



French & Spanish Basque 2017

■ Sept. 17-29 • Group capped at 8

- Comfortable hotels and charming inns – all with private bath
- The elegant, seaside resort of San Sebastian, Spain • Local wines
- Lunch in a *sidreria*, specializing in Basque cuisine and ciders
- Van transportation • Outstanding cuisine, including ultra-fresh fish
- Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao • Beaches, coastal scenery, mountains
- Gernika, Spain, immortalized in the Picasso painting • Outdoor markets
- Pamplona, scene of 'running of the bulls' • Chic Biarritz, on the Atlantic
- Pyrenees Mountain villages – Espelette, Ainhoa, Ascaïn, Sare
- Pretty, seaside St. Jean-de-Luz • mountain village of St. Jean Pied-de-Port
- Cathedrals, cafés, art, museums, natural wonders • Basque tapas

Tour cost – \$3,995* per person sharing for land arrangements (airfare not included) • Singles add \$550

Day 1 – Sunday, September 17

We meet at the airport of **Biarritz**, France, and drive to the nearby border town of **Hendaye**, crossing the **Bidasoa River** on a tiny ferry to **Hondarribia**, Spain. Here there is an old town to explore, complete with a 10th century fort converted into a luxurious paradór. Later, we arrive in lovely **San Sebastian**, Spain, on the **Bay of La Concha**, where our delightful beachfront hotel, the **Niza**, awaits us. When we've checked in, we walk into the old city for a late **LUNCH** at a cider restaurant (*sidreria*). Later we explore old and new San Sebastian and enjoy a Welcome Aperitif. **OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN**

Day 2 – Monday, September 18

We spend the day in **San Sebastian**, choosing from among a variety of temptations. At some point, we may want to see the **Aquarium**, **Naval Museum** or **Museum of San Telmo** (Basque artists). Just strolling the seaside promenade along the **Bay of La Concha** is a delight. **LUNCH. OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN**

Day 3 – Tuesday, September 19

This morning we drive to the top of **Monte Igueldo** for an eye-popping view of San Sebastian and its bay. Then it's on to the nearby fishing village of **Getaria**. Here we visit the old church, with its floor sloped like the deck of a ship, and enjoy freshly grilled fish for **LUNCH**. Getaria has other surprises too – a museum devoted to native son **Cristobal Balenciaga**, the famed fashion designer. Returning to San Sebastian in mid-afternoon, we enjoy free time – our last chance to savor the

lovely town before our departure tomorrow morning. **OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN**

Day 4 – Wednesday, September 20

An hour from San Sebastian is the market town of **Gernika**, immortalized by **Picasso** in his painting "*Guernica*," depicting an air attack by the German Luftwaffe in 1937 – a run-up to World War II. A museum educates us about the painting, the Basque way of life and the attack. Later we come to **Bilbao**, the largest city in the Spanish Basque region, with a beautifully preserved old center along the **Nervi6n River**. For dinner tonight, come along on an optional tapas crawl – the Basques call these bite-size morsels *pinxtos* ("peen-choss"). **OVERNIGHT – BILBAO**

Day 5 – Thursday, September 21

Bilbao's most distinctive feature is the starkly beautiful **Guggenheim Museum**, designed by American **Frank Gehry**. Our close-in hotel allows us to arrive shortly after the museum opens, giving us plenty of time to see both the rotating collection and the stunning building itself. Later, we visit Bilbao's well-regarded **Fine Arts Museum**, featuring art from the medieval period through Spain's top painters (**El Greco**, **Goya**, **Zurbarán**, **Murillo**) to Impressionist and modern masterpieces (**Mary Cassat**, **Gauguin**, **Delaunay**). **LUNCH** today. **OVERNIGHT – BILBAO**

Day 6 – Friday, September 22

Leaving Bilbao, we turn away from the ocean and enter the hills. Soon we are in the capital of Spain's autonomous Basque region – **Vitoria-**

Gasteiz, a pretty town with a vibrant center and a lively district of *pinxto* bars. After sightseeing we make the short drive to the town of **Oñati**, considered the “**Toledo** of the Basques” because of its sumptuous Baroque architecture and many other historic buildings. Here we check into our atmospheric hotel and have **DINNER. OVERNIGHT – TORRE ZUMELTZEGI, Oñati, Spain**

Day 7 – Saturday, September 23

From **Oñati** we first drive to **Pamplona**, known for its running of the bulls festival in summer. We won’t be there on *fiesta* day, but we’ll enjoy sightseeing in this historic town and visiting its lovely old cathedral. Later we climb into the **Pyrénées** via the pilgrimage center of **Roncesvalles**, long considered one of the main waypoints along the **Camino de Santiago**, the pilgrimage route to **Santiago de Compostela**. Then we return to France and come to **St. Jean-Pied-de-Port**, a very pretty mountain village also on the pilgrimage track. Here we check into our *centre ville* hotel. **OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN PIED-DE-PORT**

Day 8 – Sunday, September 24

We spend the first part of the day in **St. Jean-Pied-de-Port**, a very pretty mountain place with a medieval atmosphere. The town boasts a historic center, enclosed by medieval walls, as well as a fortress and, in an old bishop’s prison, an exhibition on the **Camino**. In the afternoon, come along as we visit another adorable Basque village, **St. Etienne de Baïgorry**. Back in St. Jean, we have **DINNER** in our hotel’s exceptional, Michelin-starred restaurant. **OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN PIED-DE-PORT**

Day 9 – Monday, September 25

Today we make a day trip from our base to the enchanting village of **Salies-de-Bearn**, then on to a *bastide* – **Bastide de Clairance**. This is a “new” town from the 13th century, built to control the surrounding countryside during the time when the kingdoms of **England** and **France** fought for supremacy in this part of the world. At day’s end we return to **St. Jean Pied-de-Port**. **LUNCH** today. **OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN PIED-DE-PORT**

Day 10 – Tuesday, September 26

Leaving **St. Jean Pied-de-Port**, we visit some of the most beautiful villages in France – those of the Basque **Pyrénées**. We stop in **Ainhoa**, **Espelette** and **Ascaïn** to view their venerable whitewashed houses, many sporting garlands of red peppers. Later, we visit the home of **Edmond**

Rostand, author of “**Cyrano de Bégerac**,” in **Cambo les Bains**, then push on to **St. Jean-de-Luz**, magnificently sited on a wide bay of the **Atlantic. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Day 11 – Wednesday, September 27

There are many things to do in pretty **St. Jean-de-Luz**, including taking the little tourist train for an overview of town; touring the town church, where the marriage of **King Louis XIV** and the Spanish princess **Maria Theresa** took place in 1660; embarking on a boat ride in the Bay of Biscay, with magnificent views of the coastline and the town; and strolling through the old streets to the busy harbor. Tonight we enjoy an exceptional **DINNER. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Day 12 – Thursday, September 28

On a day trip out of **St. Jean-de-Luz**, we drive to chic **Biarritz**, a world-class seaside resort, to admire its wide beaches and crashing surf – it’s France’s surfing capital. Toward noon we move to pretty **Bayonne** for lunch and a walking visit in the old town, the traditional capital of Basque France. In the afternoon we return to **St. Jean-de-Luz** via the charming **Chocolate Museum. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Getaway Day – Friday, September 29

After breakfast today we fly home from the **Biarritz** airport.

Notes

PRICE – \$3,995* per person sharing a room. Single supplement of \$550.

MEALS – All tours include breakfast daily and eight other meals (lunches and dinners), as indicated in **BOLD CAPS** in the itinerary.

OUR LODGINGS

Hotel Niza, San Sebastian, Spain
Hotel López de Haro, Bilbao, Spain
Hotel Torre Zumeltzegi, Oñati, Spain
Hôtel Pyrénées, St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, France
Hôtel Marisa, St. Jean-de-Luz, France

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS – Subject to availability.

* **TOUR PRICE** – Price is based on a U.S. dollar/euro exchange rate that existed pre-tour and could change in the event of significant exchange rate fluctuations. Call us for details - (800) 676-1247. Price quoted is for land arrangements only and does not include airfare.