

This course includes 20 lessons of Spanish language + 8 hours of Flamenco Dance lessons in the afternoons/evenings at one of the best Flamenco schools of Spain. Each class is 55 minutes in length.

Duration:	1–12 weeks
Location:	Madrid, Marbella & Sevilla
Hours:	28 classes weekly (20 Spanish + 8 Flamenco)
Group size:	Average class size of 5 students (10 maximum).
Level:	From beginner to advanced
Age:	From 16 years old
Start dates:	Start Any Monday

Flamenco

Flamenco is a Spanish art form with roots deep in Andalusia — Spain’s southern region. Although there are clues as to how this folk music evolved, the details are lost in history. Even the origin of its name is elusive. Some attribute it to the early 1500s and the Flemish courtiers during the reign of Spain’s Charles V. Their bright clothing inspired the names given things garish or conspicuous, such as flamingos and Flamenco. Others say Flamenco - still referring to the Flemish — was the nationality erroneously given by the common people to Gypsies. Still others claim the name comes from the Arabic fellah mangu - the laborer who sings.

Flamenco combines acoustic guitar playing, singing, chanting, dancing and staccato handclapping. The Flamenco dancer performs with passion, fervor, even tortured expressions but always striving for grace and dignity. Like American jazz, Flamenco dancing involves improvisation. It’s the dancer’s spontaneous expression of the moment’s emotions. The Spanish call it “Duende”. The word means goblin or fairy, but to the Flamenco dancer it signifies an inner force that fuels an inspired performance.

A dancer with “duende” goes beyond technical mastery to vent his or her feelings, achieving a powerful, compelling dance. Those who aren’t singing may shout encouragement: olé or ¡baile! ¡baile! - dance! dance! As an observer, you don’t really see good Flamenco, you feel it.

Flamenco blends many influences ...

Flamenco blends influences the earliest of which came from Hindu dances, the threnodies of Greek mourners and the mimes of Imperial Rome. In the days of the Roman Empire, dance from Andalusia was already thriving and achieving a measure of fame. The writings of Pliny, Strabo and Martial mention the dancing girls of Cadiz, who were even then using castanets. Under Roman rule large numbers of Jews entered Spain. And the chanting of Jewish synagogue services found its way into the local music.

In 711, the Moorish Warrior Tarik crossed the narrow strait separating Europe and Africa at the western end of the Mediterranean. He brought with him an army that would conquer all of Spain. Thus began almost 800 years of Arab influence on the culture of Andalusia. Early in this occupation, as the new culture was beginning to take hold, a renowned Moorish singer named Ziryab settled into Cordoba. The songs he brought with him formed the basis of much Spanish music.

Ziryab accompanied himself on a special lute. Traditionally, the lute has four strings, but he added a fifth. It was this five-stringed lute that evolved in Andalusia as the Spanish guitar. From high in the minarets of the mosques that sprang up throughout Andalusia, the muezzins would call the faithful to prayer. And their cry, too, colored the local singing.

Finally, the Gypsies began to arrive in Spain during the 15th century. Large numbers settled in Andalusia. They brought intensity to the local music - sentimentality, tragedy. The Gypsies seem to have consolidated the assorted strains into the Flamenco we know today. They cultivated and popularized *cante hondo* - deep singing. The name refers to the emotional depths reached by its singers.

While its origins are ancient, it was not until after 1700 that Flamenco came into its own. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries it flourished, achieving a peak in popularity from about 1875 to 1900. Practically every Andalusia town in the period had its singing cafe. With few exceptions, the famed singers and dancers were Gypsies.

Types of Flamenco...

There are more than a dozen varieties of Flamenco songs. Many are laments. One classic type, the Petenera, tells the story of a beautiful girl named Petenera who brings tragedy to herself and her village. Some songs are named after the Andalusia towns in which they are popular: granadinas (Grenada), Malagueñas (Malaga), Rodeñas (Ronda) and Sevillanas (Seville). Words tend to be arbitrary, and the songs seem to have as many versions as there are singers. While Flamenco songs and dances may differ with the performer and the location, they all have one element in common - emotion. Flamenco that is done correctly will create a profound, moving experience.

Where the Flamenco classes are held

Flamenco classes in Marbella and in Granada classes take place at the language school, with professional Flamenco teachers. In Madrid the Flamenco school is called "Amor de Dios" and it is located in Anton Martin area, 7 metros stops from the language school (about 30/40 minutes walking).