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# Flamenco, Feria, Fiesta

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Flamenco is an inextricable part of Andalusia’s DNA. From the way Sevillians enunciate with their hands — expressing everything from surprise to indignance with just a forceful flick of the wrist — to buskers on the streets, Christmas carolers, and modern interpretations by renowned pop artists, this popular style of music, song, and dance has become emblematic of Spanish culture worldwide. Flamenco was brought to the region by the nomadic Roma people, who migrated to Europe from Rajasthan in northwestern India. As they mingled their own sounds with those of the Muslims and Sephardic Jews, the varying styles of flamenco expanded across the region. The members of this marginal community are called gitanos, or gypsies (“gitano” is the term Spanish Roma use to identify themselves, and it does not carry the same racist connotations that the English word “gypsy” does); they lived on the outskirts of sevillano society, specifically in the Triana neighborhood, which was not easily accessible to the city until 1852. There’s no hiding that the overarching attitude towards the gitano culture remains disdainful even today, but flamenco is the exception. Today, there are more than 50 styles of flamenco, known as palos, most of which are highly emotional, even dark, and speak to the poverty and everyday turmoil of the community. To the callow ear, the heel taps and claps seem offbeat — but each one is purposefully syncopated. To the naked eye, the performance feels rehearsed, but like jazz, it is spontaneous and sensed.



The pinnacle of Seville’s contemporary flamenco is all polka dots and ruffles at the weeklong April fair, or Feria, where folks sprawl across decorated fairgrounds to eat, dance, and party until well after the break of dawn. Here you’ll find the merriest of palos, the sevillano partner dance you’re also likely to see performed at the local flamenco theaters on your visit. While most flamenco theaters, or tablaos, appeal more to tourists, it’s a well-known fact that the best dancers, singers, and musicians are in these tablaos, so don’t discount them. Check out [La Casa de Flamenco](#) for an intimate, unmixed experience; book ahead of time to reserve your seat.



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