



ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION



# Basque Country

Spain & France

## Inspiring Moments

- ▶ Discover what it means to be Basque in **its Spanish and French regions.**
- ▶ Marvel at the shimmering, titanium-clad **Guggenheim Museum Bilbao**, Frank Gehry's wondrous masterpiece.
- ▶ Bask in beautiful La Concha Bay and a world-renowned dining scene in **San Sebastián.**
- ▶ Get firsthand perspectives on Basque life at a **dinner with local residents.**
- ▶ Delight in picturesque **Espelette**, where flame-red strands of peppers adorn whitewashed homes.
- ▶ Fill your glass right from the cask in a rustic *cidrerie*, a **Basque cider house.**
- ▶ Learn about the **Routes of Santiago de Compostela** as you visit sites on these famed pilgrimage paths.



Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

Come along on an immersive exploration of Basque Country, a fascinating and beautiful region that stretches across northern Spain and southwest France along the Bay of Biscay. One of Europe's oldest people, the Basques maintained their individuality and language over thousands of years due to the mountainous terrain which surrounded and isolated them. You'll encounter an ancient, proud culture with a dual identity in a region brimming with heartfelt traditions, vibrant communities and captivating beauty. Embrace today's exuberant, thriving Basque homeland on this exceptional journey!

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### Day 1 | In Transit

Depart for Bilbao, Spain. 🌐

### Day 2 | Bilbao, Spain | San Sebastián

Upon arrival, transfer 🚗 to San Sebastián and check in to the Catalonia Donosti Hotel.

Meet and mingle with your fellow travelers at this evening's Welcome Reception and Dinner.

### Day 3 | San Sebastián

**San Sebastián.** Known as Donostia in Basque, this dynamic resort city has a culinary reputation second to none. In fact, many people believe it's the best city in Spain, if not one of the top cities in the world, to enjoy a meal. Take a walking tour down the narrow lanes of the buzzing old town to see its highlights, including the impressive, 18th-century baroque *Basilica de Santa María del Coro*. Stroll afterward on the waterfront promenade for spectacular views of La Concha Bay and the stunning Concha and Ondarreta beaches.

**Free Time:** Explore on your own this afternoon.

#### Enrichment: A History of Northern Spain.

The Basque people have preserved their distinctive culture and language, Euskara, one of Europe's oldest, for millennia. Learn about this Spanish region called Euskadi, or Basque Country, from a local expert.

🌐 **AHI Connects: Meet the People.** Food is essential to Basque culture, and meals are cherished as a time to catch up with family and friends. Join a diverse group of residents for a delicious dinner and conversation about life in the Basque region.

### Day 4 | Bayonne, France | Biarritz

**Bayonne.** This lovely gem at the confluence of the Adour and Nive Rivers is France's Basque capital. Visit the elegant Sainte-Marie Cathedral, a stop on the Way of St. James, and its 13th-century cloisters on an old town walk. Relax over lunch at a cozy cider house, and pour yourself a glass of cider right from the cask!

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Below: Pamplona  
Right: Bayonne



**Biarritz.** This chic seaside town has been a popular resort since the 1850s. Start at St. Eugénie Church on the waterfront and walk to the outcrop, Rocher de la Vierge, to admire the majestic scenery. Visit the old fishing port and the medieval watch tower.

#### Day 5 | Bilbao, Spain

**Bilbao and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.** See the city's highlights on a scenic tour, and then head to the Guggenheim Bilbao, one of the most important buildings of the 20th century. This visually arresting museum by architect Frank Gehry displays modern and contemporary art inside and outdoors. View its collection on a guided tour before enjoying lunch.

**Free Time:** Return to San Sebastián and make your own dinner plans. Choose a traditional restaurant or try the more casual pintxos (tapas) bars. Have a drink and a few pintxos at one place, then move on to the next!

#### Day 6 | Sare, France | Espelette | Saint-Jean-de-Luz

**French Basque Traditions and Espelette.** Step back in time at Maison Ortillopitz, a restored, 16th-century farmhouse in Sare, and gain insights about French Basque family customs. Continue to Espelette, famed for its red peppers, an integral ingredient in Basque cooking and an officially protected regional product. Take in this colorful town on a walk and savor lunch.

**Enrichment: Basque Strength Games.** Learn about these rural games based on old farming tasks, such as chopping wood, lifting heavy stones and sawing.

**Saint-Jean-de-Luz.** In the 17th and 18th centuries, fishermen in this pretty beachfront town traded their nets for swords and cannons to become feared pirates. Hear about its intriguing past on a guided walk.

**Enrichment: The Romance of Hemingway and Spain.** Appreciate Ernest Hemingway's passion for Spanish culture, which greatly influenced his writing.

#### Day 7 | Pamplona, Spain

**Pamplona.** Hemingway brought worldwide attention to Pamplona's signature event, the chaotic Running of the Bulls, in his novel, "The Sun Also Rises." Meander down the atmospheric streets where crowds throng each July during the weeklong festival of San Fermín.

See the bullfighting ring, Castle Square and the Santa Maria Cathedral before free time for lunch on your own.

**Enrichment: The Way of St. James.** Europe's oldest pilgrimage route, with several stops in Basque Country, is both a spiritual and cultural journey that leads to the shrine of St. James in Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. A local expert delves into the enduring appeal of this historic pilgrimage.

#### Day 8 | San Sebastián

**Free Time:** Plan a fun agenda in San Sebastián today or choose to join the Elective Activity.

**Elective | The Heart of Gipuzkoa.** Take a drive through rolling countryside into the Basque region's Gipuzkoa province. Explore Tolosa's old town and famous Saturday market, then travel to Azpeitia, the birthplace of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, and visit the Sanctuary of Loyola.

This evening, celebrate your adventure in Basque Country at a Farewell Reception and Dinner.

#### Day 9 | In Transit

Transfer to the airport in Bilbao for the return flight to your gateway city.

### Included Features

#### Accommodations {with baggage handling}

- 7 nights in San Sebastián, Spain, at the first-class Catalonia Donosti Hotel.

#### Extensive Meal Program

- 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners, including Welcome and Farewell Dinners; tea or coffee with all meals, plus wine with dinner.

#### Your One-of-a-Kind Journey

- **Small group:** Sized just right at 28 guests.
- **AHI Travel Assurance** covers Accident and Sickness Medical Expense, Trip Delay and Emergency Evacuation for U.S. residents.
- **Enrichment by expert speakers** enhances your insight into the region.
- **Engaging excursions** showcase the local culture, heritage and history.
- **Electives** and free time to pursue your individual interests.
- **AHI Sustainability Promise:** We strive to make a positive impact wherever we travel.
- **AHI Connects:** Local immersion.
- Welcome and Farewell Receptions to mingle with fellow travelers.
- A personal VOX headset to hear your English-speaking guide clearly.
- Tipping of guides and drivers.
- Complimentary travel mementos.



### 2024 Departures & Pricing

#### September 28 – October 6, 2024

Full Price from	\$3,845
Special Savings	\$250
<b>Special Price from</b>	<b>\$3,595*</b>

\*Special price available for a limited time. Call for details.  
VAT & port tax supplement are an additional \$295 per person.  
All prices quoted are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy and do not include air transportation costs (unless otherwise stated).  
Single accommodations are an additional \$895 (limited availability).  
Program-specific terms and conditions are available at <https://washst.ahitravel.com/destinations/1811A?schoold=188>. You can also request a copy from our travel experts.

**Note:** Itinerary sequence and/or scheduled events may change. Walking is required on many excursions.

Flights and transfers provided for AHI FlexAir participants.

Electives available at an additional cost.