



French & Spanish Basque 2018

■ Sept. 2-14 • Group capped at 16

- Comfortable hotels and charming inns – all with private bath
- The elegant, seaside resort of San Sebastián, 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 • Château of Abbadia
- 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 2

We meet at our hotel near the airport of **Biarritz**, France, and soon arrive at our first destination – the informative **Musée Basque**, in the heart of old **Bayonne**. This museum brings the vibrant Basque culture vividly to life and is the ideal first stop on our tour. Near 1 p.m. we arrive at a cider restaurant (*sidreria*) in the hills above lovely **San Sebastián**, for a delicious **LUNCH** washed down with local cider. Now it's on to **San Sebastián**. When we've checked into our hotel, we set out to explore this delightful and pretty resort on foot. **OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN**

Day 2 – Monday, September 3

We spend the day in **San Sebastián**, choosing from among a variety of temptations. Just strolling the seaside promenade along the **Bay of La Concha** is a delight. We also visit San Sebastián's lively covered market, take the little tourist train on a jaunt through the city and admire the **Plaza de la Constitución**, where many years ago bullfights were held. In the afternoon, join us on a boat ride around the bay and past pretty **Isla de Santa Clara**. **LUNCH**. **OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN**

Day 3 – Tuesday, September 4

This morning we drive to the nearby fishing village of **Getaria**. Here we visit a museum devoted to native son **Cristobal Balenciaga**, the famed fashion designer, and peek in the old church, with its floor sloped like the deck of a ship. We also enjoy a Getaria speciality – freshly grilled fish for **LUNCH**. We return to San Sebastián via

the top of **Monte Igueldo**, where there is an eye-popping view of the city and its bay.

OVERNIGHT – SAN SEBASTIAN

Day 4 – Wednesday, September 5

An hour from San Sebastián 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. Also on the schedule – a visit to the **Gernika Assembly House**, since the middle ages the traditional law-making venue of **Bizkaia Provence**. Later we come to **Bilbao**, the largest city in the Spanish Basque region, spread along the **Nerviön River**. For dinner tonight, seek out the best local tapas – the Basques call these bite-size morsels *pinxtos* ("peen-choss"). **OVERNIGHT – BILBAO**

Day 5 – Thursday, September 6

Bilbao's most distinctive feature is the starkly beautiful **Guggenheim Museum**, designed by American **Frank Gehry**. Our close-in hotel is only minutes away from the museum, giving us plenty of time to see both the rotating collection and the stunning building itself. We also 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 7

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 lively *pinxto* bars. After sightseeing we make the short drive to the town of **Oñati**, considered the “**Toledo of the Basques**” because of the sumptuous Baroque architecture of the first university in the Basque region. Here we check into our atmospheric hotel, which occupies a tower built in the late 1200s, and have **DINNER. OVERNIGHT – TORRE ZUMELTZEGI, ONATI**

Day 7 – Saturday, September 8

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, possibly visiting its lovely cathedral. Later we return to France and, near day's end, arrive at the vibrant Basque village of **Espelette** and its comfortable, centrally located **Hôtel Euzkadi**. You'll delight in the whitewashed village houses, many festooned with locally grown red Espelette peppers. **OVERNIGHT – ESPELETTE**

Day 8 – Sunday, September 9

On a day trip from **Espelette**, we return to Spain briefly to visit the enchanting old town of **Hondarribia**, then board a small ferry and cross the border back into France. In the afternoon, we tour the **Château of Abbadia**, built in the late 1800s to plans by renowned French architect **Viollet le Duc**. At day's end we return to **Espelette**, where we have **DINNER** in the highly regarded restaurant of our hotel. **OVERNIGHT – ESPELETTE**

Day 9 – Monday, September 10

We spend the first part of the day in **St. Jean-Pied-de-Port**, a very pretty mountain village with an old-world atmosphere and a historic center, enclosed by medieval walls. Here, help us shop for a gourmet picnic, which we enjoy at a riverside picnic ground in the village of **St. Etienne de Baïgorry**. In the afternoon, discover one of the area's most important agricultural products – the red wine of **Irruleguy**. **OVERNIGHT – ESPELETTE**

Day 10 – Tuesday, September 11

Leaving **Espelette**, we first visit the home of **Edmond Rostand**, author of “*Cyrano de Bergerac*,” in **Cambo les Bains**. Then we experience two of the most beautiful villages in France – those of the Basque Pyrénées. We stop in **Ainhoa** (a fine **LUNCH** here) and **Sare** to view these venerable whitewashed villages. Later, we arrive in

exceedingly charming **St. Jean-de-Luz**, magnificently sited on a wide bay of the **Atlantic. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Day 11 – Wednesday, September 12

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; and strolling through the old streets to the busy harbor. Also on the agenda – a harbor and bay cruise around old St. Jean. Tonight we enjoy an exceptional **DINNER. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Day 12 – Thursday, September 13

On a day trip out of **St. Jean-de-Luz**, we return to pretty **Bayonne**, where we began our tour 11 days earlier. We enjoy a thorough walking visit to the atmospheric, pedestrianized old town, the traditional capital of Basque France. Then it's on to chic **Biarritz**, a world-class seaside resort, to admire its wide beaches and crashing surf – it's France's surfing capital. Finally, we return to **St. Jean-de-Luz. OVERNIGHT – ST. JEAN-DE-LUZ**

Getaway Day – Friday, September 14

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 Euzkadi, Espelette, 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 and does not include airfare.