

The Pyrenees & Wine

7 Night Parador 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* or 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 and includes a 3 course set menu dinner and breakfast.

From either port, the tour takes you through some very diverse and often spectacular scenery, through the green undulating countryside of some of Spain's most famous wine regions before heading up into the Pyrenees. And on your return your route could take you via the stylish city of San Sebastian or Bilbao with its highly acclaimed Guggenheim museum.

Santo Domingo de la Calzada



Parador Santo Domingo

Santo Domingo was once an important staging post on the old pilgrim Way of St James and is an historic town with some interesting architecture. Whilst in the famous Rioja wine region you may like to visit some of Spain's most

charming medieval villages including **Laguardia** which has some of the best cellars around. The village was built on a hilltop above a mass of underground cellars used for wine production and storage and produces a very nice fruity red wine that is best drunk 'young'. Many good restaurants and wine bars are found in the narrow streets.

Haro is another place to note - a small prosperous town and capital of the Rioja wine region. It's very lively with a good selection of tapas bars plus wine cellars and shops, and the old town is full of historical houses.



Santo Domingo cathedral

The wine museum shouldn't be missed and at the end of June a wine fiesta takes place in the mountains around Haro - only go if you are wearing old clothes and don't mind getting wet! After all the celebrations the grapes are harvested during October.

Bielsa

The Parador in Bielsa is in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, an ideal area for walks or hikes through the beautiful scenery with its lakes (the Parador will be happy to provide you with any information you may need).

Ainsa (34k) is also well worth a visit - it is one of the loveliest towns in the area with medieval streets and an elegant main square.

Vielha (about 2 hrs away) is the capital of the Arán valley, which

has become very popular in Spain for winter sports holidays and is usually visited by the Spanish royal family for that purpose. The small town (busy in the ski season) has a huge Romanesque-Gothic church with octagonal bell tower and an interesting museum about the valley and its history. Several species of butterfly are found exclusively in this valley, which is a nature lover's delight and a lovely walking area with clear fresh air, woods and stunning mountain scenery.



Parador Bielsa



Ainsa near Bielsa



Navarra scenery

Sos del Rey Catolico



Parador Sos del Rey Catolico

Sos del Rey is a fascinating historic place with much architectural interest including its Palace of Sada. This is an amazingly atmospheric town, unspoilt by commercialism,

where you can stroll through the narrow winding cobbled streets and imagine that you are back in time - great for photography.

On your way to Limpias you may like to make a stop at the beautiful city of Pamplona (59k), the capital of Navarra and best known for its



Pamplona

'Los Sanfermines' (Running of the Bulls) fiesta held annually for 8 days in July and also famous for its connections with Ernest Hemingway. At other times of year Pamplona offers plenty to see and do with

most things being within walking distance of the elegant tree-lined Plaza del Castillo in the heart of the city.

There is a wealth of fabulous buildings such as the huge Gothic cathedral in the centre of the old town, boasting one of the most beautiful cloisters found anywhere and some amazing sculptural work.

It's also worth visiting the old medieval walls and seeing the Roman artefacts and art in the Museum of Navarre.



Hemingway's café, Pamplona

Limpias

Laredo (7k north of Limpias) is a large seaside resort with a magnificent beach. On the last Friday in August a 'flower battle' takes place where floats filled with flowers are paraded through the streets.



Parador Limpias

Another excellent beach and large fishing port is just along the coast at Santoña.

Santander is one of the most traditional holiday resorts of northern Spain where many of the Spanish themselves choose to 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 a stroll along it in the evenings. The city has wonderful restaurants and shops plus a variety of nightlife and entertainment.



Santander

Also a great place to visit is Bilbao which over recent years has been transformed into a vibrant modern city with plenty to attract tourists. In addition to the famous Guggenheim museum there is much more to see (and best explored on foot) - the old quarter, remarkable architecture, stunning bridges, parks, museums, art galleries and fabulous shopping.



Bilbao