

MITALUMNI Travel Program



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Stay five nights in a restored 10th-century hilltop castle and view the eclipse from its rooftop
- Tour Atapuerca, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where Homo antecessor, the earliest known human ancestors in Europe, were discovered
- Enjoy dinner and award-winning live flamenco performance at Corral de la Moreria
- Explore Madrid and Segovia with local expert guides
- Learn and taste the science behind the winemaking in Rioja and Ribera del Duero
- Kayak the gorges carved by the Duratón River
- Hike the forests of Guadarrama National Park

Questions or ready to book?

Call 866-OH-SHEEP (866-647-4337)

- or email -

reservations@BlackSheepAdventures.com

[BlackSheepAdventures.com](https://www.BlackSheepAdventures.com)

Based in Piedmont, California

Eclipse.

Dear MIT Alumni and Friends,

Join us for a journey through central Spain to see the total solar eclipse on August 12, 2026. During the trip, **Dr. Michael Person '92, SM '01, PhD '06, PD '06** will lead a series of presentations and informal discussions; local expert guides will lead daily tours.

Please contact the tour operator running this program for MIT, Black Sheep Adventures at **866-647-4337** or by email at reservations@BlackSheepAdventures.com, with any questions and to make a reservation. Their travel consultants are eager to take your call and answer your questions. I hope you decide to join us!

Sincerely,

Melissa Chapman Gresh, MIT Alumni Travel Program

Total Solar Eclipse 2026: Spanish Culture and Natural Wonders August 7-15, 2026

Embark on a journey through the heart of Spain, crafted for those with a thirst for exploration and a love for the cosmos. This tour not only immerses you in Spain's rich history and vibrant traditions but also offers an unforgettable celestial experience—the 2026 total solar eclipse, viewed from the rooftop of a restored 10th-century castle. The length of totality at our viewing site is one minute and 37 seconds. This trip is appropriate for curious travelers age 14 and older.

MIT Enrichment Lecturer

Dr. Michael Person is the director of the MIT Wallace Astrophysical Observatory (located in Westford, MA) and a senior lecturer in the MIT Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences. An alumnus himself, Dr. Person received his S.B., S.M., and Ph.D. degrees from MIT. His specialty is observational astronomy, especially as applied to various bodies throughout our solar system. Dr. Person has directed observations using portable telescopes for scientific campaigns focusing on the sun's corona during the total solar eclipses of 2017, 2021, and 2023.

Photo by J. Catelli



Main Tour Itinerary

DAY
0

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7

Depart for Europe

DAY
1

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Arrive in Madrid, Flamenco Show at Corral de la Moreria

Upon arrival in Madrid, transfer to the hotel in the centrally-located Barrio de Las Letras, or Literary Quarter. Gather this evening for a uniquely Spanish event at the famed Corral de la Moreria flamenco theater and restaurant. Michelin-starred, it has also been recognized as the World's Best Flamenco venue by the International Cante de las Minas Flamenco Festival.

Meals Included: Dinner

Lodging: Catalonia Puerta del Sol or similar

DAY
2

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

Madrid Walking Tour, El Prado Museum, Transfer to Curiel

Begin with a walking tour with a local guide through the center of Madrid. Walk its narrow, irregular streets and explore its many century-old stores and traditional taverns. Listen to the history and anecdotes that the local guide will share, while taking in the architecture of the Royal Palace, Puerta del Sol, Plaza Mayor, Plaza de la Villa and the Royal Theatre. Visit El Prado Museum which houses the world's richest and most comprehensive collection of Spanish paintings. After lunch, transfer to Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel, a historic castle turned hotel and exclusive home to the group for the next five nights. This medieval fortress, dating back to the 10th century, offers a unique blend of historical charm and modern comfort. The castle's meticulously restored interiors feature period-appropriate furnishings, creating an ambiance that transports guests to a bygone era. Enjoy stunning panoramic views of the surrounding vineyards and countryside from the castle's towers and terraces.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel

DAY
3

MONDAY, AUGUST 10

Kayak in Hoces de Duratón

Kayak in the Hoces del Duratón, a protected area, characterized by its dramatic gorges carved by the Duratón River, boasts towering limestone cliffs and lush greenery. The paddle is perfect for both novice and experienced kayakers. Along the route, explore hidden caves, marvel at the striking rock formations, and enjoy the quiet beauty of the surrounding nature reserve. After, enjoy a delightful culinary experience in one of Spain's most picturesque medieval villages, Pedraza. Enjoy lunch in a quaint restaurant, where the rustic ambiance is complemented by stone walls and wooden beams, evoking a sense of timelessness. Enjoy a tasting menu that showcases the region's renowned cuisine, featuring dishes such as suckling pig or lamb, slow-roasted to perfection in traditional wood-fired ovens, accompanied by fresh, locally sourced vegetables and paired with exquisite wines from nearby vineyards. In the afternoon, enjoy some free time, possibly cooling off in the castle's rooftop pool. This evening, dine at the castle.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

Tour Atapuerca Archaeological Site, Marques de Riscal winery

Today, travel to Atapuerca. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world, Atapuerca is known for its rich fossil record that sheds light on the earliest human ancestors in Europe. Tour the ancient caves and active excavation sites where remains of Homo antecessor and other prehistoric species were discovered, providing invaluable insights into human evolution. Guided by an expert archaeologist, the tour delves into the site's extensive history and scientific significance. Also, visit the nearby Museum of Human Evolution to see the fossils and artifacts. Continue on to Laguardia, a charming medieval town known for its well-preserved architecture and scenic views of vineyards, providing an idyllic backdrop to enjoy a lunch that highlights the rich flavors of traditional Riojan cuisine. Tour Marqués de Riscal, a winery located in the avant-garde Frank Gehry-designed complex, housing both the ancient wine cellars and the state-of-the-art facilities. Learn about the winery's rich history and its pivotal role in shaping the region's winemaking legacy. Then enjoy some free time or continue with a tasting featuring a selection of their finest wines. Dine in Burgos on our way back to the castle.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel

DAY
5

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12

Wine Tasting at Emilio Moro Winery and **Eclipse!**

Nearby the castle, enjoy an immersive experience into the rich viticulture of the Ribera del Duero region at Emilio Moro Winery. This family-owned winery is renowned for its deep-rooted tradition and commitment to quality. Guests are welcomed into a charming, rustic setting, to learn about the particular wine-making method that Emilio Moro Winery employs. Later, after lunch, return to the castle and begin preparing for the eclipse with a presentation by the enrichment lecturer. As Dr. Person says, "One of things that drives my interest in astronomy is its potential to connect us all. Regardless of our geographic, social, or political differences, we all live under the same sky." The viewing location is the roof of the hilltop castle, the perfect place to enjoy drinks and snacks with a panoramic horizon view while waiting for the celestial show to begin. The partial eclipse begins at 7:34 PM. Totality commences at 8:29 PM and lasts one minute and 37 seconds. Sunset is at 9:21 PM, just moments before the end of the partial eclipse. After, celebrate with a dinner at the castle.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel

DAY
6

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

Hike Guadarrama National Park, Visit Real Sitio de San Ildefonso

A hike in Guadarrama National Park offers an immersive adventure into one of Spain's most breathtaking natural landscapes. This protected area is known for its stunning mountain ranges, lush pine forests, and diverse wildlife. With our guide, traverse its well-marked trails and encounter sweeping views of surrounding peaks, crystal-clear streams, and verdant valleys, making it a haven for nature lovers. The park's rich biodiversity includes majestic Iberian mountain goats, soaring griffon vultures, and an array of plant species. There will be two hike options to cater to various skill levels, from a shorter, flatter walk to a longer walk with a more challenging ascent. Along the way, a knowledgeable guide shares insights into the park's geology, flora, and fauna, enriching the experience with educational elements. After, transfer to Real Sitio de San Ildefonso, also known as La Granja, nestled in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama. This charming town is home to the historic Royal Palace and its magnificent gardens. Enjoy lunch here at the Michelin-recognized La Fundación Restaurante, a former 18th-century foundry, which provides an opportunity to savor the flavors of traditional Castilian cuisine, thoughtfully prepared with fresh, local ingredients. After, relax with some free time at the castle, another opportunity to take in the views from the rooftop pool, dine this evening at a restaurant near the castle.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Residencia Real Castillo de Curiel

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

Walking Tour of Segovia, Transfer to Madrid

En route back to Madrid, tour Segovia. Here, see a mix of architecture that dates to the late Middle Ages (11th and 12th centuries) and the Renaissance (16th century), its two periods of prosperity. See the famous Roman aqueduct of 166 arches, the Alcazar constructed by Alfonso VI, and the 16th-century Gothic cathedral. After lunch and free time to explore the city, transfer to Madrid. This evening, enjoy a final celebratory dinner.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging: Catalonia Puerta del Sol or similar

DAY
8

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Head Home or Continue the Journey

Today after breakfast, either transfer to the airport in Madrid to begin travel home or continue the journey.

Meals Included: Breakfast



Optional Extensions

Pre-Trip Extension

Wednesday–Friday, August 5–7

Tour Catalonia's cities with local expert guides. Start in Barcelona exploring architecture from Gothic to Gaudi and tasting the local culinary specialties. Continue the pre-tour in Girona and delve into the surreal world of Salvador Dalí before heading to Madrid to join the main tour. Stay three nights Catalonia Magdalenes Hotel or similar in Barcelona. (More details will be provided to confirmed travelers)

Post-Trip Extension

Saturday–Monday, August 15–17

Continue the journey beyond the main tour visiting the iconic cathedrals and museums of the cities of Salamanca, Avila and Toledo. Dine on regional cuisine and taste local wines before returning to Madrid. Stay one night Sofraga Palacio or similar in Avila. Stay one night Catalonia Puerta del Sol or similar in Madrid. (More details will be provided to confirmed travelers)

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Pricing

TRIP COST	PAYMENT TERMS
<p>Main Tour, August 7-15, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7,495 per person double occupancy • \$6,595 for 3rd person in a triple • \$6,495 each for 3rd and 4th person in a quad • \$8,990 for single occupancy <p>Pre-Trip Extension, August 5-7, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,295 per person double occupancy • \$2,795 for 3rd person in a triple • \$2,295 each for 3rd and 4th person in a quad • \$3,890 for single occupancy <p>Post-Trip Extension, August 15-17, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,395 per person double occupancy • \$1,095 for 3rd person in a triple • \$795 each for 3rd and 4th person in a quad • \$1,890 for single occupancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,500 deposit per person. • Additional \$3,000 payment per person due August 1, 2025. • Balance of trip cost due April 10, 2026. • Payments can be made by ACH, check, credit card, or Zelle. • Confirmed travelers will be required to sign a Participant Release, Waiver and Assumption of Risk Form upon confirmation. • Confirmed travelers need to provide passport information. Spain requires all passports to be valid for at least six months after arrival.
TRIP PRICE INCLUDES	TRIP PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodging as outlined in itinerary • All meals as outlined in itinerary, including soft drinks, beer, and wine as selected by tour staff • Tickets, rental equipment, and museum admissions for all included activities • Two lectures by MIT enrichment lecturer • Services of professional tour manager throughout and local guides for daily tours • Ground transportation via a private air-conditioned motorcoach for all included events during the trip and portage service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post tour travel • Optional and additional sightseeing not mentioned in the itinerary • Alcoholic beverages beyond what is included, such as hard alcohol • Any services or meals not mentioned in the itinerary • Personal items such as laundry, telephone or incidentals. • Trip insurance – highly recommended



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What to Expect

Weather: In August, weather in Spain can be quite warm, around 80-90 degrees F, at the peak heat of the day, and cooling to around 55-65 degrees F overnight. Most of the outdoor activities will be in the cooler morning hours. In the heat of the afternoon, tour activities move indoors to air-conditioned comfort. **Weather and cloud conditions for viewing the eclipse can change and are not guaranteed.**

Tour Pace: This tour features a range of pace each day with a few hours of moderate activity such as walking, hiking or kayaking as well as lighter activities such as museum visits and wine tastings. Daily transportation includes rides on a private motor coach typically lasting from thirty minutes to two hours at a time, totaling one to five hours in the motor coach each day. Travelers should be able to handle city tours lasting up to two hours with a mixture of walking including upstairs and up hills as well as standing while listening to our local guides. The hike in Guadarrama National Park is up to two hours starting at a trailhead at around 6,000 feet with the option to climb 500 feet or more. For kayaking, travelers do not need to be experienced paddlers, but need to be comfortable seated in the boat for up to two hours. This tour is suitable for enthusiastic travelers who value the excitement of learning while traveling, age 14 and older.

Co-share: This program may be shared with another similar co-sponsoring organization.

Group Size: 25-45 travelers. The Optional Extensions can be operated with as few as eight travelers.

This trip will be confirmed once a minimum of 25 travelers have registered for the trip with a paid deposit. All confirmed travelers will receive notification from Black Sheep Adventures once the minimum number of travelers has been reached. If the minimum number of travelers is not reached by August 1, 2025, all funds paid to Black Sheep Adventures will be 100% refunded.

Terms

CANCELLATION POLICY

All payments are non-refundable. In the case of cancellation, travel insurance may cover costs that are non-refundable. For this reason, **the purchase of a comprehensive travel insurance policy is highly recommended.** Name changes and participant replacements are allowed up to June 8, 2026 (60 days prior to departure).

WAIVER

All participants must complete Black Sheep Adventures' Participant Release, Waiver and Assumption of Risk online at: <https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/v/MITeclipse2026/>

DISCLAIMER

Black Sheep Adventures is the tour operator responsible for managing this travel program. The above itinerary is subject to change depending on a variety of factors. In every case, Black Sheep Adventures (herein BSA) will endeavor to make travelers aware of changes as soon as possible, but, occasionally, changes must be made immediately prior to, or during, a departure. BSA strives to offer the best quality trip for each area and will make every effort to offer a comparable or better travel program. Rest assured BSA's goal is to provide travelers with the best possible travel and learning experience. BSA acts only as an agent for the various independent suppliers that provide hotel accommodations, transportation, sightseeing, activities, or other services connected with this tour. Such services are subject to the terms and conditions of those suppliers. BSA and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, including the MIT Alumni Association, the MIT Alumni Travel Program (herein MIT) and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability whatsoever from any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or any other incident which may be caused by the negligence, defect, default of any company or person in performing these services. Responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, local laws or other such causes. Parents and guardians are responsible for the children accompanying them. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws and regulations of the country in which they are provided. BSA is not responsible for any baggage or personal effects of any individual participating in the tours arranged by BSA. Individual travelers are encouraged to and responsible for purchasing a travel insurance policy that will cover some of the expenses associated with the loss of luggage or personal effects. If the MIT Enrichment Lecturer or local experts must cancel their participation in this program, BSA will attempt to provide, but cannot guarantee, a suitable replacement. **Viewing the solar eclipse is subject to atmospheric, environmental, and other factors beyond the control of BSA. No guarantee is made that the eclipse will be visible.**

Note: The MIT Alumni Travel Program provides further information about the Travel Program and the relationship between the Alumni Association and the tour operator online at: <http://alum.mit.edu/travel/about>

*Tour participants must fully review the tour operator's cancellation and refund policies, as the tour participant's financial commitments are directly with the tour operator, with all tour funds being paid to the operator. **The purchase of a comprehensive travel insurance policy is highly recommended.***

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