

France & Spain Discovery

7 Night Tour - Bed & Breakfast

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 France/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 that your room is held for you.

This tour is on a bed and breakfast basis.

Whichever direction you have chosen to book your itinerary, the tour gives you the opportunity to see some of the wonderful and varied locations along the west coast of France and northern Spain, stopping at our selection of hotels on the way. Here we give you some ideas of places you may like to see on your tour and give an approximate driving time and distance, without allowing for any detours.

Santander/Bilbao to Hagetmau

approx. 3 hrs 40, 343k / 213 miles (Santander),
2 hrs 40, 249k / 154 miles (Bilbao)



If you are travelling via Santander it's worth spending some time in this great coastal city. Standing along the north shore of a great bay of stunning natural beauty, it is a sophisticated resort with a

superb sandy beach, modern leisure amenities and an attractive promenade laid out with flower borders and trees. The city has wonderful restaurants, tapas bars and shops plus a variety of nightlife and entertainment.

After leaving Santander it's only about an hour's drive on the motorway (E70/A8) to 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 are remarkable buildings, stunning



bridges, lovely parks, quaint museums and much more. San Sebastian (21k from the French border) was originally a small fishing village but has grown into a smart seaside town with 3 beaches and an old quarter packed with bars and restaurants.

Across the border, St Jean de Luz is a picturesque fishing port with a beach and some typical Basque streets and squares. The beautiful

seaside resort of Biarritz has some fantastic sandy beaches which are great for surfing - a number of international competitions are held here. A walk along the promenade takes you beside elegant



hotels and villas or follow the clifftop path for stunning views across the bay and don't miss the famous Rocher de la Vierge - a huge hollowed out rock linked to the coast by a footbridge. Bayonne is another very traditional Basque town which has a lovely old quarter across the river, with narrow streets, tall colourful buildings and lots of bars and brasseries.

The overnight hotel in Hagetmau, in the Chalosse region, is perfect for relaxation, beside a lovely lake popular for fishing or walks.

Hagetmau to Libourne

approx. 2 hrs, 197k / 122 miles



The fortified town of Libourne is the wine making capital of the northern Gironde region, close to the charming village of St Emilion and there are numerous wine producers offering tours and tasting. Many of these have tours in English and some (but not all) require you to book in advance so it's worth doing some research before you go. In addition, there are various tours of the vineyards which add another dimension to your visit.

UNESCO listed Bordeaux is 40 minutes by train from Libourne with some awe inspiring architecture, including St André cathedral and many museums and art galleries. The busiest shopping area is the Rue Ste Catherine, a pedestrian street built on a long Roman road.



Libourne to Rochefort

approx. 1 hr 40, 152k / 95 miles



Saintes has a famous Roman amphitheatre which is well worth a visit. The town itself is also attractive, with a long avenue leading to a bridge across the river Charente where there are boat trips available. Rochefort is on the same river and was once an important naval base and shipyard - today it is still a port with marina and sail-makers. It boasts France's longest building, the impressive 17th century Corderie Royale (royal ropeworks) which is now a museum. Just over half an hour away with its ancient towers at the harbour entrance, the port area of La Rochelle is very picturesque with dozens of pavement cafés, bars and restaurants to choose from. The old town is lovely with an outstanding market and cobbled streets filled with boutiques. To see a more modern part of La Rochelle you can take a walk around the quayside and across the footbridges to the marina at Les Minimes (or take the 'bus de mer' water taxi) which is also very pleasant.

Rochefort to Saumur

approx. 2 hrs 35, 200k / 125 miles



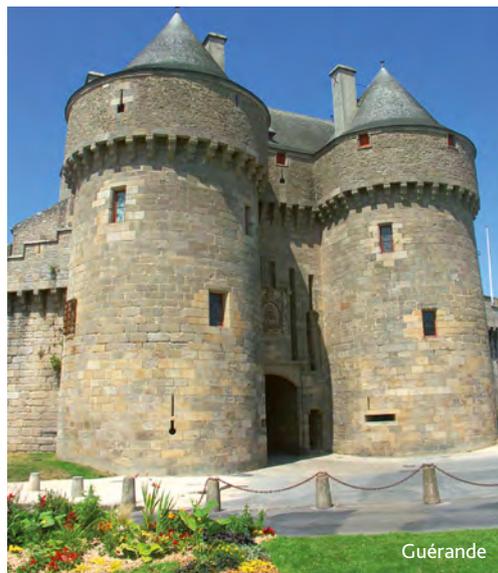
You may like to spend some extra time in Rochefort or drive straight to Saumur to make the most of your time in the Loire Valley. Whilst in Saumur this is a good opportunity to visit one of the sparkling wine cellars which are open for guided visits. France's Cadre Noir national cavalry school is in this city so you may have the chance to see some of the magnificent horses in training. The area is also known for its many troglodyte properties built into the white tufa stone making ideal living conditions - warm in winter, cool in summer, and perfect for wine storage and mushroom growing.

Cholet might be a nice place to stop for lunch - there is a huge public garden in the middle of town which is popular for walks. Another highlight along the way is the wildlife paradise of the Marais Poitevin or the Venise Verte (Green Venice), particularly the area in and around Coulon where you can take a punt trip through these scenic waterways.

Rochefort to La Baule

approx. 2 hrs 50, 240k / 149 miles

After your stay in Rochefort you may like to break your drive to La Baule by stopping in Nantes, on the river Loire. France's 6th largest city, it was once the capital of Brittany and an important 18th century trading port. Nantes is famous for its Petit Beurre butter biscuits from the LU factory (which make nice gifts to take home) and was the home of the novelist Jules Verne. It's a very attractive place with cobbled pedestrian streets in the old city, historic riverside buildings, a good tram system and a large student population. The mechanical elephant is a great tourist attraction



too, on the Ile de Nantes, where there is also a Jules Verne museum. La Baule is a large and very popular seaside resort with a fantastic sandy beach that stretches for 9 kilometres around the bay. There's a huge range of places to eat, bars, shopping and entertainment, particularly in the summer.

The beautiful walled town of Guérande (a 15 minute drive from your hotel in La Baule) is entered by fortified gateways & has a network of medieval cobbled streets, attractive shops & restaurants. This is a great place to explore on foot and is known for its high quality sea salt cultivated from the surrounding marshes - there are lots of arts and craft galleries, some tempting crêperies and you can try various local specialities such as delicious salted caramels.

