

San Sebastian & Rioja

21st - 27th September, 2022



What to expect

The Basque Country is one of the world's top gastronomic centres and the wonderful city of San Sebastian introduces us to the distinct gourmet feel of green Spain.

We experience a Basque tapas (pintxos) tour of the old town of San Sebastian. Along the road, we enjoy the finest wines of the region as well as that most Basque of wines, the light and spritzy Txakoli, best enjoyed with the local anchovies from the Cantabrian Sea.

Rioja is one of the world's foremost wine regions and harvest time is an amazing time to visit. We sample some of the best of old and new styles of wine in several of the best wineries, as well as having the opportunity to blend our own wines. Riojan gastronomy is also highly prized and we sample traditional and Michelin star meals.

Bilbao, the capital of the Basque Country sees us visit the world famous Guggenheim Museum before heading into the countryside to enjoy a morning shepherds experience and cheese tasting. We enjoy a long lunch with beef from the asado (bbq) after a visit to the nearby town of Gernika.

This trip is truly a food and wine lover's delight!

Highlights

- Lunch at one of the world's top 5 wine cellars
- Gourmet pintxos tour in San Sebastian

- Taste Txakoli overlooking the Cantabrian Sea
- Michelin star dinner in Rioja
- Visit and tastings at some of Rioja's best wineries: Muga, Roda and Marques de Riscal
- Wine blending in Rioja
- Visit to the Guggenheim Museum and lunch at its Michelin star restaurant
- Shepherd experience and cheese tasting in the Basque mountains
- Visit to Gernika, inspiration for Picasso's famous painting



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Trip Itinerary

Day 1 (Wednesday 21st September). We meet in Bilbao Airport after the Aer Lingus flight from Dublin arriving at 13:15. Check in to the 4 star Hotel Zenit close to La Concha bay in San Sebastian. Time to freshen up before evening gourmet pintxos (tapas) tour of the old town, visiting 5 or 6 bars and restaurants to savour modern and traditional style tapas. **D**

Day 2 (Thursday 22nd September). Head for a morning visit to top txakoli producer, Txomin Etxaniz. Txakoli is the most Basque of wines, a light spritzy white produced from local grapes grown on hillsides overlooking the Cantabrian Sea in a stunning location and we try some local tuna and anchovies at the tasting. Back to San Sebastian for a fine wine lunch, featuring the best of Basque cuisine at Rekondo, which has Spain's most extensive and best known wine cellar, named by Wine Enthusiast as one of the world's top 5 restaurant wine cellars. Evening free to explore the city and shop. **B/L**

Day 3 (Friday 23rd September). Leave San Sebastian, for a drive south to Haro, the capital of the Rioja wine region. We start with a visit to Roda, a recent Riojan icon that showcases the modern style of wine. We follow Roda with a visit to the old school at Muga, one of the very few wineries to retain its own cooperage, which we see, and the perfect place for a traditional roast lamb lunch at the winery, accompanied by the top Muga wines. Head to the Hotel Viura in the village of Villabuena de Alava. This small boutique hotel has a remarkable design and a warm welcome in the heart of Rioja Alavesa. Light dinner at the hotel this evening. **B/L/D**

Day 4 (Saturday 24th September). Wine blending masterclass at the beautiful Amaren winery that is dedicated to the wife of Luis Cañas, a top family producer in Rioja. Five of Spain's seven 3 Michelin star restaurants carry Luis Cañas wines, now a

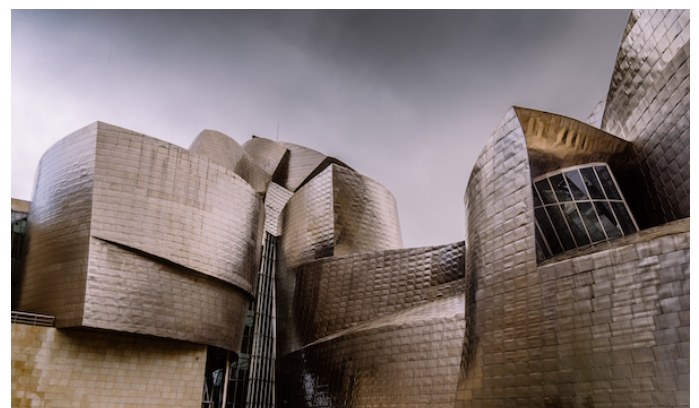


Riojan benchmark. We get the chance to blend our own wines and meet the winemaker (harvest permitting) before a light tapas lunch at the hotel. In the afternoon we drive to the next village to visit Marques de Riscal for a tasting in the Gehry designed city of wine before we move on to a last night dinner at Ventamoncalvillo a Michelin star restaurant. **B/L/D**

Day 5 (Sunday 25th September). After breakfast transfer to Bilbao for morning guided visit to the Gehry designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao followed by lunch at Nerua, the Michelin star lunch adjoining the museum. Check in to centrally located Hotel Miro. Early evening guided walk around the city. Free evening. **B/L**

Day 6 (Monday 26th September) Morning shepherd experience including milking sheep, making cheese, watching sheep dogs work as well as cheese tasting in the foothills of the Basque holy mountains in Atxondo. Visit to Gernika, inspiration for Picasso's famous painting, to see the Tree of Gernika and the Parliament. Asado lunch with Basque beef over the open fire at the Baserri Maitea restaurant. Back to Bilbao and light tapas in the city to end the tour. **B/L/D**

Day 7 (Tuesday 27th September) After breakfast end of tour.



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£2995 per person double occupancy

£595 single supplement

£500 deposit per person

Included

- 2 nights Zenit Hotel, San Sebastian
- 2 nights Viura Hotel, Rioja
- 2 nights Hotel Miro, Bilbao
- Private transport
- Tour manager
- Breakfast daily; 5 lunches/ 4 dinners
- Visits and activities as specified

Not included

Airfare; meals not mentioned above; travel insurance; gratuities for guides



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