PLAZA DE TOROS GRANADA

BULLFIGHTING

STEP BY STEP
Granada is a destination which will change your life. The old Garnata of Jewish opens to the tourist like an open-air museum plenty of master pieces. The Alhambra and Generalife Gardens, known in the whole world, are just two examples of its huge touristic and cultural attractive. Granada is much more. Open your senses and feel it in all its essence.

In the heart of this literary, poetic, artistic, cultural and millenial city, is located the Plaza de Toros de Granada (the Granada’s Bullring), a neomudejar jewel which has been hidden until now, offer you a complete experience for understanding the soul of Granada.
A bullfight is an event in which a bullfighter on foot or on horseback challenges a numbers of bulls (one each time) in a enclosed area built for this purpose; it’s called bullring or arena

Bullfighting may be divided into three different kinds, depending on the Torero’s experience, the size of the bull and the use of horses:

- **Corrida de Toros.** La Corrida is performed by a TORERO (bullfighter) who is on foot. All the bullfighters are TOREROS but not all the toreros are “Matador de Toros” or “Diestro”. Matador is a category acquired in a ceremony called “Alternativa”. From this moment onwards he can fight with the red cape and the sword. Each Matador has his own team called cuadrilla which includes 6 members: 2 lancers, 3 flagmen and 1 sword servant. Not all the bulls can fight in this kind of corrida, they must weigh at least 460 kg and be 4 years old (the bull fight regulation allows bulls between 4 and 6 years old).

- **Novillada.** It’s like the Corrida but for junior bullfighters who haven’t received the Alternativa yet or tittle of “Matador de Toros”. The bulls allowed in this kind of fight are at least 3 years old and they don’t show the necessary fierceness (bravura) required for the stockbreeder to be chosen for a Corrida.

- **Rejoneo.** It’s another kind of bullfight where the Matador is on horseback and he’s assisted by Toreros on foot. The horses are an integral part of bullfight. The rejoneo is about trust, control and discipline that should exist between the rider and its horse, it’s a great act of courage for both.

*Bullfighting in its different modalities has been carried on for centuries, its precise history is difficult to chart and it has always been a way of celebration. An example of it was a bullfight held in Roma due to The Reconquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. The modern bullfight started in Spain in the second half of 18th century. This Fiesta could not exist without the toro bravo, a specie of bull of an ancient race that is only breed in Spain.*
IF YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH CORRIDAS DE TOROS (BULLFIGHTS), FROM THIS MOMENT YOU WILL KNOW MORE IN DETAIL WHAT THE CORRIDA IS ABOUT.

The bullfight starts with a parade of all participants into the arena to salute the presiding dignitary, accompanied by music from a band. In the past, there was no bullrings so when bullfights took place in public spaces (like the main square of the city), the royal civil servants had to clear the people from the squares before letting out the first bull. In remembrance of this tradition today, two “Alguaciles” or sheriffs on horseback, look up to the president’s box and symbolically ask for the keys to “the puerta de los toriles”, the door behind where the bulls are waiting. Other duties of the alguaciles include conveying and executing orders from President and giving the trophies to the Matador.
1 Los alguaciles (Sheriffs). They are dressed in the old style clothing dating from the time of Charles IV.

2 Los Diestros o espada Bullfighters. They are in the first row of the parade (or paseíllo). The oldest one is located on the left side and the youngest one in the middle. If a matador is fighting bulls for the first time in that bullring, he will carry his montera (hat) on his hands during the paseíllo. They are easily distinguished because of their spectacular “suit of lights”, a custom-made and embroidered with silver or golden thread.

3 Subalternos (secondary bullfighters) and the sword servant. Those who are working for the oldest matador occupy the first row, then come those who are working for the second oldest and finally for those who are working for the youngest one. They are called banderilleros too because the plant two little flags each one (barbed sticks) in the bull’s shoulder. They can dress in a silver suit of light, never in a golden one. The sword servant is in the alley and he brings the matador all the tools he might need during the corrida, but always standing behind the fence. Normally, he is the least known member by the team but an important one. He is also in charge of dressing the matador.

4 Picadores (lancers or riders armed with a lance). Two of them work for each matador. During the paseíllo, they follow the same order than secondary bullfighters.
5 Monosabios (Assistants). They help the lancer while he is fighting.

6 Mulas y mulilleros (Mules and Muleteers). The muleteers use the mules to drag the bull’s body out of the bullring once it’s dead.

7 Areneros (Sandmen). They take care of the sand, keeping it in an excellent condition for the fight.

8 Presidente (The president). He is the authority of the bullring. His duty is to interpret and enforce the rules. He is a relevant local Government figure or a police officer. His job is not an easy one.

The president has several handkerchiefs in different colors. He shows them to give orders and transmit them to the ruedo staff and the Callejon (alley).

- **White.** Used to command the beginning of the corrida, the release of each bull, the changing of a tercio (stage), to warn the bullfighter of an excessive prolongation of his fight or faena and to award the trophies.
- **Green.** To command the return of a bull to the bullpens.
- **Red.** To command the use of banderillas negras (extra large harpoons).
- **Blue.** The President uses it to order the dead bull to be pulled around the ring, so it can receive the applause of the crowd in tribute to the bull’s good behavior and bravura.
- **Orange.** To forgive a bull and command the bullfighter not to kill the animal. Pardoned bulls spend the rest of their lives as stallions.
The current bull species in Spain is a descendant of an extinguished species called “wild uro” which used to live in Central Europe. This original breed was transformed into the modern Toro Bravo, specifically created to fight in the corridas. The main difference between a wild and a tame bull is their way to react when they feel to be menaced. The Spanish Toro Bravo will attack ceaselessly whoever or whatever moves in front of his eyes. The first time a bull fight a man is when he comes to the ring. Being face to face with a bull which has fought another times and knows what a cape is, is very dangerous.

La casta. It is the pedigree of the Toro Bravo. All modern bulls descend from six original cattle firms (castas fundacionales) founded in the XVIII century.

El trapío (appearance) It is defined according to the appearance of the bull and his behavior. A toro Bravo has trapío when its physical aspect is impressive regardless of its size. It have to be svelte and muscular, (like an athlete), with tidy and shiny hair, thin and velvet skin, lively and black eyes, long and thick tail. The shape and the size of the horns is also crucial as well as the energy and liveliness in its moves. For instance, a toro Bravo can have an incredible appearance but if it hasn’t got the sparkle when he moves, it hasn’t got trapío and it can’t fight in the arena, it can have bravura but not the power to show it.
La bravura. (the courage)

It is the essence of a Toro bravo. The animal will show courage by repeatedly attacking after having been punished instead of trying to escape, as a tame bull would do. Toros bravos will always warn their potential victims before running into them. They would place themselves in front of their opponent, stare, raise their ears and head and even dig with their hoofs before attacking.

Herrajes (marks on the bull’s skin)

Divisa: It’s a rosette with the colors of the cattle firm
Brand of the cattle association: Every cattle associations has a breed stud book of the bulls
Brand of the cattle firm that the bull belongs
The Rib number: Number of the bull branded on his ribs. Every bull has one to recognize it
Guarismo: Number showing the year of birth of the bull (this would be 2009, 2019, 2029...)

The marks on the bull’s skin are necessary in order to recognize each toro and differentiate it from the rest. Each bull holds its own name: Islero, Huracán, Demonio, Veneno, Reventón, Adventator, Miura, etc... Each one corresponding to the name of a famous Toro bravo or a cattle brand. I’d like to mention a curiosity regarding this aspect: Lamborghini used to call each type of car like that.

The bullfight ritual takes place before the fight itself: The selection of toros assigned to each matador is solved by drawing lots, and it takes place in “los corrales”, (the plaza’s pens). It starts at noon of the same bullfight’s day. From this moment on, chance will play an important role; both the torero’s and bull’s fate will be decided. It’s a public ceremony and everybody who wants to witness the ritual can assist and experience it from the start.
The seasons of bullfights goes from March to October. The beginning of the corrida will be determined by the intensity of sunlight. Normally it begins at 5 pm in March but it’s postponed until 7 pm in August. It’s very important to know the situation inside of the bullring to see the bullfight because there are two sections: sun and shade. The best seats are located in the shaded section. To have a good experience the best choice is try to avoid the sun area in summer: the heat and the light may ruin the experience.

The duration of a normal corrida ranges from one hour and a half to two hours and a half. The average length of a faena (work with one bull) is around 20 minutes and normally a total of six bulls are fought during the corrida.

The modern corrida is highly ritualized, with three distinct stages or tercios which are announced each one by a trumpet sound.

a) **El tercio de varas (stage of pikes)**

In this first stage is when the bull enters the arena and is tested by the matador and the flagmen using the capote (A capote is a yellow and fuchsia dress cape and weighs between 4 and 6 kilos). During this tercio the cuadrilla discovers the bravura’s conditions: ferocity, temperament and behavior of the bull. Then, two picadores enter the arena armed with long lances or varas. They are mounted on horses which are heavily padded and are blindfolded.

The manner in which the bull charges the horse also provides important clues to the matador regarding which side the bull prefers. If the work of the picador is successful, the combination of blood loss and the effort exerted by the bull to lift the horse up with its neck and horns, will help the bull to hold the head low during the following stages of the bullfight. This is a mandatory step in the corrida which makes the bull’s charges less dangerous and more reliable, enabling the matador to perform its sequence of movements more safely.
b) **El tercio de banderillas (little harpoon stage)**

The goal of this stage of the lidia is to ‘revive’ the bull, who normally tends to slow down after the tercio de varas. The banderilleros or flagmen can’t reduce the strength of the bull in order to prepare it for the next stage.

A strict order is necessary to perform this stage successfully. Normally, one bullfighter will be in charge of conducting the bull and placing him correctly, so that his colleagues can harpoon the animal properly. Sometimes a matador will place his own banderillas. While they perform, the members of other cuadrillas will distribute along the ruedo in order to be able to act in case of danger.

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C) **El tercio de muerte (Stage of death)**

In the final stage, the bullfighter re-enters the arena, facing the bull alone, with the muleta (red cape) and the estoque (sword). The muleta is smaller and lightest than the capote and it’s hanging from a wooden stich to facilitate the movements. The muleta is used to attract the bull in a series of passes, with the purpose of wearing the bull down for the end. During this stage, the music band is playing famous pasodobles.

The matador will carry an imitation sword during the pases, made of wood or aluminum, which is used to extend the fabric and increase the size of the cape when giving right-handed passes. This will later be exchanged for a real sword made of tempered steel. Once the bull is correctly situated and it has the front legs together, it’s time to the “muerte suprema”, the most dangerous and difficult action of the fight. The trumpet’s sounds are the signal to inform the matador that it’s the beginning of the final act, so he has a minute to carry out his performance.
The Trophies.

Once the bull is dead, the audience, by applause and whistles, judges the matador’s performance and, as such, influences the final ruling of the president.

- **First Trophy:** An ear is cut out and given to the matador as recognition of his good performance. The president will award it if the majority of the audience claims for it waving their handkerchiefs.

- **Second Trophy:** Two ears are cut. Just The president will decide if the performance of the matador deserves this honor. For this trophy it’s necessary a good performance with the capote and the muleta, as well as killing the bull in a superb way.

- **Third (and maximal) Trophy:** Two ears and the tail are cut. The lidia must have been perfect.

Pardon of a Bull

It’s the best trophy for the bullfighter. Excellent bulls who have demonstrated sublime attributes, courage and strength during the lidia can be pardoned and avoid being killed becoming them stalions.
The bullfighter’s costume.

The suit of lights: Called like that because it is covered with sequins which reflect the light. It’s made of silk and embroidered with golden thread. The matador can choose others colors for the suit if he prefers. He can’t dress or undress himself, due to the complexity and weight of the suit so he needs the sword servant to assist him.

La montera is the sophisticated hat. During the last stage or tercio, the diestro takes it on his hands, waves at the crowd and throws it to the arena. The montera will remain where it hit the ground until the end of the faena. The matadors consider that if the montera falls upside down, it’s a bad omen and for this reason they prefer to place it slowly in the right position.

La coleta is an artificial ponytail which helps the matador to keep the montera on his head.

La camisa. The shirt in white colour and it’s decorated with ornaments.

El corbatín. The thing tie in black colour.

El chaleco. The vest.

La chaquetilla. The jacket is decorated with ornaments (alamares and machos). It has two holes below the armpits to allow the diestro move his arms easily.

La taleguilla. It’s like short pants and it covers the bullfighter from his navel to below his knees.

Las medias. The socks always are pink and are made of silk.

Las zapatillas. Flat black shoes decorated with a lace.
THE BIG DOOR / MAIN DOOR
Open the big door is the best triumph for a bullfighter. Just on this point is where we will discover and feel the history of this Bullring and its monumental value.

THE ARENA
Is the magic circle where the fight starts. Just in front of the clock and situated in the tendido number 3 is the presiding dignitary. We will know that The president has 5 handkerchief and everyone has a meaning, the president’s indication to change the stage and the different trophies that the torero wins.

The Alley and Tendidos (rows from 1st to 18th)
We will walk into the arena and we’ll discover the place of the National Festival. Around the ring or arena, there are 4 screens for the bullfighters, the fence and the alley. The Bullring is divided in 12 parts with 12 tendidos, 12 stands and 12 grandstands areas.

THE DRAGGED YARD OR PATIO DE ARRASTE
After of the heroic death of the bull, two mules drag it until this yard. While, the crowd decides with applauses the bravery of the bull. There the vet’s office is also located.

THE PENS OR CORRALES
This is the area where the bulls stay when arrive to the bullring. Some hours before the fight, the bulls are classified by lot, so each matador will know which bulls will fight with him.

THE CHIQUEROS
This area is like a hotel for the bulls, it’s divided in rooms. Let’s take a walk around the corridor, rooms and let’s see the structure of the ropes to open and close the doors. Each bull stay alone in each chiquero, waiting for goes into the
THE INFIRMERY
Is one of the most coldest places on the bullring. Hopefully we had to use it a few times but tragedy is part of the Spanish festival.

THE CHAPEL
Is the place where bullfighter lives an emotional moment praying before the fight. Pray before fight is an important part of the torero’s ritual.

STABLE YARD
Is where the horses and the lancers are waiting for go to arena too. In this area the protagonists are nervous and emotions before the fight. The parade or paseillo starts from this yard.

PANORAMIC VIEW
Let’s go up to the stands to enjoy panoramic view. You can’t miss it.

THE ROOF OF TORILES
Is the perfect place to enjoy the beauty of the bullring and know a little bit about the history and funny stories.

THE TEAMS OR CUADRILLAS
Let’s go into the arena like a torero. Just in this door the corrida starts with a parade called paseillo. In this point we will know every team member: Lancers, bullfighters, sword pages...
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