



Basque Country CULINARY IMMERSION

*A Culinary & Cultural Adventure
in Northern Spain*

Hosted by **The Chopping Block + Onward Travel**
September 2–10, 2022

The
**Chopping
Block**

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014

A SPREAD OF PINTXOS AT A TAVERN IN SAN SEBASTIAN



Chopping Block collaborator, Chef Guillermo Delavault, and Onward Travel invite you to join a small group culinary tour to The Basque Country! This weeklong program is an opportunity for culinary and cultural immersion in one of the most fascinating food enthusiast destinations on the planet.

The Basque Country is a fiercely independent region with hundreds of miles of coastline along the Bay of Biscay. The Euskaldunak people are characterized by their own language and culture, and a society built around the appreciation of food and wine.

To spend a week exploring Basque Country from end to end – Spain to France, effervescent Txacoli to Rioja’s reds, tapas to tasting menus, farmhouse tables to farmers markets, queso Idiazábal to chocolat, sea views to cobbled streets – is to immerse yourself in one of the world’s most enchanting culinary destinations.

Our home base for the week will be San Sebastián, a small city formed around a horseshoe-shaped beach where life revolves around food and dining. It’s an invigorating locale with gorgeous outdoors, world-class urban beaches, art, music and restaurants galore, plus nearby wine, cider, and artisan food producers. At night, San Sebastián is alive with Donostiaras (residents of San Sebastián) strolling from bar to bar enjoying pintxos (Basque-style tapas), and six days a week the local food market is bustling. There is much to discover.

Chef Guillermo has been visiting San Sebastián for twenty years and considers it a second home. He is delighted to share this special place with our group and will be partnering with a Basque colleague, Chef Lander, to teach a hands-on cooking class. The Basque Country is a feast for the senses and we invite you to indulge!



Imagine yourself...

Collecting Michelin stars and enjoying best-in-the-world dining experiences

Gazing at the Bay of Biscay from the balcony of your ocean-front room

Eating pintxos (Basque-style tapas) in the old town...home to the largest concentration of bars in all of Europe

Welcome to Spain!

DAY 1: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 2

- Lunch on hard cider and steak at a traditional cider house
- Taste hyper-local and seasonal seafood

Welcome! We'll meet at the Bilbao Airport late morning and hop on a private minibus en route for San Sebastián. But first, we'll stave off jet lag with hard cider and an authentic dining experience. Just outside San Sebastián, we'll stop at a traditional cider house to enjoy our first feast. Sagardotegias (cider houses) are nestled in the hills around San Sebastián. Enjoy unlimited cider this afternoon, poured (spurred, really) directly from the barrels: the perfect complement to a traditional lunch featuring chorizo cooked in cider, salt-cod omelet, and char-grilled T-bone steaks..

Once satiated, we'll check in at the comfortable beachside boutique property, Hotel Niza, our home base for the week. The family-owned hotel features comfortable rooms, a lovely blue and yellow color scheme, a terrific restaurant, and a central location facing the crescent shaped La Concha beach, one of Spain's most beautiful beaches. We've reserved beachfront rooms with balconies to take full advantage of the lovely setting.

Our welcome dinner tonight is at Kofradia, a culinary project dedicated to promoting and revaluing the local inshore fishing industry. The restaurant cooperative is located at the port of Donostia-San Sebastián in a landmark building. The project was created by Gipuzkoa Fishermen's Guilds in 1986. In addition to expertly preparing local and seasonal seafood, they focus on educating the public. We'll have an opportunity to tour an inshore fishing boat and learn about the fishing sector... then enjoy a tasting menu featuring what's fresh at this moment.

Meals Lunch, Dinner

Exploring San Sebastian

DAY 2: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3

- Learn local history at the region's oldest museum
- Snap a panorama of the picturesque seashell-shaped La Concha Bay

Enjoy a leisurely buffet breakfast at the hotel and perhaps a morning beach walk. Mid morning we'll meet a local guide to discover the city of San Sebastian, known as Donostia locally. We'll get the lay of the land and visit the San Telmo Museum. This museum, open since 1902, houses collections of ethnography, archeology and fine arts and is focused on the history of the Basque Country.

Midday you're on your own for lunch and a wander...then we'll reconvene to get a different look at San Sebastian. We will walk to the end of the bay to take the wooden funicular to the summit of Monte Igelda. Take in the immense scale of the Cantabrian coast and enjoy panoramic views of La Concha Bay and the city below. Awe inspiring!

To cap off our first full day together in Spain, we'll seek out the fabulous pintxos (Basque-style tapas)! Every night Donostiarras head out in groups of friends, called cuadrillas, to hit (traditionally) as many tapas bars as there are group members! The pintxos bars are mostly self-serve, stand up, social experiences. It seems each bar is trying to outdo the next and the tapas is considered the best in Europe. It's haute cuisine in miniature, and we'll enjoy it bite by bite, led by Chef Guillermo who will take us to some of his favorite places.

Meals Breakfast, Tapas-Style Dinner

MEET THE CHEFS



Guillermo Delavault

Guillermo studied Culinary Arts in Barcelona, and developed his professional career in some of the most relevant hotels and restaurants of that city. He first visited San Sebastian in 2002 and immediately fell in love with the city. Almost every year, for ten years, he went back to Donostia to see friends, eat the best food of the Iberic Peninsula, and drink txakolí, of course.

In 2012 Guillermo accepted the position of Executive Sous Chef at Hotel Maria Cristina, a prestigious hotel in San Sebastian, and the dream of working and living in the Basque Country came true. Guillermo moved to Chicago in 2016, and started his adventure as a Chef Instructor at The Chopping Block. Currently he lives in Portland, Maine, where he still collaborates with The Chopping Block, and works at Fore Street restaurant, the most emblematic establishment of the city.

Lander Ganzo

Born and raised in San Sebastian, Lander studied Culinary Arts at San Sebastian Cooking School. After working at some of the most prestigious restaurants and hotels of his city, three years ago he opened his own culinary school: Ama Ur Cooking Studio.



A Sunday Lunch to Remember

DAY 3: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 4

- Snap photos of picturesque Getaria
- Taste mind blowingly delicious, gorgeously plated seafood

After a relaxing morning, we'll meet our private bus to head 25 km west to Getaria, a quaint fishing village. We'll enjoy amazing views of the sea, old town, rolling green hills, and mountains. Then it is time for lunch at Elkano. The one-star restaurant is known for creative, elegantly plated cuisine featuring seafood and fish. The restaurant started as a humble grill but is now the most prestigious fish grill in the Basque region. In 2021, Elkano was named to the "World's Top 50" restaurant list and this is a true dining experience.

After this bucket list tasting menu lunch, the rest of the day is yours. Enjoy relaxing on the beach, perhaps a stroll on the promenade, or some shopping. Tonight, dinner is on your own. Remember that the Spaniards dine late; most don't even think about going out until 9pm. Reservations are a great idea and Onward Travel will provide a list of suggested restaurants to inspire you.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Merveilleux French Basque

DAY 4: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 5

- Sample regional specialties including Piment d'Espelette
- Walk out over the sea on the Rocher de la Vierge for dramatic views

Let's go to France! Today we will drive to the Pays Basque. We'll explore the French coastline along the way, stopping in small villages for chocolate, macarons, and irresistible photo ops. We'll visit charming French towns with colorful facades and quirky Basque architecture like St-Jean-de-Luz, a small Atlantic fishing village. You'll have time to visit St-Jean-de-Luz's charming market.

Midday, we'll visit Espelette, famous for the pepper of the same name. The Espelette pepper, also known as Piment d'Espelette, is a chili pepper regarded as DOP product meaning its growing is protected and limited to the French commune of Espelette, Pyrénées-Atlantiques. We'll visit Atelier du Piment to visit the farm and learn about the process of growing and processing the peppers. Then, taste a selection of local products and enjoy a light lunch of local delicacies including Basque Talo (similar to tortilla), local meats, and a cream cake typical of Pays Basque.

OnwardTravel.co Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Hudson Valley, New York

Our last destination is Biarritz, a snazzy seaside resort town that is Europe's surf capital and the former vacation destination of European royalty. We'll take a walk on the Rocher de la Vierge, a dramatic rock outcropping perched over the Bay of Biscay. Then we're heading back to San Sebastian where we'll continue the theme by dining in Hotel Niza's restaurant Biarritz. This restaurant is a destination in itself with a talented young chef at the helm.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cheese, Wine & Fine Dining

DAY 5: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 6

- Visit a cheesemaker and winemaker - top tier food artisans
- Experience a 10-course market driven menu

Nearby San Sebastian is the heart of the Getariako Txakolina D.O. Txakolina is made from the indigenous grapes Hondarribi Zuri (white) and Hondarribi Beltza (red). The wine has a natural spritz and is typically poured from high above, so it foams in the glasses and aerates. We'll visit a family-owned winery and toast our adventures to come while gazing out over the vineyards and enjoying a light lunch.

Today we'll visit a local cheesemaker to taste six different Idiazábal cheeses right at the creamery. This cheese that is ubiquitous in the region is made from unpasteurized sheep's milk. The production we'll observe is a work of art.

Enjoy free time this afternoon to relax and prepare for another fabulous culinary experience. Tonight we'll visit one-Michelin star Restaurante Kokotxa to enjoy the 10-course Menú de Mercado, a seasonal tasting menu dictated by what's fresh at the market, complemented by local wines.

Meals Breakfast, Light Lunch, Dinner



Culinary Instruction

DAY 6: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 7

- Check out San Sebastian's top notch farmers market
- Learn from a culinary dream team: Chef Guillermo + Chef Lander

We all know the Basque Country is a food enthusiast's paradise, so today we really dig in. First we'll visit La Bretxa Market, a stimulating indoor market that is open daily. Chef Guillermo and Chef Lander will show us around the market.

Now surely you're in the mood to cook. We'll walk to a local Gastronomic Society to learn about Basque cooking and prepare a fabulous lunch. Chef Guillermo and Chef Lander will be our culinary guides and there will be opportunities for hands-on participation. We'll dine at the farmhouse table at the society, enjoying wine pairings and the fruits of our labor. The wine and fun will flow.

Dinner is on your own in San Sebastián this evening. Head out in pursuit of Michelin stars... or perhaps you're craving more pintxos. Cheers!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Vines and Views in La Rioja

DAY 7: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 8

- Visit a totally different region of Spain - the landscape and the culture are unique
- Taste some of La Rioja's best wines

At our home base in San Sebastián, we're located near one of the world's best wine regions: Rioja. It'll be harvest in Rioja, so we'll see the vines heavy with grapes, mostly Tempranillo and Garnacha. Today we'll take a daytrip to explore the wine region, where we'll visit two wineries and enjoy a Rioja lunch plus a visit to an ancient town.

The Rioja D.O.C. is Spain's largest wine region with more than 500 wineries in the area. The region dates from the Neolithic area and is home to atmospheric hilltop fortress towns with medieval walls and Gothic churches. Savor the world-class wines and unforgettable views.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

An Artsy Day in Bilbao

DAY 8: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 9

- Treat your senses at the Guggenheim Bilbao
- Relax at Hotel Meliá Bilbao and take in views of the city

Enjoy your last breakfast at Hotel Niza. We'll depart mid-morning for the iconic Guggenheim Bilbao. We'll be met by a private guide for a tour highlighting the collection and of course the building itself, designed by Frank Gehry and made of titanium, glass, and limestone. The art collection spans from the mid-20th century to the present day, concentrating on postwar painting and sculpture in America and Europe.

Midday is our last culinary hurrah - a creative tasting menu at Nerua, located inside the Guggenheim Museum. At this restaurant, also named to the "World's Top 50" restaurant list and in possession of a Michelin star, food is art, too. The restaurant overlooks the Nervión River, from which the restaurant takes its name, and has a sleek open kitchen.

After lunch, we'll walk 10-minutes to Hotel Meliá Bilbao where we'll spend the last evening of the tour. Explore Bilbao this afternoon on foot. Or hang out at the hotel, a 5-star spot that was designed by famed architect Ricardo Legorreta as a tribute to the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida. The hotel features an open-air heated pool on the 6th floor, with sweeping views of the Nervión River and the city. To cap off our week together, we'll convene in the hotel's lounge bar for drinks and appetizers. If your flight isn't at the crack of dawn tomorrow, consider one last special feast in Bilbao. Otherwise, buenas noches!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Evening Reception

Farewell

DAY 9: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10

- Head home with wonderful memories

From the Hotel Meliá Bilbao, you are 20 minutes from the Bilbao International Airport. The hotel will organize a taxi for you at your convenience.

TRIP INFORMATION

Basque Country Culinary Immersion
September 2–10, 2022

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| BEGINS | Bilbao International Airport (BIL), on September 2 Airport transfer provided late morning, arrival to Bilbao by 11:00 am is preferred. <i>Travelers may like to come a day early base on available flight schedules. Onward can assist with early travel arrangements.</i> |
| ENDS | Hotel Meliá Bilbao, on September 10 No activities are scheduled for today. The hotel can organize taxis (15-20 minutes) to Bilbao International Airport (BIL) for travelers. |
| SUITABILITY & MOBILITY | This tour includes walking for up to 20 minutes at a time, plus stairs, uneven natural terrain and cobblestones. Travelers should be able to walk a mile at a comfortable pace. If you have limited mobility, we may be able to accommodate you, but it is essential to inform us at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided. |
| TRIP LENGTH | 9 days, 8 nights |
| LODGING | Hotel Niza 7 Nights A three-star family-run hotel located in a circa-1908 villa opposite La Concha Bay and beach. The hotel is a 10 minute walk to the center of San Sebastian. The Belle Époque atmosphere and beautiful views lend an excellent sense of place. The hotel has 40-rooms and an excellent restaurant on site. Hotel Meliá Bilbao 1 Night A large, contemporary hotel in an acclaimed building. Multiple well-regarded dining establishments on site plus an indoor/outdoor pool with mountain views and sauna. The hotel is easy walking access to Bilbao's attractions. |
| TOUR DATES & PRICE | September 2–10, 2022 Double Occupancy \$4975 per traveler Single Supplement \$965 additional Please note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Spain. <u>Please ensure that your passport is valid 6 months after the date of travel.</u> <i>You are welcome to pay your trip fee by credit card, please note that a 3% processing fee will be applied.</i> |

AIR TRAVEL: The tour will start and end at Bilbao International Airport (BIO), the air hub for the Basque Country. Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a "go" before booking non-refundable airfare. Contact Onward Travel for assistance.

Trip price includes the following:

- Arrival airport transfer and ground transportation in Spain.
- Seven nights accommodations at Hotel Niza in an oceanfront room with balcony. Private en-suite rooms provided.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, six lunches, and seven dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences, wine included, of course!
- Onward Travel guide at your service plus excellent local tour guides and Chef Guillermo hosting.
- Hands-on cooking class.
- Activities, tastings, admission fees, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.
- Taxes and gratuities.

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment. Space is limited to only 14 travelers. \$1,250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by June 1, 2022.

COVID-19 & VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS:

Travelers are required to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 to travel with Onward Travel.

As the tour approaches, Onward will keep travelers informed of destination requirements.

For more information, please see www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo

TRIP INFORMATION

Basque Country Culinary Immersion September 2–10, 2022

About Onward Travel

Onward Travel is a group tour operator owned and operated by sisters Molly Crist and Katerina Clauhs Dhand. Onward Travel is focused on unique, thoughtful small group tours with itineraries that are researched and pieced together carefully to ensure authentic, engaging trips that foster genuine connection to places and people. A deep love of hospitality and adventure has been in Molly and Kat's blood for generations as Onward Travel is inspired by their family's cooking school on a farm in Bucks County, PA that offered culinary-focused travel to customers for over two decades.

San Sebastian in September

Early fall is a terrific shoulder season in the Basque Country. Many of the crowds have disappeared and the wineries and cideries are harvesting their fruit. The temperatures will likely be consistently pleasant in the 70's but layers and raincoats are always recommended. On warm, sunny days the beach out front of the hotel will likely be bustling with sunbathers and swimmers.

Miscellaneous Travel Information

- *Passports are required for American citizens travelling to Spain. Visas are not required. Note your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the date of travel.*
- *To determine the current exchange rate, Google "USD to Euro."*
- *Travel Protection: Onward Travel recommends that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. Travel protection plans include coverage for Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. For more information on the recommended plans or to enroll, contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 32-0704.*
- *For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308294*

Get in Touch!

Contact Molly with questions or special requests:

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BASQUE CHEESECAKE