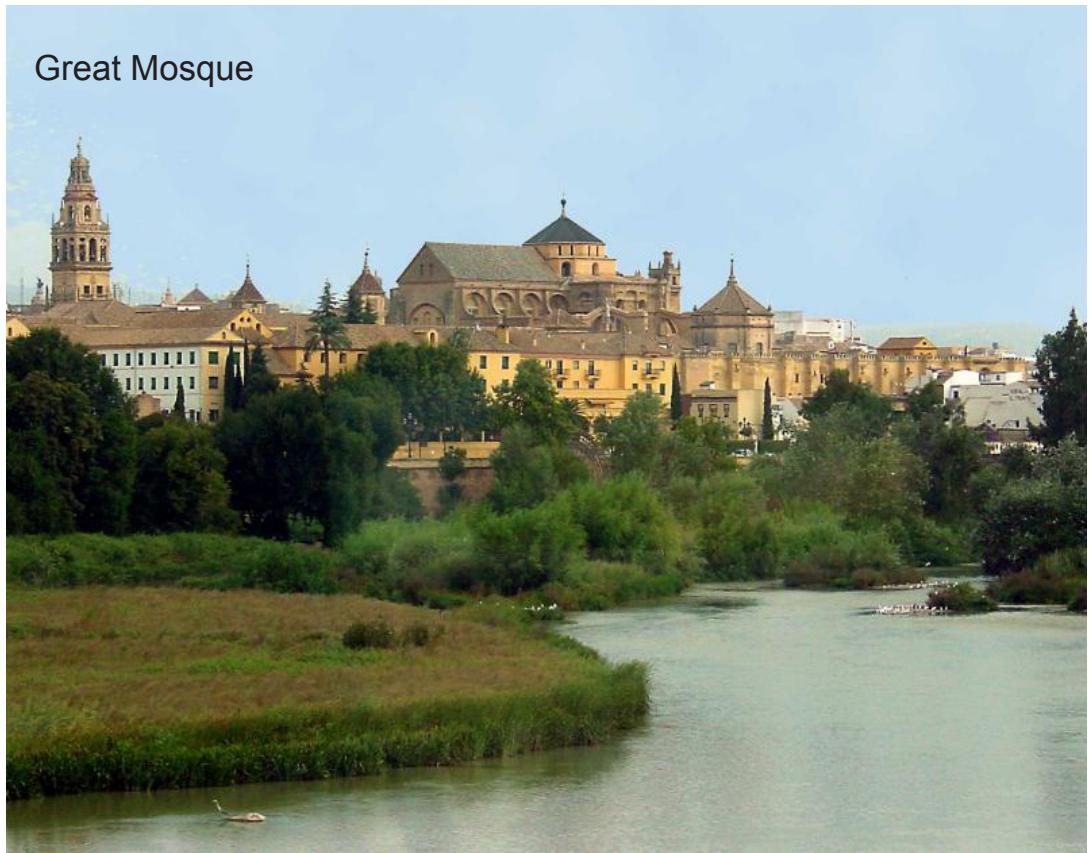


# Tracing the Foot steps of Tariq Ibn Ziyad Part III

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Please refer to previous editions of ITM magazine  
for 1st and 2nd part of the voyage.....



Cordoba

Immerse yourself in numinous saga and rich culture of Moorish Cordoba, home to a 1000 year old great mosque, La Mezquita. After succession of victories in Algeciras, Gibraltar and Ecija, the conquering army betook itself towards Cordoba.

At Cordoba, Tariq and his men encountered stout resistance. Roderick had placed the defences of his ducal capital in good order. In fact, Cordoba was a strong and important city, and much better defended than Toledo, the imperial capital. Tariq Ibn Ziyad and Mughith al Roomi spent nine futile days in outer city compound, looking for a breach in city's defences. After the horror of Ecija, Tariq was unwilling to give his

adversaries a chance to assemble and launch yet another offensive. Therefore, taking the advice of Count Julian, Tariq reorganized his eclectic army into three wings, one column to remain in Cordoba under Mughith al Roomi, while he took another column of 700 warriors towards Toledo and sent third column south eastward toward Granada. After a long and arduous siege of two months, Cordoba was finally seized by

## The Great Mosque of Cordoba , Spain



## Cordoba moscheefassade



Mughith al Roomi. After the sack of Cordoba, Orihuela in Murcia was taken.

### In Cordoba

Be prepared to spend at least two full days in Cordoba, a marvel of middle ages, home to erstwhile renowned scholars like Ibn Rushd, Ibn Al Arabi, Ibn Hazam, Al-Qurtubi, al-Maqqari, al-Ghafiqi and Ibn Tufayl. Cordoba was also a ruling seat of Ummayad Caliphate till 10th century. Cordoba has the biggest and most

labyrinthine old quarters in Spain, so do not be taken by surprise, when you get lost, in fact getting lost is part of the fun in Cordoba. Explore the city's picturesque quarters dating back to 9th Century. Walk through the myriad of narrow streets dating back to Moorish era, and discover watered courtyards and flower filled patios and broad orange and lemon trees lining the streets.

### Cordoba's Grand Mosque and Surroundings

According to Fodor «Córdoba's

mosque is one of the earliest and most transportingly beautiful examples of Spanish Muslim architecture.»

Visit the great mosque built (786-788 A.D.) by Umayyad Emir Abd al Rahman 1. La Mezquita is recognised as one of the most prestigious wonders of the Islamic world. You'll be astonished by the architect of this great mosque

because it indeed is full of subtleties and surprises. The building has been cathedral for over 750 years now, but no one can ever mistake its origins. Architect of this mosque is unpretentious rectangle, divided into aisles by rows of columns of onyx, marble jasper and granite. Simple walls are punctuated by beautifully decorated portals and

Kathedrale Toledo



richly gilded prayer niches. There are several beautiful calligraphical Quranic verses on the walls, entwined with coloured tile work. The surviving jewel of the mosque is its famous mihrab, an octagonal domed shrine of Byzantine mosaics constructed and added under Al Hakam 11. Under Abd Rahman 111 the mihrab once housed Quran and relics of Prophet Muhammad. Opposite Mihrab is the Maksoureh, foyer of the caliph and his court; its mosaics

and plasterwork are a splendid work of Islamic art. The size of mosque was increased with time and under different emirs to accommodate growing number of Muslim population. The construction of mosque lasted over two centuries and the end result was second largest Muslim pilgrimage site after Mecca. Outside, the mosque courtyard is lined with Orange trees and fountain. The former minaret now has a Baroque belfry. Visitors can

climb to the top to catch a panoramic view of the city.

In 1236, Cordoba was recaptured by King Ferdinand 111 of Castile and Mezquita was turned into Cathedral for local Christian population. For centuries the famous Islamic architect of great mosque remained undisturbed and in 1984, it became a part of UNESCO world heritage site.

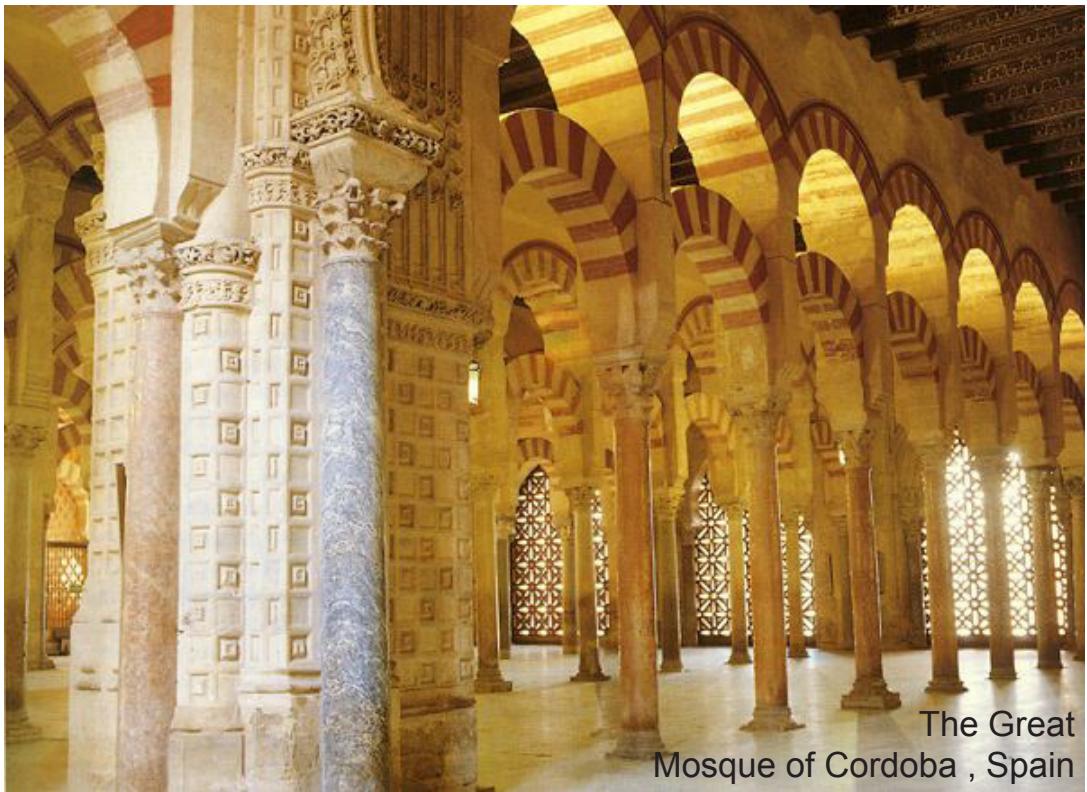
In 1931, national Sufi poet of Pakistan Muhammad Allama Iqbal became the first Muslim to pray in

Mezquita since it was closed to Muslims in 1236. Iqbal wrote a beautiful dedication in the honour and memory of what once was a heart of Islamic civilisation:

Oh Holy Mosque of Qurtaba, the shrine for all admirers of art  
Pearl of the one true faith, sanctifying Andalusia's soil  
Like Holy Mecca itself, such a glorious beauty  
Will be found on earth, only in a true Muslim's heart

Medinat Azahra





The Great  
Mosque of Cordoba , Spain

Why not treat yourself and stay in Hotel Conquistador, set in the heart of Cordoba, overlooking great mosque. The view of mosque from the Hotel balcony is simply beautiful.

### **Lost city of Flowers- Medinat Azahra**

Seek out the essence of this great city and further expand your itinerary by visiting other famous attractions like bullfighting

museum, Andalusi house, Zoco market, Calleja de las Flores, Synagogue, Caliphate baths, Roman walls and Viana Palace.

In afternoon, hire a taxi and visit Moorish city of flowers, Medina Azahra 8km west of the Cordoba.

In 936, under the reign of Caliph Abdr Rehman 111, elaborate construction of this city began with infinite resources. After serving as an enchanted fort for 900 years, the city was razed by Berber troops in 1013. Nothing remains of the

city now, but in 1944 the royal apartments were discovered. With time more was discovered of lost city, fragments were pieced together to restore few arches with floral decorations and a hall with roof was discovered. More work is underway.

In evening, indulge your taste buds with fine dining; enjoy the speciality of local Cordobesa cuisine. At night, take a walk across Roman Bridge and sense the profound melancholy that surrounds Alcazar and Mezquita at night time.

### **Minaret of Mezquita Córdoba**



### **Toledo**

Tariq and his troops marched northward to take Toledo, the “imperial city” and most established centre of Visigoth rule in Hispania. Toledo was capitulated after little resistance, its malcontented Jews offering a peaceful surrender. The diplomatic alliances that were formed between the Jews of Toledo and Muslims were aimed at preservation of peace, individual liberties and religious freedom. According to Irving, this surrender was quite orderly and provided the



Mosque in Cordoba

Arabs with fresh arms and horses. Smaller detachments were then sent to deal with the smaller towns. In Toledo, Tariq was joined by his master Musa Ibn Nasir. It was here in Toledo that Musa Ibn Nasir publicly lashed and incarcerated Tariq Ibn Ziyad for an act of disobedience at Ecija. These two leaders were different in their temperaments and tactics; however, Musa later freed Tariq and putting their differences aside both continued with their campaign

and in less than seven years, whole of Spain fell under Islamic hegemony. According to Philip K. Hitti, 'This constituted the last and the most sensational of the major Arab campaigns and resulted in the addition to the Moslem world of the largest European territory ever held by them.'

Toledo is famed for its legends and folklore tales. Ibn Abd-el-Hakem (History of the Conquest of Spain) and Irving (Falcon of the Spain)

both state that it was here in Toledo that Tariq Ibn Ziyad acquired a marvellous, legendary table of Prophet Solomon which was said to be held in Cathedral in Toledo. The table had been in possession of Visigothic rulers for centuries.

## In Toledo

There's so much to see in Toledo

that a full day is acquired to appreciate and enjoy this splendid city, with its artistic treasure troves, medieval bridges, gateways, churches, mausoleums and Jewish quarters.

Centuries after the expulsion of Muslims from this heartland, only little of Islamic architect has survived. In Toledo, you will see the remarkable synthesis of



Calleja de las  
Flores



## The Great Mosque of Cordoba , Spain

Islamic and European Gothic architect called Mudejar in churches such as Santiago del Arribal, San Roman and Toledo Cathedral. Prime features are the delicate decorative style of the brickwork and conventional Islamic horseshoe arches. Visit the Church of Cristo de la Luz, once a 10th century mosque Bab Al- Mardum stood here. In Toledo cathedral you will come across a 13th century polychrome statue of the Muslim saint Abu Walid the

peacemaker (1086).

Visit the fortress, looming on the hill, originally the Renaissance palace of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V. Relax and gaze down at city from above river Tajo.

Revel at the triangle-shaped Plaza de Zocodover, Toledo's main square, buzzing with activity, shops, silver smiths, and restaurants. Toledo is famed for its silverware and sword and knives making. Don't forget to try the delicious local delicacy Marzipan.