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#4940247 in Books 1994-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x 4.50 x .50l, #File Name: 1562611399192 pages | File size: 26.Mb

Rick Steves : Rick Steves' 1994 2 to 22 Days in Spain and Portugal: The Itinerary Planner (Rick Steves' Spain Portugal) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rick Steves' 1994 2 to 22 Days in Spain and Portugal: The Itinerary Planner (Rick Steves' Spain Portugal):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. CASTLES, CAVES, AND WINDMILLSBy Loren D. MorrisonWhen I travel, I like to explore, and Rick Steve's older guidebooks, such as this one, always suited my purposes. He used to place a lot of emphasis on less commercial, more out of the way places. By this, I don't mean that he ignored the more popular commercial sites. He just gave us a lot of options.In La Mancha, he directed us up a dirt road above the town of Almonacid de Toledo, where, on a Sunday morning, we had the deserted ruins of a castle to ourselves. No ticket booths, no souvenir stands, no guides, no one else, just my wife and me. Just the two of us with the morning sun, the dew still on the grass, and the ruins to explore to our hearts' content.Later the same morning, on a windy hill, high above another La Mancha town, Consuegra, waiting for us were seven giant windmills -- the largest I've ever seen. It was easy to see how they inspired Cervantes to write his famous windmill tilting scene. We kept waiting for Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to appear, but they must have been taking Sunday off.Another place that we never would have found without Rick's help was the Caves at Pileta. Pileta is not an easy place to find, and is not mentioned in most other guide books. "22 Days" is the exception. The caves are at the end of a dead end road about 30

or 40 miles north of Ronda. When you reach the end of the road, the hard part of the trip is still ahead. Into the side of a steep, rocky cliff, several hundred stone steps have been carved. You must climb these to reach the caves. "22 Days" had warned us about the difficulty of the climb, so it didn't take us by surprise. The caves are very rustic. They are owned by the grandson of the farmer who discovered them and it is he who leads four or five tours a day into the depths of the mountain. No commercial tour this. The tours are restricted to about twelve people. To start, three Coleman type lanterns are pumped up and lit. The guide carries one, someone in the middle carries one, and the last person in line carries one. They are the only light anywhere in the caves. A crude path has been cut into the ground, and in several places you find yourself walking in shallow water. After about a half mile walk, you are treated to several areas of paleolithic era cave paintings, and you come across a few piles of bones and pottery shards. We are told that the bones are both human and animal, and that some of them are over five thousand years old. I think that the real appeal of Rick Steve's older books was in helping the more adventurous tourist find places like these. It was also our experience that at least some of the inexpensive lodgings that he recommended were real finds. I think particularly of one in Granada just a few hundred yards below the entrance to the Alhambra. It was very inexpensive, clean, and was owned by the second or third generation of the same family. The woman who, with the help of her son, owned and operated it, (Matilda was her name) was both personable and helpful. When I was leaving Granada and heading south, she told me about a secondary road through the mountains that turned out to be one of the scenic highlights of our trip. Other than some of his recommendations on where to eat, which were hit and miss, Steves' recommendations and descriptions were right on the money. For all the wonderful things we saw only because of his write ups, I can forgive him a poor meal or two. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A clear, uncluttered travel plan for Iberia By A Customer When I was planning a month-long bicycle tour of Iberia, I immersed myself in travel guides until my eyes began to glaze over. Lots of depth, lots of conflicting opinions about what was worthwhile, overrated, etc. Then I came upon Rick Steve's 22-day guide - a slim, resourceful guide that made a superb framework for a travel plan. Rick is highly opinionated, but he prefaces his critiques with enough personality that I found it easy to read between the lines and form my own opinions. His broad descriptions of major cities - Lisbon, Madrid, Toledo, Sevilla - are punctuated with precise detail on lodgings and restaurants. I found his phone numbers and descriptions of cheap housing to be dead on-the-money. When you roll into a large city late at night without reservations, believe me, having a number to call is a welcome asset. The book was small enough to fit in my hip pocket and I used it every day. I found it a perfect balance of structure and open invitation to explore. I recommend it without hesitation! The fact that it's perpetually out-of-print should be a further hint as to its usefulness