



AUGUST 8-16, 2026

Featuring Professor Stephen Bradshaw
Professor of Physics and Astronomy
Chair of Undergraduate Program

CASTILE AND THE COSMOS

Orbridge

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE IN THE HEART OF SPAIN

Castile and the Cosmos | Itinerary Highlights (subject to change)

Day 1 EN ROUTE FROM U.S.

1

Day 2 ARRIVE IN MADRID, SPAIN | CHINCHÓN (R)

2

Upon arrival at Adolfo Suárez Madrid–Barajas Airport an Orbridge representative will be waiting to assist with your transfer to a hospitality room before continuing to the property in Chinchón. Settle in before meeting fellow travel companions for beverages and tapas during a welcome reception.

Day 3 CHINCHÓN (B,D) Following breakfast at hotel

3

set off on a guided city tour of Chinchón, a town rich in history featuring several notable landmarks including the 15th-century Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, which houses a painting by Goya, and the 11th-century Castillo de los Condes, a fortress with a turbulent past. Enjoy lunch on own with free time to explore Chinchón's narrow, winding streets full of old-world charm. This evening gather for dinner in a wine cave restaurant, or *cueva del vino*.

Day 4 SEGOVIA (B,L) After breakfast depart for an

4

exciting full day of touring in Segovia, first seeing the city and gardens. The most iconic landmark in Segovia is the Roman Aqueduct, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the best-preserved Roman structures in the world. Built around the 1st century AD, this engineering marvel stretches for more than nine miles and is composed of 167 arches, standing without the use of mortar. Following a group lunch continue to the Alcázar de Segovia for an inside visit.

Day 5 ECLIPSE DAY (B,L,D) This morning after a

5

leisurely breakfast visit an olive oil farm for a tour and tasting followed by lunch at a local restaurant. The afternoon is reserved for special eclipse activities. Depart for a local park for unobstructed viewing opportunities. Witness this celestial phenomenon where the moon slowly encroaches on the sun. At the moment of totality you can safely remove your solar viewing glasses for a brief period. The sky darkens dramatically, resembling twilight, and the sun's outer atmosphere becomes visible creating a breathtaking halo of light around the darkened sun. This is the most magical moment of the eclipse, often lasting only a few minutes. Enjoy a tapas dinner before the main event.

Day 6 TOLEDO (B,L) Explore Toledo, a diverse

6

city whose historic center was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1986. Visit Toledo Cathedral, one of Spain's most important Gothic structures and a stunning masterpiece of medieval architecture. Completed in the 13th century, it boasts an intricate façade, an ornate interior filled with beautiful chapels and a collection of religious artwork including paintings by El Greco. After lunch at a local restaurant continue to the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca. Originally built as a synagogue in the 12th century under Christian rule, this building is an architectural marvel with its mix of Moorish and Jewish design elements. Enjoy leisure time for independent exploration before returning to Chinchón.

Day 7 ARANJUEZ | ALCALÁ DE HENARES (B,L)

7

Following breakfast set out for Consuegra to see the 12 legendary windmills prominently featured in *Don Quixote*, written by Miguel de Cervantes—one of the greatest writers in Spanish history. Continue to Cervantes' birthplace, Alcalá de Henares, for lunch. Afterward visit the Cervantes Birthplace Museum, a beautifully restored 16th-century house displaying exhibits related to the life of Cervantes, the era in which he lived and the influence of his literature on the world.

Day 8 CUENCA (B,R,D) This morning depart for

8

Cuenca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Cuenca's most iconic landmark, the *Casas Colgadas*—or Hanging Houses—appear to defy gravity as they perch dramatically on the edge of a steep cliff overlooking the Huécar Gorge. These medieval houses were originally built in the 14th century, although many have been reconstructed and re-purposed over time. Take advantage of free time in Old Town's square—a great place to explore the city's medieval streets and sample wonderful cuisine and a variety of cafés and restaurants. This evening gather with fellow travel companions for a special farewell reception plus dinner featuring a delicious assortment of tapas.

Day 9 CHINCHÓN | MADRID | DEPART FOR

9

U.S. (B) After breakfast transfer to the airport for flights home.

(B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner, Reception)



What's Included

- 7 nights luxury accommodations
- Special welcome and farewell receptions, 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 3 dinners served with wine/beer or soft drinks
- Full guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director and expert local guides
- All private tours, tastings and unique small-group excursions noted on the 9-day itinerary
- Private motor coach transportation
- Luggage portorage
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, porters and wait staff for included meals
- Airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times

Activity Level: Guests should be able to enjoy two hours or more of walking, be sure-footed on cobbled surfaces, and walk up and down stairs without assistance. Historic city centers are usually more accessible by foot than vehicle. Due to the structure of some buildings, facilities for those with mobility issues may be limited.



Accommodations *(subject to change)*

Founded by the first Lords of Chinchón in the 15th century, Parador de Chinchón is situated in the former monastery of Nuestra Señora del Paraíso. The site retains its original cloister, staircase and the primitive church—which has been transformed into a unique suite.

Located in the heart of the medieval town of Chinchón, the inn boasts extensive gardens and a traditional convent orchard, now filled with fruit trees. This serene setting provides an ideal space for relaxation including a pool that occupies the former monastery stables.

The property also features a stunning glass-enclosed cloister showcasing an exclusive collection of religious art.

Room Amenities: Individual climate control, complimentary Wi-Fi, flat-screen TV, safe, minibar, and en suite bathroom with sundries and hair dryer.



Optional Pre-Tour Madrid

Madrid is known for its elegant boulevards, beautifully preserved architecture and world-class museums. Experience a delicious bite of this vibrant city and glimpse into Madrid's storied past and lively contemporary grandeur.



Day
+1 EN ROUTE FROM U.S.

Day
+2 **ARRIVE IN MADRID, SPAIN** Upon arrival at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport transfer to the hotel for check-in and the remainder of the day at leisure. Strolling through Madrid discover lively tapas bars, colorful parks offering peaceful green spaces to relax, and a vibrant nightlife with cozy cafés open into the evening.

Day
+3 **MADRID (B)** After breakfast at the hotel meet a local guide for a comprehensive city tour. Madrid is known for its elegant boulevards, beautifully preserved architecture and world-class museums like the Prado, home to masterpieces from Goya and Velázquez. At its heart is the bustling Puerta del Sol, a lively square that's always full of activity. Nearby Plaza Mayor offers a glimpse into Madrid's storied past with its majestic arcades and cobblestone streets. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore independently.

Day
+4 **MADRID | MAIN PROGRAM BEGINS (B,L)** Following breakfast enjoy additional time exploring Madrid before venturing to a local farm for lunch. Afterward join guests arriving for the main program.

What's Included

- 2 nights hotel accommodations at Palacio de los Duques Grand Melia (or similar) with breakfast each morning
- A guided panoramic tour of Madrid's highlights
- A special visit to a local farm followed by lunch
- Luggage portage
- Guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guide, driver and porters
- Airport transfers for guests departing during the suggested times





Dear Traveling Owls,

Join us on this leisurely exploration of the The Kingdom of Castile in the heart of Spain. Once the cradle of Spain’s medieval power, Castile is divided into two historic areas: Castilla la Vieja (Old Castile) and Castilla la Nueva (New Castile). During this unforgettable journey through each, discover ancient cities, imposing fortresses and stunning UNESCO World Heritage Sites, all highlighted by the area’s rich cultural and culinary flavors.

With the rare spectacle of a total solar eclipse as a centerpiece, this extraordinary experience combines heritage, natural beauty and celestial wonder in one of Spain’s most evocative regions.

Your home base during this adventure is the enchanting Parador de Chinchón, a property situated within a former monastery.

Space is limited. With significant savings of more than \$1,000 per couple, we anticipate this tour will fill quickly. Reserve online at rice.orbridge.com or call 866-639-0079.

Sincerely,

Deanna Perez, Ed.M
Assistant Director, Alumni Engagement

For questions and to learn more, call the Traveling Owls at 713-34-TRIPS (87477) or email travelingowls@rice.edu.

AUGUST 8-16, 2026

Madrid Pre-Tour: August 6-9, 2026

RESERVE YOUR SPACE TODAY


Online: rice.orbridge.com

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Category	Standard Rate	Special Rate*
Double	\$6,999	\$6,495
Single	\$9,499	\$8,995
Madrid Pre-Tour	Standard Rate	Special Rate*
Double	\$2,099	\$1,895
Single	\$2,899	\$2,695

DEPOSIT AMOUNT PER PERSON
\$500 pre-tour • \$850 main tour

*Special group rates; limited offer. All rates are per person in U.S. dollars based on double occupancy except where noted as Single. Single availability limited. Unless noted otherwise, airfare is not included.
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 Orbridge takes seriously the responsibility to minimize our global environmental impact. Each year we plant 100,000 trees in U.S. State Forests with afforestation needs as an ongoing initiative among our evolving sustainability efforts. Learn more at orbridge.com/going-green.





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AUGUST 8-16, 2026

Special Alumni Rate:

Save more than \$1,000 per couple

30-DAY REFUND GUARANTEE

**Featuring Professor Stephen Bradshaw,
Professor of Physics and Astronomy;**

Chair of Undergraduate Program

Professor Stephen Bradshaw is a faculty member at Rice University in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, where he chairs the Undergraduate Program. He earned his MS in Physics from Aberystwyth University in 2000 and his PhD in Solar Astrophysics from the University of Cambridge in 2004. Before joining Rice in 2010, he was a postdoctoral fellow at Imperial College London and a research astrophysicist at NASAs Goddard Space Flight Center.



His research focuses on theoretical and computational plasma physics applied to solar and stellar atmospheres, particularly the heating mechanisms behind these atmospheres, where temperatures can reach millions of degrees, while the surface temperature remains just a few thousand degrees. He also studies solar/stellar flares and the acceleration of solar/stellar winds, which influence space weather.

Professor Bradshaw has published widely, with projects receiving over \$10M in funding from NASA and the National Science Foundation (NSF). He is the lead scientist for a NASA mission proposal to study the Sun's atmosphere in soft X-rays.

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