

# Northern Spain & Portugal Explorer

## 6 Night Parador & Pousada Tour - Half Board

### Your itinerary

The following pages contain general information about your car or motorcycle tour and the locations where you will stay. The order in which they appear may not be the order your hotels have been confirmed for you - for your individual itinerary please refer to your holiday documentation.





**Maps and route planning** To help plan your trip we provide you with an excellent map of Spain. It's also useful to go to travel websites such as Google maps, [viamichelin.com](http://viamichelin.com)\* or [www.theaa.co.uk](http://www.theaa.co.uk).

\*Motorway tolls, where applicable, are indicated on this site.

**Hotel directions** With your travel documents is an information sheet for each hotel which has been booked for you giving directions together with some further details.

**Arrival** Unless stated, you will be expected to arrive at each of the hotels pre-booked for you by 6pm each day. This should allow time for a fairly leisurely drive between overnight stops but if you find you will be arriving later than this please ring the hotel so your room is held for you.

This tour is on a half board basis, with breakfast and set menu dinner included.

The itinerary takes you from the northern coast of Spain to Portugal's Atlantic coast staying at Paradores and Pousadas, taking in a variety of different landscapes including vineyards, beautiful city architecture, a Roman amphitheatre and the Picos de Europa mountains. Here we give some suggestions for places to see in and around each of your overnight stops

## Cervera de Pisuerga



Cervera is in an excellent position to explore the breathtaking scenery of the surrounding lakes and mountains. It's also a good base for seeing some of the Romanesque architecture of the region which is considered to be the most abundant in Europe.

The nearby town of **Aguilar de Campóo** has some good examples of this and has some picturesque medieval houses with bold coats of



arms. The town sits in a green valley below a ruined castle dating from the 11thC and near a man made lake (Embalse de Aguilar de Campóo) with beaches and watersports.

## Salamanca



Salamanca is a very attractive university city built of golden stone with some magnificent monuments, domes and spires. It's small enough to be explored on foot and the central very beautiful Plaza Mayor with its lively bars and cafés has a great atmosphere and is a popular meeting place. It's also a stage for outdoor entertainers, sometimes in period costume. Not far from the cathedral is the fabulous Casa Lis museum with its collection of Art Deco and Art Nouveau - the building itself is worth going to see even if you don't go inside!

**Alba de Tormes** (23k) is known for pottery making and is the resting place of Santa Teresa. **Ledesma** (40k) is a pretty, partly walled small medieval town with a pleasant main square and a Roman bridge, near a huge reservoir.

## Torreira



A drive around the lagoon from Torreira brings you to **Aveiro**, a picturesque town situated on Portugal's Atlantic coast. Known locally as the Venice of Portugal for its network of canals, for a few euros you can take a trip and enjoy views of the town from colourful former fishing boats called moliceiros. You can also take a larger boat for a 3 hour tour along the coast. Surrounded by salt-flats, lagoons and fascinating birdlife, Aveiro is considered something of a national gem.

## Viana do Castelo



Pousada, Viana do Castelo

This town is located on the north bank of the Lima estuary and famous for its handicrafts and local costumes. The Confreria of Santa Luzia is particularly worthy of a

visit to enjoy the breathtaking river and coastal views. Set on a hilltop, the basilica is reached by a flight of steps, or for the less energetic you can get there by car or funicular. The church itself has beautiful stained glass windows and you can climb the narrow spiral stairs into the domed roof for 360° views. For beach lovers, there's a great choice and plenty of watersports too.

## Ribadeo



Cudillero

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You may wish to take a short detour from the N632/N634 to the picturesque traditional fishing villages of Cudillero and Luarca. Ribadeo itself is a beautiful Galician fishing and farming village with a choice of bars and restaurants and you can buy some of the popular local ceramics. It also has a number of wonderfully unspoilt sandy beaches which are linked by rocks and arches which you can wander through at low tide. Boat trips along the nearby river Eo are another popular attraction here.

## Santillana del Mar



Santillana del Mar

Santillana is one of northern Spain's most picturesque villages with its wealth of historic buildings including medieval, Baroque and Renaissance styles. The Colegiata church is said to be the best

Romanesque architecture in Cantabria. At holiday times, particularly Easter and August the village becomes extremely busy, drawing visitors from all around, so during these times it's best to go into the village in the evening after the crowds have gone. Altamira, about 20 minutes' walk away has some famous prehistoric cave paintings discovered at the end of the 19th century. The original caves cannot be visited except by special request made a long time in advance but you can visit the museum where there are also the replicated caves and see a video describing the vividly coloured paintings. Suances (5k from Santillana) is a fishing village and small seaside resort with 2 good beaches including one popular with surfers.

## Santander & Bilbao



Los Peligros beach, Santander

Standing along the north shore of a great bay of stunning natural beauty Santander is one of the most traditional holiday resorts of northern Spain where many of the Spanish people choose to spend their holiday, escaping the more arid inland areas. There is a superb sandy beach, modern leisure amenities and an attractive promenade laid out with flower borders and trees, popular with the locals who enjoy strolling along it in the early evening and at weekends. The city has wonderful restaurants and shops plus a variety of nightlife and entertainment.



Guggenheim, Bilbao

Over recent years Bilbao has been transformed into a vibrant modern city with plenty to entice tourists. The top visitor attraction is the Guggenheim museum with its striking modern architecture which is spectacular both inside and out. There are permanent art displays and regular temporary exhibitions held here which are well worth a visit. There is much more to see (and best explored on foot) - the atmospheric Casco Viejo old quarter with its maze of cobbled streets filled with shops, cafés and restaurants; remarkable buildings, stunning bridges, squares, lovely parks, museums, art galleries. Shopping is also excellent and there is a large colourful Sunday market.