



Page Knox: An Art Lover's Guide to Spain



Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Dr. Page Knox and Sevilla, courtesy Indagare

To art historian Page Knox, Spanish art has a special appeal. “It is a unique combination of religion and royalty, the secular and the spiritual, with an air of mystery about it,” she explains.

Poised to kick off her seventh Indagare Art Club, [Masterpieces of Spanish Art from the Hapsburgs to the Modern Age](#) next week and to lead an [Insider Journey to Madrid, Granada and Sevilla](#) this March, Knox spoke with Indagare about her top art spots in Spain, including her favorite works. Plus, she previews what travelers can expect from the Insider Journey—and how to study up ahead of time.

Learn more about joining Knox in this fall's [Indagare Art Club](#) and on the ground in Spain this spring during the [Insider Journey](#).



Courtesy Museo Nacional del Prado

What are your top two or three museums in Spain? And what's your favorite work in each?

A very difficult question with some very obvious answers! The Prado is simply the best, and Velazquez's *Las Meninas* is its ultimate masterpiece. Though, Goya's portraits also blow me away and Ruben's *Saint George and the Dragon*, Botticelli's *Scenes from the Story of Nastagio degli Onesti* and Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* always thrill. Whenever I can, I stop by the Thyssen-Bornemisza to check in with my favorite Renaissance female, Giovanna Tornabuoni. Outside of Madrid, I would have to say Frank Gehry's spectacular Guggenheim in Bilbao—both the building and its collection are extraordinary. I just adore Jeff Koons's *Puppy!*

What's your favorite hidden gem in Spain?

It isn't a hidden gem by any means but the cathedral in Toledo is breathtaking. The monstrance is spectacular. Just around the corner is a recently restored former synagogue (later turned into a Catholic church) built in the 13th century by Moorish architects with one of the most exquisite ceilings in Spain.

Favorite museum + restaurant combination in Spain?



Mandarin Oriental Ritz Madrid, courtesy Indagare

I love the garden at the [Ritz](#)—fabulous food and great people-watching, it's also just a stone's throw from the big three (the Prado, the Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofia).

Any favorite shops?

There is always too much art for me to explore there, so I have no time for shopping. I'm punting with this, and I'll say the book shop in the Prado.

Favorite Spanish artist?

Velazquez (with Goya a very close second).

Can you tell us about the Insider Journey itinerary, and why you chose these destinations? What moments are you most excited for on the trip?



Alhambra, Granada, courtesy Indagare

I'm so thrilled to be returning to Madrid as I think it is an enchanting city, but I'm also very excited about our visits to Granada and Sevilla to see other aspects of the complex history of Spain, particularly the Moorish elements of the country. The Alhambra is magical.

You recently led a trip to the Loire Valley—how will this trip be similar (or different)?



Córdoba, courtesy Indagare

We will still be staying at fabulous hotels and dining at exceptional restaurants, but this trip will have a more urban element to it as we'll be in Madrid. While the Loire trip was more focused on a particular moment of the Baroque and Rococo in France, this trip will cover a vast amount of time, and we will be going as far back as the ancient and medieval worlds of Spain with our trips to Córdoba and Toledo.

Who is this trip right for? What types of travelers do you hope it will attract?

Lovers of art, lovers of Spain, lovers of culture and lovers of adventure.

What are some of your biggest takeaways from leading small group art trips?

The lasting friendships that are made. I've kept in touch with so many people from the France trip and gotten to know their families and friends. Connecting through art and travel creates a unique bond that I highly value.

Do you have any book or movie recommendations for Spain?

Well, again, cliché, but Don Quixote still makes me laugh out loud. I recently read *The Vanishing Velazquez*, which I thought was an excellent discussion of the painter as well as a good story about an obsessed collector. I also liked the movie *Goya's Ghosts*, which I don't think was a huge hit, but it gives a sense of the complicated time period in which the artist lived and worked, and the chilling power of the Spanish Inquisition.

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- Bridget McElroy on September 7, 2022

