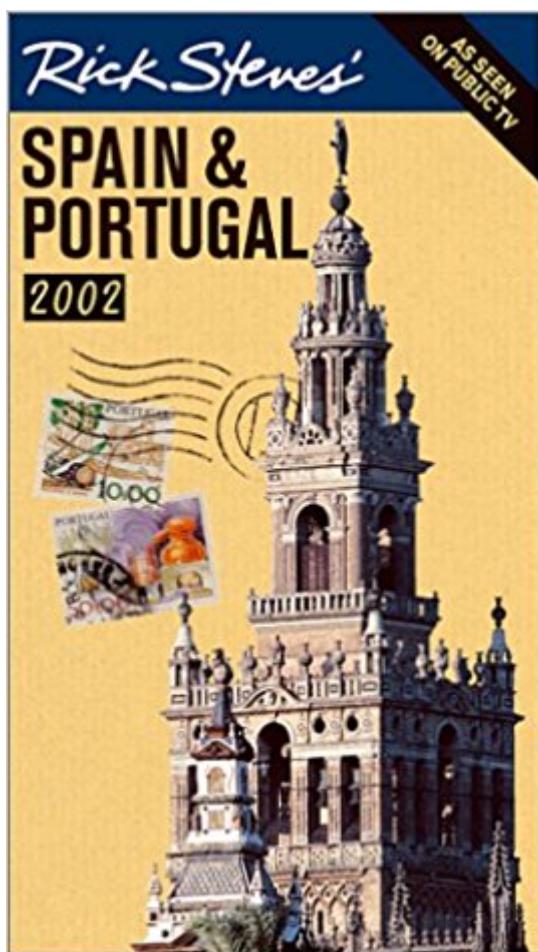


The book was found

Rick Steves' Spain And Portugal: Covers Madrid, Barcelona, Andalucia, Lisbon, The Algarve, And Morocco



Synopsis

Rick Steves doesn't just list where to travel in Europe, he leads travellers through the "back door", revealing how to give every journey an extra, more authentic dimension. He shows travellers how to delve into European culture, and experience each region's natural wonders - economically and hassle-free. Rick Steves' television series Travels in Europe with Rick Steves is seen on more than 200 public tv channels in the US and Canada

Book Information

Series: Rick Steves' Spain

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Avalon Travel Publishing; Revised edition (January 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1566913586

ISBN-13: 978-1566913584

Product Dimensions: 8 x 4.5 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,276,912 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Travel > Europe > Spain > Andalusia #58 in Books > Travel > Europe > Portugal > Lisbon #65 in Books > Travel > Europe > Spain > Madrid

Customer Reviews

Good source of information. Even though it is dated 2001, it did give me good information on the historic items to see.

Rick's books are always very helpful. I just didn't realize that this edition is 12 years old!

The one thing I think I might enjoy more than traveling is planning a trip. The problem with most trips is that I never have enough time to see all of the things I'd like to see. Consequently, I generally end up buying or borrowing a bunch of books, then planning obsessively. I really like Steves' book because it gives a great overview of each region of the country and makes it easy to figure out how to get the most out of the limited time I have available to me. It is clear that Rick Steves knows a great deal about the country, and he is able to organize and present that information in an interesting and very understandable way. He also makes suggestions about where to go and what

to do based on his experience. I found myself trusting in his opinions and making my plans without the normal qualms: "Do I really want to spend two days in Ronda and Arcos? Maybe it would make more sense to go to Gibraltar." In addition, he provides a lot of great information on affordable places to stay. Most of the guides seem to focus on the expensive, world class hotels (DK guides) or the less expensive, student hostel type of places (Lonely Planet). This guide fills the gap. While it identifies expensive "splurges" that have something really unique to offer (beyond mere luxury accomodations) and also identifies some great bargain hotels and hostels, it also provides a wealth of information about those hotels that fall in the middle. Since I'm a public defender, I don't have the bucks to stay at the Ritz, but I'm too old to sleep in a bunk-bed (plus, I think my wife would object to staying in dormatories -- for some odd reason, she likes to be in the same room with me). This guide has given me the information I need to find a place with character that will not break the bank.

Here's my response to reviewers complaining about lack of detailed information ... well, DUH! It's the whole purpose of the book to be selective, instead of data-dumping 2000 pages of hotel listings for villages that 99% of the tourists never go to. If you want that other kind of travel guidebook, or if you're traveling to the one-oxcart villages, then go buy one of those books. (We also bought a Lonely Planet book, esp. for the cultural and historical background info.) But you were fully informed and warned that this book is **SELECTIVE**. From the back cover: "Most travel guidebooks try to impress you with massive amounts of data. My philosophy is...[to] present you with only the best" From the second paragraph of the introduction, page one: "This book breaks Spain and Portugal into their **TOP** big city, small town, and rural destinations. It then gives you all the information and opinions **NECESSARY** to wring the maximum value out of your limited time and money. If you plan **A MONTH OR LESS** in Iberia, this **LEAN AND MEAN** little book is all you need." [emphasis added by me] Once again, you were fully informed that this book is selective, so why do you complain about that selectivity? Personally, I found this book was absolutely indispensable in planning our trip to Spain. It solved our biggest problem with the trip: it was our first time there, we wanted to see the best that this amazing country has to offer, but we only had 2 weeks. We also did not want to buy a package tour for budget reasons and because you don't get to see as much of the "genuine" country. Rick Steves' book saved the day. It helped us pick the top places to visit, and the top sights in each city. The recommended hotels were also real finds -- some of them were easily worth twice as much as they were charging, and the book lets you know which of the expensive hotels are really worth the splurge and which are just stuffy tourist traps. Phone numbers, email and web addresses, hours, and train/bus info was also very accurate (obviously some of the info is going to change, but

it was maybe 95% correct), with new updates and helpful info available.

We took this book on a 2 week tour of Spain. While informative for the larger cities, we found Rick's book simply lacked a lot of information that, looking back, would have made our trip a hundred times better. Rick's hotel choices gave sparse details, and he failed to stress the necessity of air conditioning-- something we found well worth an extra \$5. Do not go to Spain in the summer and get a hotel without a/c - even keeping the windows open was not an option for us with the city noise. While we were usually happy with Rick's sightseeing choices, we found his restaurant decisions were poor. The places we tried that he recommended were pleasant but had no interest in tourists (even the back door kind). The places we found on our own - off-beat family-run types - were much better. There we had kitchen staff coming out to "practice their English" on us, we were given free samples of Spanish cuisine that we hadn't ordered, and basically felt like we were interacting more with the staff and therefore experiencing more. None of those places were in Rick's book. If I were going to Spain again, I'd rip out the sightseeing parts and take them along with a different book for eating and sleeping. Just my 2 cents.

I consider travel guides one of the most useful books. When someone likes to travel like me, it is an opportunity to experience deeply local issues that other wise would tend to be hidden from the first time around tourist. For this reason I totally disagree on the fact that the author tends to summarize Portugal and Spain, two of the oldest countries in Europe, therefore with totally different aspects and much to say about, in one single book. On the educational side, it is misleading for most people who does not know where Portugal is and considers it part of Spain. I hope the author could appreciate the completely different realities when in Portugal and in Spain..

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