



Educational Tours

Exploring the Basque Region

A private tour designed by Anita Francoia, in conjunction with EF Customized Tours

Requested departure date: Thursday, September 26, 2013

(Dates below are subject to change. Required date flexibility of 4 days on either side of requested departure date)

Day 1

Thursday, September 26, 2013

Board your overnight flight to Bilbao!

Day 2

Friday, September 27, 2013

Arrive in Bilbao and Transfer to San Sebastian

Touch down in Bilbao, the Basque Country's largest and most densely populated city! From here, continue on to San Sebastian, the heart of the culturally unique Basque region. This town was the birthplace of *tapas*. This evening, your tour director will introduce you to this traditional Spanish meal as you find a local restaurant to sample some delicious dishes.

Walking Tour of San Sebastian

Take in the beautiful scenery of San Sebastián, a town sandwiched between the mountains and the sea. Stroll down Playa de la Concha and through the town's old quarter, where Isabel II spent her vacations. Napoleon III and Bismarck both spent time in San Sebastián as well. While in the Old Town, look for numbers on the balconies above—these used to be ringside seats for bullfights.

Dinner is not included this evening.

Overnight in San Sebastian

Day 3

Saturday, September 28, 2013

Excursion to Zugarramurdi

Your Tour Director leads you on a walking tour of the famous caves located near Zugarramurdi, known as the village of witches. During the 17th-century Basque witch trials carried out by the Spanish Inquisition, this cave was allegedly an underground meeting place for the *akelarres*, or witches' covens, to practice their craft. Modern-day believers gather here on the summer solstice for the annual "Witches Festival". Your group will then enjoy a picnic lunch together nearby the cave. (Note: Picnic lunch is not provided by EF)

Free Time in Saint-Jean-de-Luz

Continue on to the small French Basque fishing village of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a popular resort town known for its mixture of medieval, Basque and Moorish architecture, Old-World feel and cosmopolitan flair—all while retaining its traditional charm. Sample some of the town's famous seafood, take a stroll along its harbor or browse through its many shops.

Dinner is not included this evening.

Overnight in San Sebastian

Day 4**Sunday, September 29, 2013****Excursion on St. Michael's Day**

During your excursion today, as well as spending some time participating in some of the local St. Michael of Aralar Day festivities you will have a chance to visit an archaeological dig that dates back to Roman Times that your tour director is currently working on at Uharte Arakil. You will also stop in Oñati, for a short visit to see the area around the first university in the Basque Country dating back to 1540, including the Guevara Palace. *(Archaeological dig visit pending the schedule of the excavations)*

Overnight in San Sebastian

Day 5**Monday, September 30, 2013****Excursion to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Orreaga-Roncesvalles**

Cross over the border to the French Basque country to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Here you'll have free time to visit market day and take in the views along the river Nive and explore the cobbled streets of the old town whose name literally means, 'Saint John at the foot of the mountain pass'. Continue on to nearby Orreaga-Roncesvalles, known for the historical defeat of Charlemagne and commonly chosen as a starting point for the Pilgrim's Way in Spain.

Overnight in San Sebastian

Day 6**Tuesday, October 1, 2013****Free Day in San Sebastián**

During your free time, you may wish to spend time relaxing on the beaches of this once royal resort. Take in the sights of the Paseo Nuevo, visit the Palacio del Mar, a cutting edge aquarium, or visit the Palacio del Miramar, built by Queen María Cristina in 1893 and the Palacio de Ayete, another royal residence. Otherwise, enjoy the local delicacies at a café and keep your ears open for the Basque language Euskera, which is spoken by half the residents of San Sebastián.

Dinner is not included this evening.

Overnight in San Sebastian

Day 7**Wednesday, October 2, 2013****Transfer to Bilbao**

Continue to the largest city in Basque Country, Bilbao, which is nestled at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Guided Sightseeing of Bilbao

Your guided sightseeing begins with a walk through Bilbao, a city nestled at the foot of the Pyrenees. You'll see the famed Guggenheim Museum, whose fanciful walls of titanium, limestone, and glass provide grand structure around a vast collection of 20th-century modern art, including works by Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock. Stroll through the rustic streets of the casco viejo (old town) to the Catedral Basílica de Santiago, Bilbao's Gothic Cathedral. You may even have time for some churros y chocolate at a local café.

Visit to the Guggenheim Museum

Visit Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum of modern and contemporary art. Inaugurated in 1997 and designed by American Frank Gehry, the edifice alone has become an internationally renowned architectural masterpiece bringing much prestige to this fiercely Basque city. A titanium steel explosion of interconnecting curves and distorting angles, it houses an eclectic and exciting range of permanent exhibits.

Overnight in Bilbao

Day 8**Thursday, October 3, 2013****Free Day in Bilbao**

Enjoy a day on your own to explore the many sights to see in Bilbao. You might want to visit some of the many other museums in the city such as the Basque Museum or the Museo de Bellas Artes. Alternatively, you can spend some time in the Plaza Nueva or the Parque Etxebarria.

Dinner is not included this evening.

*Overnight in Bilbao***Day 9****Friday, October 4, 2013****Excursion to Laguardia**

Travel into the Rioja Wine Region to the Medieval Village of Laguardia. The 13th century cities walls are still intact, including four entrance gates. Here your Tour Director will acquaint you with the city as well as helping to organize an optional wine tasting. On your way back to Bilbao, your group will also stop at a local Cider House, often referred to as Sagardotegis, for a festive dinner including cider and dishes such as cod, steak and some local cheeses.

Dinner is not included this evening.

*Overnight in Bilbao***Day 10****Saturday, October 5, 2013****Excursion to Bakio, San Juan de Gaztelugatxe & Bermeo**

Start your day with some relaxing free time at the beach in Bakio, located just northeast of Bilbao on Spain's northern coast. Continue onward with a stop to see the hermitage San Juan de Gaztelugatxe, dedicated to John the Baptist, located on a small island off the coast of Biscay. With its 200 plus steps, your group will relax and enjoy another group arranged picnic lunch that everyone will help pitch in and shop for. Lastly, continue to Bermeo for a brief stop to take in the breathtaking views of this quaint and traditional fishing village. (Note: Picnic lunch is not provided by EF)

*Overnight in Bilbao***Day 11****Sunday, October 6, 2013****Excursion to Lekeitio and Markina**

Spend some of your day relaxing on the beautiful beach or enjoy the many picturesque sites in Lekeitio. In Markina, make sure to visit the unique Church of St. Michael of Arretxinaga, and you may have the opportunity to watch or participate at the university of Jaialai.

*Overnight in Bilbao***Day 12****Monday, October 7, 2013****Morning Excursion to "Day of the Cow" Special Market in Guernica**

Accompany your Tour Director on a walking tour of Guernica ('Gernika' in the Basque language Euskera). Known now as the 'City of Peace', citizens of Guernica fell victim to air attacks during the Spanish Civil War, inspiring Spanish artist Pablo Picasso to create a powerful, grand-scale work by the same name. During your walking tour you will see the Tree of Gernika, a symbol of Basque freedom, and also pass by Parliament, the traditional center of government for Basque Country.

Free Afternoon and Farewell Dinner in Bilbao

The rest of your afternoon is free to enjoy your last evening of tour on your own. Later this evening, your group will come together for one last farewell dinner.

Overnight in Bilbao

Day 13**Tuesday, October 8, 2013****Transfer to the airport for your return flight**

Your tour director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

Itinerary is subject to change

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions at www.eftours.com/bc.



Educational Tours

Tour Highlights and Details

Overnight stays:

San Sebastian (5)
Bilbao (6)

Comprehensive sightseeing tours led by an expert local guide of the following:

Bilbao

Entrances included to the following sites:

Guggenheim Museum

Included in the Program Fee:

- Round trip airfare
- Transfers to and from the airport and hotel and between destination cities (as per program itinerary)
- Overnight in hotels with private bathrooms
- Continental breakfast daily
- Dinner on days 4-5, 7 & 10-12
- Full-time services of an EF Tour Director

Not included in the Program Fee:

- Customary gratuities for your tour director, local guide and driver
- Porterage
- Personal Insurance
- Beverages and lunches
- Dinner on days 2, 4, 6 & 8-9
- Public transportation to free time activities