

Córdoba – Inclusive Tourism in a Historic City



Background

- Córdoba is a UNESCO World Heritage city that faces a complex challenge of maintaining historic infrastructure while ensuring accessibility.
- The municipality adopted a holistic inclusion plan focused on public space accessibility, cultural participation, and tourism for all. The city blends universal accessibility with preserving its cultural heritage, making tourism inclusive for visitors and locals alike.
- Córdoba secured 2nd prize at the 2023 Access City Awards.

Key Activities

- **Physical access:** Public spaces like parks, squares, museums, and key historic sites were retrofitted to install ramps, tactile paths, and accessible toilets. These features are temporary and reversible to protect heritage elements.
- **Digital navigation:** Tourist websites were updated for screen reader compatibility. The city also uses NaviLens QR codes to guide visually impaired users along public transport and pedestrian routes.
- **Staff training:** Training was provided for tourism professionals offering inclusive services to persons with disabilities. Tourism employees received courses on disability awareness and inclusive customer service. In addition, events and festivals now include seating, signing interpretation, and accessible routes.
- **Institutional collaboration:** Córdoba cooperates with private businesses, NGOs and tech firms to scale accessibility solutions.



Impact

Enhanced accessibility: The city has become a leader in accessible tourism in Southern Europe. Local citizens and international visitors alike benefit from improved mobility and cultural participation, as accessibility is embedded into public spaces and tourist infrastructure.

Recognition: Córdoba was awarded 2nd place in the 2023 Access City Awards. This elevated Córdoba's influence, encouraging knowledge-sharing and further investment.



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Challenges & Solutions

- **Cultural heritage constraints:** Balancing historic preservation with structural change requires adaptive solutions, such as portable ramps or reversible installations. These creative, non-invasive solutions meet both preservation and accessibility needs.
- **Education and awareness:** Community education helped foster understanding and acceptance of visible accessibility features in heritage sites.
- **Ongoing improvements:** The city acknowledged that further work is necessary in private contexts and lesser-used areas.

Tips for Similar Projects

- Integrate accessibility into tourism and economic strategies.
- Use festivals and cultural events as testing grounds for inclusive design.
- Collaborate with local disability groups and heritage experts.
- Use international awards to build credibility and political will.
- Universal design and tech integration (like QR navigation) can be leveraged in historic contexts.
- Cooperation across the public and private sectors is crucial.

Identified Limitations/Weaknesses

- Some private venues and heritage structures still present significant accessibility barriers.
- Navigating cobblestone areas and narrow historic streets remains difficult, and full retrofitting continues to be a challenge.

Resources/Links

- Access City Award – [Córdoba](#)



Image Source

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