



NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja

Where Basque Culture Meets Rioja Wine Country

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Trip Details:

Days
10 Days • May–Oct

Price
From \$14995

Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja

Where Basque Culture Meets Rioja Wine Country

Few places offer as rich an encounter with food, wine and living tradition as northern Spain. On this journey through Basque Country and Rioja, we explore a landscape where lush green hills meet the Bay of Biscay, centuries-old villages cling to the coast and vineyards spread across Rioja Alavesa. Along the way, we discover a culture shaped by its distinctive language, celebrated gastronomy, fishing traditions and deep connection to the land.

Our days bring us close to the people behind those traditions. Walk a section of the Camino de Santiago along the rugged Atlantic coast, meet fishermen, farmers, cheesemakers and winemakers, and step inside a private Basque gastronomic society. Taste pintxos and txakoli, explore Laguardia's cellar-lined streets and stay on an invitation-only historic wine estate. Together, they reveal a region where food, landscape and culture are inseparable.

Trip Highlights

Stay on a Private Historic Wine Estate in Rioja

Spend two nights on an invitation-only working wine estate in Rioja Alavesa, reserved exclusively for our group, with private access to its vineyards, cellar and culinary traditions.

Explore the Rugged Villages of Spain's Basque Coast

Follow the Atlantic edge through fishing towns, rural hamlets and green hills, walk a section of the Camino de Santiago and discover the historic communities of northern Spain's coast.

Dine Inside a Private Basque Gastronomic Society

Step inside one of the members-only cooking societies at the heart of Basque social life for an intimate evening of regional food, conversation and local tradition. Spain MVP



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Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja Itinerary

Where Basque Culture Meets Rioja Wine Country

Itinerary at a Glance

- Day 1** Arrive in Bilbao and begin our journey through northern Spain
- Day 2** Walk the Basque coast and cruise near Zumaia
- Day 3** Discover San Sebastián through music, pintxos and city life
- Day 4** Meet Basque cheesemakers and dine at a traditional cider house
- Day 5** Walk the Camino and enter our private wine estate in Rioja
- Day 6** Explore Laguardia and the vineyards of Rioja Alavesa
- Day 7** Return to Basque Country as guests at Nafarrola
- Day 8** Explore Urdaibai, Gaztelugatxe and the history of Guernica
- Day 9** Meet Bermeo's fishing community and share a final Basque dinner
- Day 10** Return to Bilbao and depart



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Day
1

Arrive in Bilbao and begin our journey through northern Spain

- Settle into Bilbao and meet your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers
- Gather for a welcome presentation, drinks and our first dinner together

Our journey begins in Bilbao, gateway to Spain's Basque Country. After arriving and settling into our hotel, there is time to rest and refresh before we gather with our Expedition Leader and fellow travelers. Over a welcome presentation and drink, we get oriented to the days ahead and the landscapes, food traditions and communities we'll encounter across Basque Country and Rioja. This evening, we sit down together for a welcome dinner, beginning our exploration of northern Spain through one of the themes that will connect the entire journey—its extraordinary regional cuisine.

Day
2

Walk the Basque coast and cruise near Zumaia

- Follow the rugged Atlantic coast on foot, then take a private boat excursion with lunch
- Experience Basque social life over a private dinner inside a traditional txoko

Leaving Bilbao, we make our way toward the Basque coast, where green hills meet the Atlantic and small communities are closely tied to the sea. A coastal walk gives us our first close look at this dramatic landscape before we continue to Zumaia for a private boat excursion and lunch.

Later, we continue toward the San Sebastián area and encounter another side of Basque life: the txoko, or private gastronomic society. These members-only gathering places are an important part of the region's food culture and social traditions. This evening, we are welcomed inside one for a private dinner—an intimate introduction to a world most visitors never experience.

Day
3

Discover San Sebastián through music, pintxos and city life

- Take part in a txalaparta cultural experience and explore San Sebastián on foot
- Taste your way through the city on a pintxo crawl, with free time to explore independently

Today is devoted to San Sebastián and the cultural traditions that give the city its distinct identity. We begin with a txalaparta experience, offering a closer encounter with an element of Basque cultural expression before setting out to explore the city.

Food is central to life here, and we experience that firsthand on a pintxo crawl through San Sebastián, moving between local establishments and sampling the small dishes for which the city is renowned. Later, enjoy time on your own to wander, shop or simply absorb the atmosphere before returning to Hotel Ur Bare for dinner.

Day
4

Meet Basque cheesemakers and dine at a traditional cider house

- Visit a local farm for a cheese and shepherding experience followed by lunch
- Spend the evening over a traditional Basque cider house dinner

Our exploration moves into the countryside today as we meet people whose work remains closely connected to the land. During a cheese and shepherding experience, learn firsthand about local agricultural traditions, then continue with a farm visit and lunch.

This evening, another essential element of Basque food culture takes center stage as we gather for dinner at a traditional cider house. Together, the day offers a personal look at how farming, food and longstanding traditions remain part of everyday life in northern Spain.

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Day
5

Walk the Camino and enter our private wine estate in Rioja

- Walk a section of the Camino de Santiago before tasting txakoli over lunch
- Arrive at our private Rioja wine estate for a cellar tour and dinner

We leave the coast behind today, but not before walking a section of the Camino de Santiago, experiencing part of the historic route on foot. We then stop at Ganeta for txakoli and lunch, connecting the day's landscape with one of the wines closely associated with Basque Country.

Continuing inland, the scenery transitions toward the vineyards of Rioja Alavesa. Our destination is La Casa Cosme Palacio, a historic working wine estate that is reserved exclusively for our group. After an introduction to the property, explore its cellar and settle into this exceptional private setting before gathering for dinner.

Day
6

Explore Laguardia and the vineyards of Rioja Alavesa

- Walk the estate garden with a chef and enjoy an olive oil experience before exploring Laguardia
- Venture into the vineyards by 4x4 or on foot, followed by dinner in a cave cellar

Our immersion in Rioja continues with a closer look at the ingredients and landscapes behind the region's cuisine. Begin with a garden walk alongside a chef and an olive oil experience before heading to **Laguardia**, whose streets sit above a network of historic wine cellars. Enjoy a guided walk through town followed by time to explore independently.

Later, return to the surrounding vineyards, choosing to explore by 4x4 or on foot. This evening, the day concludes underground with dinner in a cave cellar—an atmospheric setting that brings us even closer to Rioja's centuries-old relationship with wine.

Day
7

Return to Basque Country as guests at Nafarroa

- Enjoy a leisurely final morning in Rioja and lunch at Casa Cosme before traveling north
- Settle into Nafarroa, meet our local host and share txakoli and dinner together

Enjoy an unhurried morning at our wine estate before gathering for lunch at Casa Cosme. We then leave Rioja behind and return toward the Basque coast, traveling to Nafarroa, our home for the next three nights.

More than simply a hotel stay, Nafarroa provides a personal base for our final days in Basque Country. After arriving, tour the property and settle in before spending time with our local host over txakoli. Dinner at Nafarroa begins an intimate stay rooted in the surrounding community and landscape.

Day
8

Explore Urdaibai, Gaztelugatxe and the history of Guernica

- Discover the landscapes of Urdaibai and walk at Gaztelugatxe
- Visit Mundaka for lunch before exploring the history of Guernica

Today we explore the region surrounding Nafarroa, beginning with an overview of Urdaibai, where coast, estuary, villages and countryside come together. We continue to Gaztelugatxe for a walk amid one of the area's most dramatic coastal settings.

Later, visit the village of Mundaka and stop for lunch before turning inland toward Guernica. A historic tour introduces us to the town and its place in Basque history, adding another layer to our understanding of the people and identity of this distinctive region.

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Day
9

Meet Bermeo's fishing community and share a final Basque dinner

- Meet people connected to Bermeo's fishing traditions and visit an anchovy-preserving factory
- Explore the old quarter before a local storytelling experience and gastronomic society dinner

Early risers may begin the day with an optional sunrise walk before we delve into the maritime traditions of Bermeo. Meet fishermen's wives and learn about the work connected to the town's fishing life, then visit an anchovy-preserving factory for another perspective on how the local catch moves from sea to table.

We continue through Bermeo's old quarter before gathering for a local storytelling experience. For our final evening, we return to one of the journey's defining cultural traditions: a sociedad gastronómica, where we share dinner in the intimate setting of a Basque gastronomic society.

Day
10

Return to Bilbao and depart

- Travel from Nafarrola back to Bilbao
- Transfer to the airport for departing flights

After breakfast, our journey through Basque Country and Rioja comes to a close. We leave Nafarrola and transfer back to Bilbao, continuing to the airport for departing flights.

From the fishing communities of the Atlantic coast to Rioja's vineyards, private estates and local tables, we depart with a deeper understanding of a region where landscape, food and cultural identity remain closely intertwined.

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Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja Accommodations

Where Basque Culture Meets Rioja Wine Country



The Artist Grand Hotel of Art

Directly facing Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, this art-filled hotel features a soaring sculptural atrium, rooftop terrace with museum views and gourmet cuisine—within walking distance of the arts district.



Hotel Ur Bare

Overlooking Zarautz Beach, this restored 1940s villa features relaxed coastal interiors, a terraced hillside pool, and Basque cuisine on a dining terrace built around a mature magnolia tree.



La Casa Cosme Palacio

Set among vineyards below the medieval walled town of Laguardia, this invitation-only 1894 boutique estate features historic cellars, original stonework and an infinity pool overlooking the Ebro Valley.

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Hotel Nafarroa

Set amid wildlife-rich oak forests in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, this restored 17th-century farmhouse features minimalist rooms with stone walls, Michelin-listed cuisine, and a wealth of sustainability initiatives.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/northern-spain-basque-country-rioja-tour/accommodations.

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What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja

Our Cultural Journeys are built around meaningful encounters with the people, traditions and places that define a destination. In Basque Country and Rioja, longstanding local relationships take us beyond the usual visitor experience—into a private gastronomic society, onto an invitation-only wine estate, and alongside fishermen, farmers, cheesemakers and winemakers who share their lives and traditions with us. Through food, wine, landscape and personal connection, we experience northern Spain not simply as visitors, but as welcomed guests.

1 Personal Connections Open Doors

Many of this journey's most memorable experiences are possible because of relationships built over time. Friends welcome us into private homes, galleries and gastronomic societies, creating encounters that travelers could rarely arrange on their own.

2 An Invitation-Only Stay in Rioja

Spend two nights inside a historic working wine estate in Rioja Alavesa that is normally accessible only by invitation. Reserved exclusively for our group, the estate becomes our private base for exploring its vineyards, cellar and culinary traditions.

3 Three Nights as Josu's Guests at Nafarrola

Our stay at Nafarrola goes far beyond simply checking into a hotel. Josu welcomes our group exclusively to his restored Basque farmhouse and introduces us to his community through local wine, fishing traditions and time inside a gastronomic society.

4 Food Comes with a Person Attached

Throughout the journey, the people who grow, catch, make and cook our food are part of the experience. Meet farmers, fishermen, cheesemakers, chefs and winemakers who share not only what they produce, but the stories and traditions behind it.

5 Follow the Landscape That Feeds the Table

Northern Spain's food and wine are inseparable from the land and sea. From Rioja's vineyards and the green grazing hills of Basque Country to the farms, estuary and fishing ports of Urdaibai, we see firsthand how the landscape shapes what appears on the table.

6 Discover Basque Culture from the Inside

Experience a culture that remains deeply rooted in everyday life, from txakoli and traditional dance to fishing communities, markets and members-only gastronomic societies. Local relationships give us a more personal window into traditions that continue to define Basque identity.



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7

A Small Group Creates a More Personal Journey

Limited to just 12 travelers, this journey maintains an intimate scale as we visit small farms, private estates, family-run businesses and spaces not designed for large tour groups. The result is more time for conversation, connection and genuine interaction with the people we meet.

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Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From \$14995

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Northern Spain: Basque & Rioja Dates, Pricing & Info

Where Basque Culture Meets Rioja Wine Country

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Dates not confirmed for 2028		
May 22 - May 31, 2028	\$14995	
Jun 19 - Jun 28, 2028	\$14995	
Jul 17 - Jul 26, 2028	\$14995	
Aug 7 - Aug 16, 2028	\$14995	
Sep 25 - Oct 4, 2028	\$14995	
Oct 9 - Oct 18, 2028	\$14995	

See <https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/northern-spain-basque-country-rioja-tour/dates-fees> for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations at luxury properties, services of Nat Hab guides and staff, airport transfer to and from Bilbao airport, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on the final day, some wine and liquor at meals, private wine tastings and vineyard tours, some gratuities, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

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Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

Our journey offers a rare opportunity to experience a more intimate side of Northern Spain that few travelers encounter. For those with an interest in regional culture and traditional ways of life, Basque Country offers a fascinating window into one of Europe's most distinctive cultural identities. During our trip, we stay in small, boutique accommodations, including an invitation-only historic wine estate and an exclusive stay at a restored luxury Basque farmhouse. Weather is generally mild and comfortable, though rain is possible throughout the season, even during the summer months—it's what keeps Basque Country's landscape so beautifully green! Please come prepared to spend time in variable weather.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least \$250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Bilbao. We recommend arriving in Bilbao the night before Day 1 so you can rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you must arrive at Bilbao Airport by 4pm to join the group welcome orientation and dinner.

You may depart from Bilbao Airport any time after 12pm on the final day.



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