

FARMLIVING

EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Different cultures celebrate the holidays in different ways, which means a wide variety of recipes to try. | **Page 18**



FARM LIVING EDITOR: BRUCE DYCK | Ph: 306-665-3507 F: 306-934-2401 | E-MAIL: BRUCE.DYCK@PRODUCER.COM



The Roman Bridge and the Great Mosque are two of the highlights of a visit to Cordoba, Spain. | ROBIN & ARLENE KARPAN PHOTOS

Spain's easy-to-visit Cordoba offers blooms and history

TALES FROM THE ROAD



ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN

Of the places we visited on a trip to southern Spain this year, Cordoba stands out as a favourite. It offers a combination of world-famous historic sites, ease of getting around and an all-round pleasant place to spend a few days.

While Cordoba has slightly more than 300,000 people, it doesn't feel like a big city. Everything of interest lies in a fairly compact historic city centre. If you stay here, like we did, it's easy to walk everywhere and not worry about transport.

With an agreeable Mediterranean climate, it's best to visit in the off-season, anytime other than summer, when the stifling heat often reaches the high 30s C and more tourists are around.

The main attraction is the massive Great Mosque of Cordoba, one of the oldest and most elaborate structures still standing from the



Cordoba is famous for its flower-bedecked patios.

time when Muslims ruled much of Spain. It was begun in the 8th century and expanded over the next 200 years.

When the Christian monarchs

kicked out the Muslim rulers in the 12th century, the mosque was converted to a cathedral, although much of the Islamic architecture was retained. The result is an

intriguing mix of styles where we look through classic Islamic arches to a magnificent Catholic altar.

Arabic inscriptions stand next to Renaissance paintings telling

Christian stories. The original minaret from the mosque was turned into the cathedral bell tower, which at 54 metres is the highest structure in the city. Now preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the complex is widely considered among the world's most beautiful buildings.

The entrance fee to visit is close to \$20, but for an hour each morning when it opens at 8:30, admission is free. We took advantage of this and went on two days. As a bonus, it is less crowded then because tourist buses don't arrive until later.

Cordoba's Old Quarter is filled with other historic sites, such as the Alcazar fortress built to defend the city, plus numerous ancient churches, palaces and Roman ruins. More than specific sites, we enjoyed simply wandering around soaking up the ambiance. Many streets are pedestrian-only, often lined with sidewalk restaurants. Some streets are so narrow that you wouldn't be able to drive a car down them anyway.

After the Great Mosque, the most popular spot is the Roman Bridge, built by the Romans in the 1st century BC and then reconstructed over the centuries. It leads straight into the Old Quarter of the city.

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The Great Mosque of Cordoba features an intriguing mix of Muslim and Christian influences.



Walking the streets of Cordoba is a colourful experience.



The Great Mosque is one of the oldest and most elaborate structures still standing from the time when Muslims ruled much of Spain.

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A popular evening pastime for both residents and visitors is strolling across the pedestrian-only bridge to the other side of the river to watch the lights illuminate the bridge and the mosque beyond.

Cordoba is also called the Flower City. Blooms decorate almost every window and balcony, and flower pots hang from the white-washed walls.

While flower-embellished walls are common throughout southern Spain, here they go a step further. The city is famous for its flower-bedecked patios, so much so that

UNESCO recognized the Patios of Cordoba for their cultural heritage.

Most older public buildings and houses have inner courtyards, and it was always common to decorate them with flowers.

About 100 years ago they started a competition to see who had the best display and it has grown ever since. Every spring they hold a Fiesta of the Patios, but it's easy to see many of them throughout the year. Guided tours take visitors to top places, though you can wander on your own to find some dazzling displays.

Half the fun is just getting there. Cordoba is two hours away by high-

speed train from Madrid, Spain's capital and the main point of entry for most visitors. We were impressed by the high-speed trains, which are not only fast but efficient and comfortable.

The key to getting the best fare is to book the trains as far ahead as possible. Every car has a speed indicator, and it was amazing feeling the sensation and watching it climb to 300 km-h as we raced across the vineyards, orchards and farms in open countryside.

Arlene and Robin Karpan are well-travelled writers based in Saskatoon. Contact: travel@producer.com.

Indigenous summit focuses on community, partnership

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together recognized as the key to success across resource industries

BY JANELLE RUDOLPH
GLACIER FARM MEDIA

Canadian Western Agribition's 11th Indigenous Agriculture Summit focused on growing opportunities for Indigenous producers and using their ways of knowing to advance the ag industry.

Topics included growth of wealth and how that can contribute to food sovereignty.

Many of the speakers said community involvement and interest is a main way to address the wealth and agriculture gaps.

A prime example of this was shared by Derrick Meetoos, one of the community members and farmers who are part of Thunder Farms Ltd. of Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Meetoos said Thunder Farms is continuously growing and is currently close to 9,000 acres. The band's goal is to get to 14,000 acres.

The farm is also completely Indigenous-run.

"They started purchasing land around the reserve itself, so we have land base around it that we've slowly started taking back from the patrons that used to lease it from the reserve," he said.

Meetoos said the First Nation's success was a combined effort of the community and band council, particularly in getting local youth involved and trained.

It was Indigenous people that we learned that (farming) from, and we shouldn't forget that that's where it began.

CHRISTY CLARK
FORMER B.C. PREMIER

Former British Columbia premier Christy Clark said that for many Indigenous communities, especially those in remote and rural areas, resource sectors such as agriculture, mining, forestry and oil and gas are some of the most valuable ways to create wealth.

She said that while this may sound counterintuitive at first, given Indigenous values and traditions when it comes to resource extraction, it's actually a productive and positive way for Indigenous communities to grow their wealth and do what's best for the land.

"About it being done in a way that is acceptable to Indigenous people," she said.

"I mean, my experience of that was a lot of long, intense, emotional discussion and negotiation with elected leaders and traditional leaders in communities to find a way to do this that was acceptable."

Clark offered the example of Haida Gwaii, which operates a forestry



Former British Columbia premier Christy Clark says industries such as agriculture are important to economic growth for Indigenous communities, but there needs to be partnership to grow. | JANELLE RUDOLPH PHOTO

business, harvesting only enough trees to ensure good profit while not abusing the land.

This was also touched on by Michael Twigg, program director of land use, nature and agriculture at

they're firmly intertwined into a future vision of what the local community is desiring for prosperity," Twigg said.

He said promoting and supporting Indigenous communities can achieve a balance of growth while working within the systems of nature and Indigenous practices. This approach will also help with sustainability and address production losses caused by land degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Twigg said failing to care for the land will result in significant loss of production and increased input costs to make up for the loss. Mitigating land damage now is one-fifteenth the cost of post-disaster remediation, he added, which would save everyone billions of dollars.

There are still lessons to be learned from Indigenous people regarding sustainability and biodiversity and how they can help industries such as agriculture, just as it was when Europeans arrived hundreds of years ago.

"It was Indigenous people that we learned that (farming) from, and we shouldn't forget that that's where it began," said Clark.

"There is a real opportunity for partnership here, but it has to recognize we will be partners — not adversaries, not takers — sharers and partners in the resources that we create."