

BASQUE COUNTRY

*culinary
immersion*

**A CHEF-LED CULTURAL ADVENTURE
IN NORTHERN SPAIN**

SEPTEMBER 27—OCTOBER 5, 2026

ONWARD TRAVEL



EST 2014



The Basque Country is a fiercely independent region with hundreds of miles of coast-line 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 – from Spain to France, effervescent Txakoli wine to Rioja's reds, pintxos to tasting menus, farmhouse tables to farmers markets, Idiazabal cheese to chocolat, sea views to cobbled streets – is to immerse yourself in one of the world's most enchanting culinary destinations. Truly, there is no other place like the Basque Country.

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 a vibrant, 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 Donostiarres (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. Fine dining is next level here and the region is considered a global epicenter for Michelin-starred dining - in fact on this tour we've included meals at three starred restaurants.

Our tour host, Chef Guillermo Delavault, has been visiting San Sebastián for over twenty years and considers it a second home. He can't wait to show you around... The Basque Country is a feast for the senses and we invite you to indulge!



Imagine yourself...

Strolling along La Concha Beach at the end of a beautifully day

Enjoying lunch al fresco on a pepper farm in the French Basque region

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

Welcome to Euskadi!

DAY 1: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27

- Lunch on hard cider and steak at a traditional cider house
- Check in at a sleek boutique hotel in the heart of San Sebastián

Welcome to Spain! 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 before we reach the city, let's 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 compliment to a traditional lunch featuring chorizo cooked in cider, salt-cod omelet, and gigantic char-grilled T-bone steaks.

After an experience so very very Basque we're headed to that jewel of a seaside city, San Sebastián, or Donostia in the local language Euskara. Check in at Abba Hotel, your home for the next week. Located in a quiet area beside the river in the heart of the city, the Old Town and the beaches are just a walk away.

Let's meet at the hotel's rooftop garden this evening for a welcome cocktail party featuring quintessential Basque bites and local wines, and as we take in the fantastic views around us we'll toast to the week of delicious adventure ahead!

Meals Lunch, Dinner



Basque Kitchen Introduction

DAY 2: MONDAY SEPTEMBER 28

- Tour the fantastic fresh food market with a chef's guidance
- Have fun in the kitchen as you help to cook local recipes

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning as your leisure, it is included each morning of the tour. Then we are off to Mimo Cooking School, ranked as one of the world's best, for a hands-on immersion in Basque Cuisine. Our class begins with a trip to the vibrant city market to explore local products - wait until you see the fresh fish! Then we are headed into the kitchen to prepare Basque specialties together, think dishes such as clams and rice or hake with pil pil sauce, before sitting down to a delicious meal together.

Tonight we'll split up into two groups. One group will enjoy a free evening and the other will set out to discover the unique pintxos (Basque tapas) culture of the Old Town. The pintxos bars are mostly self-serve, stand up, social experiences. Little glasses of txakoli wine and local cider are poured from on high, patrons are elbow to elbow and the vibe is convivial to say the least. Sometimes 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, Lunch, Dinner

Exploring San Sebastián

DAY 3: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29

- Immerse yourself in local culture: from history to pintxos
- Enjoy a one-of-a-kind cheese tasting, an "urban picnic" if you will

Enjoy a leisurely buffet breakfast at the hotel and perhaps a morning beach walk. Late morning we'll meet a local guide to discover the city of San Sebastián. We'll get the lay of the land and learn about the interesting history of this unique and fiercely independent place.

Midday you're on your own for lunch and a short wander...then we'll reconvene for a super fun cheese party. Our friends at the best little cheese shop in town will have a whole spread set up for us on the leafy street in front of their store, and they'll be pouring some interesting wines for us as they guide our group through a tasting of iconic local cheeses. It's an urban picnic of sorts, and only we've got the invite!

Tonight, the group who didn't go out for pintxos the night before will hit the town in search of tasty bites and good times with Guillermo!

Meals Breakfast

Art, Wine & Fine Dining

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30

- Look out over the vineyard to the sea beyond, glass in hand
- Savor what may be the best grilled fish you've ever had

Nearby San Sebastián is the heart of the Getariako Txakolina D.O. Txakolina wine 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 towards the sea.

Then it is time for lunch at Elkano. This Michelin-starred 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, a must-visit for chefs when they pass through the region. We'll enjoy a marvelous, memorable tasting menu which culminates in their famous grilled turbot and of we'll go ahead and take the wine pairings as well.

From Elkano we head back to San Sebastián with an optional stop at Chillida Leku, the outdoor museum dedicated to the work of influential Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida, and created by the artist within his own lifetime. His monumental works are in complete synchronicity with their gorgeous natural surroundings of trees and meadow and it's just the place to marvel at the beauty of life on a fine afternoon after an incredible lunch. Enjoy a free evening tonight.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



Day Trip to Rioja

DAY 5: THURSDAY OCTOBER 1

- Taste a range of Rioja wines produced by family-run wineries
- Walk through wine cellars dating back to the 11th century

We're spending today in an iconic European wine region: Rioja. The Rioja D.O.C. is Spain's largest wine region with more than 500 wineries in the area and it's about two hours' drive from our base in San Sebastian. The region dates from the Neolithic area and is home to atmospheric hilltop fortress towns with medieval walls and Gothic churches. Savor world-class wines and unforgettable views.

In Rioja today we'll visit two family-run wineries with very different vibes, one in the bucolic countryside and one in the heart of the ancient village of Laguardia with a network of subterranean wine vaults. In between winery visits we'll have a delicious country-style lunch at a restaurant popular with local folks from all walks of life.

We'll be back in San Sebastián by early evening. Maybe you'd like to make an advance reservation to add another Michelin star to your collection tonight... or maybe, more pintxos!

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Merveilleux French Basque

DAY 6: FRIDAY OCTOBER 2

- Sample regional specialties including Piment d'Espelette
- Spend the evening enjoying a creative Michelin-star tasting menu

Let's go to France! Today we will drive to the Pays Basque. We'll visit charming French towns with colorful facades and quirky Basque architecture like our first stop in St-Jean-de-Luz, a small Atlantic fishing village. You'll have time to visit St-Jean-de-Luz's charming market which happens on Tuesdays and Fridays.

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, at a table set al fresco besides the pepper fields, taste a selection of local products and enjoy a light lunch al fresco of local delicacies including Basque Talo (similar to tortilla), local meats, and regional cake.

Tonight we're off to Kokotxa, a fabulous Michelin-starred restaurant in the heart of town. The creativity of their young team is reflected in every dish. Our group will spend a special evening over their market tasting menu, delighting in the presentation and the flavors alike.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

A Day by the Sea

DAY 7: SATURDAY OCTOBER 3

- Snap photos of picturesque fishing villages on the Bay of Pasaia
- Taste simply prepared, fresh as can be seafood at a local tavern

Today we're exploring Pasaia, a collection of fishing villages just east of San Sebastián, set amid an absolutely gorgeous natural environment where two mountain ranges flank the Bay of Pasaia.

After a relaxing morning we'll make the short drive from the hotel to our first stop in Pasaia, Albalola Itsas Kultur Faktoria. This is a fascinating way to experience the history of this region as you can actually see the reconstruction of a 16th century whaling boat which is being painstakingly undertaken in a method purely authentic to the period. People who are interested in learning about this tradition travel from all over the world to apprentice here, and it's a unique and beautiful place to experience.

After Albalola we'll head to a casual local tavern where super fresh fish is served fried or in sandwiches without pretension in an old fisherman's house. Paired with a crisp, cold beer - nothing is better! Then we'll take a little more time to explore this atmospheric place before heading back to the city. We leave town tomorrow, so enjoy this last bit of free time soaking up the city's incredible ambience.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



Back to Bilbao

DAY 8: SUNDAY OCTOBER 4

- Explore an architectural marvel on a private tour
- Enjoy one last fine dining meal with your travel group

After breakfast we're checking out and loading up the minibus to return to Bilbao. Our driver will leave us at the famous Guggenheim Museum and then deliver our baggage to the hotel where it will be waiting for us when we check in later this afternoon. Designed by star architect Frank Gehry, the Guggenheim Bilbao delights all of your creative senses before you've even taken a step inside. Indeed it is one of the most famous examples of contemporary architecture in the world and in many ways it revitalized the city of Bilbao.

Let's visit the museum together on a guided tour, exploring the permanent collection and temporary exhibits as well as learning more about the unique architecture of the place. And then we will sit down to dine together one more time at Nerua, a Michelin-starred fine dining restaurant located at the museum. Over a late lunch that will extend into the afternoon the art goes from the walls to our plates, to the people around us and the special relationships we've cultivated during this week exploring the good life in the Basque Country. Raise yet another glass to your traveling companions and your chef-host!

It's a short walk from the museum back to the hotel, where your bag will be waiting in your room. By now it's the end of the day and you may wish to just relax or perhaps get your things situated and head out for one last txakoli and a pintxo or two with your travel friends.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Farewell

DAY 9: MONDAY OCTOBER 5

Transfers will be arranged from Hotel Miro to Bilbao Airport for travelers departing today. Head home with new friends and enhanced culinary knowledge. Safe travels!

Meals Breakfast

TRIP INFORMATION

Basque Country Culinary Immersion September 27–October 5, 2026

BEGINS	Bilbao International Airport (BIO), on September 27 Pickup from Bilbao Airport at 11am or from Bilbao City Center at 11:30. <i>Travelers may like to come a day early. Onward can assist with early travel arrangements.</i>
ENDS	Hotel Miro, Bilbao, on October 5 No activities are scheduled for today.
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	This tour includes walking for up to 20 minutes at a time, plus stairs, uneven natural terrain and cobblestones. <u>Travelers should be able to walk a mile at a comfortable pace.</u> 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	Abba Hotel 7 Nights A boutique four-star hotel located in a quiet area beside the river in the heart of San Sebastián. Abba features a bar, a gym and a rooftop garden with beautiful views. Hotel Miro 1 Night We've reserved museum-view rooms at this artsy hotel in the center of Bilbao a short walk from the Guggenheim Museum.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	September 27–October 5, 2026 <i>Double Occupancy</i> \$5500 per traveler <i>Single Supplement</i> \$1100 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>

Trip price includes the following:

- Arrival airport pickup, departure airport transfer and ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Eight nights accommodations.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, seven lunches, and three dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences planned, including three Michelin-starred restaurants, with wine included, of course!
- Knowledgeable Onward Travel tour director at your service.
- 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. \$1,500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by July 1, 2026.

AIR TRAVEL

The tour will start and end at Bilbao Int'l 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 if you'd like assistance.



**The Onward
Travel Tour
Director
for this
trip is
Guillermo**

Born and raised in Argentina, Guillermo Delavault studied Culinary Arts in Barcelona and worked in some of the most relevant hotels and restaurants of that city. He first visited San Sebastián in 2002 and immediately fell in love with the place. Almost every year for a decade he went back to Donostia to see friends, eat the best food of the Iberian 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 Sebastián, and the dream of working and living in the Basque Country came true. Currently he lives in Portland, Maine, where he is the Culinary Director at Fore Street restaurant, the most emblematic establishment of that city. Not only is Guillermo deeply knowledgeable about the food and culture of the Basque region, he's a friendly and funny person who embodies hospitality and you will love traveling with him!

Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelex.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Spain it should be valid for six months beyond your return date.



Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full Terms & Conditions at www.onwardtravel.co/terms



Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
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