

MEDIEVAL HISTORY IN SPAIN: AL-ÁNDALUS



1. Complete the sentences about the Visigoths. Write one word in each.

Germanic belongings Western Code Toledo

Catholicism

Guadalete

Alans

- a. The Visigoths were a nomadic tribe.
- b. The Roman Empire fell in 476.
- c. In the Iberian Peninsula, the Visigoths made their capital.
- d. King Recaredo converted to in 589.
- e. The Visigoths conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula by defeating....., Suevi and Vandals.
- f. The Moors defeated the Visigoths in the Battle of in 711.
- g. The Visigothic combined Roman and Germanic law. Code
- h. Some Visigothic women had control over their own and some even organised their own marriages.

2. Choose the correct dates. Then order the events.

- a. Córdoba became an independent emirate in **756 / 824** under Abderramán I.
- b. The Moors formed Al-Ándalus and by **714 / 756** had captured Zaragoza.
- c. Christian Kingdoms such as Navarra and Aragón formed from **824 / 929** onwards.
- d. The Moors invaded the Iberian Peninsula in **689 / 711**.
- e. Al-Ándalus separated from Damascus in **714 / 929**.
- f. Don Pelayo stopped the Moors advancing north in **824 / 722**.

3. Write the names of the places in a typical town of Al-Ándalus to match the descriptions.

- a. You would go here to get a wash and meet your neighbour. Men and women had different times.
- b. This was an important place where grain was stored and sold.
- c. All sort of pots and tools were available for sale as well as fruit, vegetables and meat.
- d. This was a centre of learning and for prayer and reflection.
- e. This building was heavily defended, within the city walls, and placed on a hill. Important people lived inside.

4. Read the accounts for three people living in Al-Ándalus society. Write the name of a religious group for each one (Muslims, Jews or Christians).

a. Although we weren't obliged to, we generally lived in quarters within big cities like Toledo. Here we could follow our traditions: bake our bread in special ovens, pray at a synagogue and observe the Sabbath together. We weren't forced to convert to Islam.

b. We were able to live together with the other religious groups, keep our religion though some of my neighbours became *Muladis* while others simply absorbed the ruling culture and language.

c. I was an official of the state. Our group had most of the administrative roles. We were tolerant of different groups, but of course our women could not marry into any another religion apart from our own.

5. Complete the essay with words from the box. There are two extra words.

algebra	arches	architecture	cinnamon	culture
education	geometric	language	poetry	irrigation
meatballs	mosques			

Can we see the influence of Al-Ándalus today in Spain?

The answer is 'yes', and in many areas. Let's start with art and (a) We can still see (b) and forts today with their characteristic horseshoe (c) , mosaics and domes with (d) patterns.

But we can also see the influence in more day-to-day things. What about the (e) you had for lunch? And other tasty dishes like paella? They originate from Al-Ándalus. In fact, the Muslims introduced rice to Spain and made huge improvements to farming with (f) and the introductions of new crops like lemons!

Then there's (g) Many words in Spanish and place names starting with *a-l* and *az-*, for instance. Can you think of any examples? And what about (h) ? Did you know that festival like the *Moros and Cristianos* come from this time?

And finally, let's not forget about (i) yes, they brought us (j) and the number zero.

Look around you. Al-Ándalus is still with us here today.