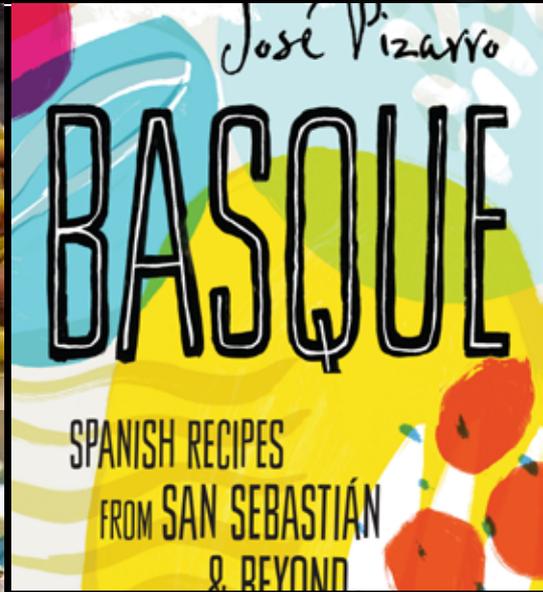
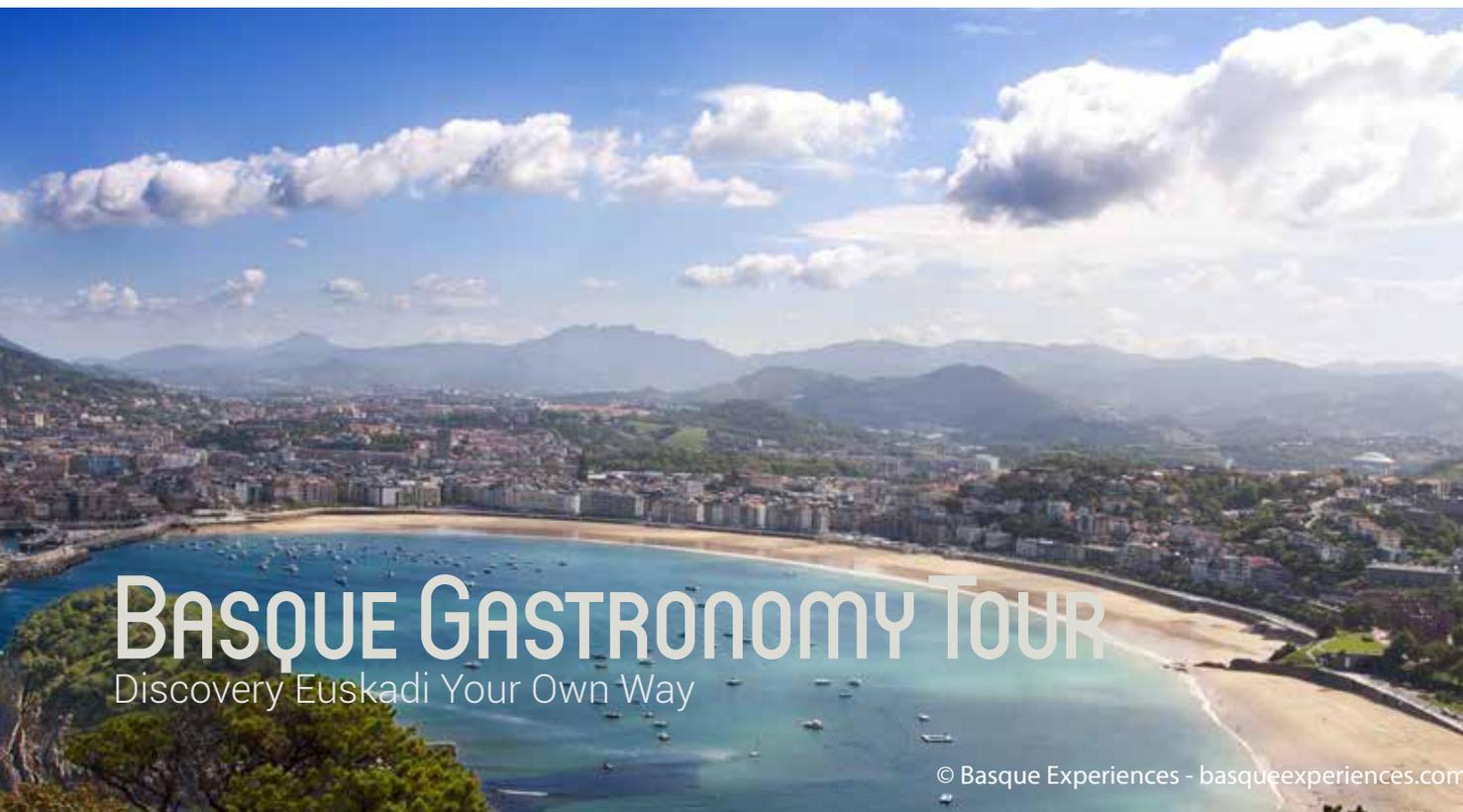


BASQUE[®] experiences

DISCOVER EUSKADI, YOUR OWN WAY





BASQUE GASTRONOMY TOUR

Discovery Euskadi Your Own Way

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DAY BY DAY ITINERARY - MARCH 2018

DATE	OUTLINE ITINERARY	ACCOMMODATION
March 7	Arrive in Bilbao airport. Private transfer to Hotel in Bilbao. Welcome evening in the town by way of an informal tour to some of the best and hidden pintxo bars.	4* Hotel Miró Bilbao
March 8	Indigenous Varieties Visits to 'Denominación de Origen' producers close to Bilbao. Salt flats, Idiazabal Cheese, and our own Txakoli wine. José to give a pintxo preparation course in the Txakoli Bodega. Late lunch at the cheese-maker. Evening together in Bilbao. (B,L)	4* Hotel Miró Bilbao
March 9	Provenance Visit two local producers. One supplying vegetables and salad leaves the other a winner of the best 'txistorra' sausage. Both local, small scale, family run enterprises. Lunch in the village at a local style restaurant. Free afternoon in San Sebastián. Evening dinner in a 'Sociedad Gastronomica' famous in San Sebastián as male only, private dining clubs. José to prepare, with help from the guests, some very local, typical dishes seen in these clubs. (B, D)	4* Hotel Villa Soro San Sebastián
March 10	Hands-on class Morning visit to a local market to select ingredients before a full day's private course in the Basque Culinary Center , with José as the Chef/Tutor. Wine tasting provided by a great Rioja Bodega. Free evening in San Sebastián. (B,L)	4* Hotel Villa Soro San Sebastián
March 11	Transfer to Bilbao and a morning tour of the Guggenheim Museum with a private guide before dining at Azurmendi, one of the world's finest restaurants. This 3 Michelin Star restaurant opens its kitchen for us in a private visit with José and the restaurant team. Private transfer to BIO airport (B,L)	

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BASQUE GASTRONOMY TOUR

Basque Experiences Itinerary - 7-11 March 2018

THIS FOUR-NIGHT CULINARY TOUR TO THE BASQUE COUNTRY WITH JOSÉ PIZARRO AND BASQUE EXPERIENCES IS A CHANCE TO DISCOVER, SEE, TASTE AND EXPERIENCE TRADITIONAL AND MODERN BASQUE CULTURE AND GASTRONOMY FIRST-HAND WITH EXPERTS. THIS SMALL GROUP TOUR WILL BE RESTRICTED TO 10 GUESTS STAYING IN TWO GREAT 4* HOTELS IN THE GASTRONOMIC CITY THAT IS SAN SEBASTIÁN AND THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY, BILBAO. OUR VISITS WILL TAKE US TO HIDDEN AWAY FARMS, SUPPLYING UNIQUE PRODUCTS TO THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN SPAIN, AND A FAMILY-RUN SMALL BUSINESS THAT HAS ENDEAVOURED TO MAINTAIN RARE-BREED LIVESTOCK IN THE RUGGED MOUNTAINS. WE WILL DINE WITH THE CHEFS AT ONE OF THE WORLD'S FINEST RESTAURANTS, WITH THE LOCALS ON A CHEESE-MAKING FARM AND WITH THE MEMBERS OF ONE OF THE MOST CLASSIC AND ONE OF THE OLDEST BASQUE DINING SOCIETIES. GET A BEHIND-THE-SCENES AND HANDS-ON LOOK AT THE BRILLIANT MIND OF A CELEBRITY CHEF IN THE KITCHEN.

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DETAILED ITINERARY: **BASQUE GASTRONOMY TOUR** – MARCH 4 - 11 2018

March 7

Arriving at Bilbao airport at around 15:45, we will collect you in our own private coach and make the short trip to your hotel in the city centre of Bilbao. Principal city of the Basque Country, the formerly polluted, industrial and conflictive city has shed its grimy and rusty coating and transformed itself into a shiny, cosmopolitan, modern, dynamic metropolis. Busy, dense, and diverse, the city is now home to the world-famous Guggenheim Bilbao. Boasting the largest indoor covered food market in Europe, dining is never far from you here. Excellent pintxos, bars, restaurants and a lively old quarter, ensure that you will have no time to stand still.

Evening will see us wander from the hotel to sample the latest creations in the bars of the city. Pintxos here are taken seriously and with Jose and Basque Experiences helping us, we will discover why they are becoming as popular as they are.

March 8 - Indigenous Varieties

After an evening in the city, we head inland. Time to discover the other Basque Country, the province of Alava. Much less visited than its two coastal neighbours, but more steeped in history and a variety of produce one wouldn't perhaps expect. Today we look to some of our longest and often forgotten traditions.

Salt is an often forgotten, sometimes maligned yet absolutely fundamental element when it comes to gastronomy. Our day starts at a truly remarkable place.

For thousands of years salt has been extracted from this hidden spot close to Vitoria. We will discover, learn about and sample the incredible resource that literally springs out from the ground here. Tracing its importance to the 21st Century, we will move on to a modern and innovative wine maker to sample what is only found here in the Basque Country, Txakoli. Among the vines we will learn about and sample this mineral, fresh wine before retiring to the kitchen/bar on the premises where Jose will introduce and prepare for us some classic Basque Pintxos. We will see up-close and learn the special techniques needed to produce what appear very simple dishes, but take years to master without these tips.

After sampling, we will head out into another valley for a visit to a producer of what is one of the Basque Country's most famous exports, that of Idiazabal Cheese. One of the three 'Denominacion de Origen' products we will see today, the makers are a family who open their doors for us to learn about, taste and enjoy this very Basque cheese. It's not only cheese here however, as the entertaining owner takes us on a gastronomic trip of the area with some surprises! A very, very long and late meal here means that we will not probably get back into Bilbao until into the evening.

March 9 - Provenance

Heading east along the coast on Tuesday morning, we will visit the small fishing village of Getaria. Famous

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for whaling and ship-building in the middle-ages, this maritime culture is reflected in its cuisine and society. During the morning we will visit two farms, both small enterprises and family-run, to learn about the local history, and how it has influenced what people eat here and further afield. Lunchtime will be free for you to explore more, or discover a local style restaurant.

After lunch we make the short drive to San Sebastián, without doubt one of the gastronomic capitals of the world. Compact, charming and aristocratic, this city, hemmed in by mountains and beaches is our base for two nights. A rich history comprising elements of Basque, Spanish and French cultures has enabled this city to develop a very unique culinary profile. Internationally famous for its array of Michelin Star restaurants, it is the local culture which is held up by many as the reason for this success. Abundant local produce, a summer resort for the French and Spanish aristocracy and the competitive nature of the Basques ensures that procuring, preparing and dining well are always high on the list here.

We will meet early evening to experience one of the great Basque dining traditions, that of the Sociedad Gastronomica or Txoko. Visits are by invitation only and as guests, we will not only dine, but participate in the whole ritual, which until recently, was a male-only preserve. Our hosts Jose and Txuno will introduce us to some of this city's classic dishes and with the help of a few glasses of wine as we assist in the preparation, you will soon find yourself converted as a fan of the Sociedad Gastronomica!

March 10 - Hands-on Class

After breakfast, we will visit the Mercado de San Martín in San Sebastián, the venue where the serious chefs source their produce. Under the tutelage of Jose and a teacher from the Basque Culinary Center, we will inspect, learn about and choose the produce we will today prepare and enjoy together.

The Basque Culinary Center is a world-leading Faculty of Gastronomic Science, the first in Spain and the second in Europe, part of Mondragon University here in the Basque Country. It is also an internationally acclaimed Research

and Innovation Centre in the field of Food and Gastronomy founded by the Basque Government alongside the Basque Chefs; Arzak, Berasategui, Subijana, Aduriz and Atxa among others. The Basque Culinary Center also has an International Advisory Committee, chaired by Ferran Adrià and made up of some prominent international chefs including Yukio Hattori, Massimo Bottura, Michel Bras, Dan Barber, Heston Blumenthal and René Redzepi.

Reserved for these institutions, access again is by special invitation only and we are privileged to have full access for the day. After selecting our goods from the market, we will undertake a bespoke cookery course in our own private lecture theatre/kitchen. Each person will have their own fully-equipped individual 'kitchen' and will receive one-to-one instruction from Jose and the BCC staff. Upon completion we will dine together in the Center and also we will undertake a wine tasting from a small-production wine-maker from the village of Laguardia in the Rioja Alavesa wine region. Finishing around 18:00 we will back to the hotel where you will have a free Saturday evening.

March 11

Our final day in the Basque Country sees us visit two world famous destinations; The Guggenheim Bilbao and Azurmendi restaurant.

The Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, famous the world over for its ground-breaking architectural design is an icon for us Bilbainos. For our final morning, our own English-speaking art expert will introduce us to the permanent and temporary exhibits of the Guggenheim Foundation collection by way of a private tour. This 21st Century theme is continued by our visit to what is seen by many as one of the finest restaurants in the world today. Azurmendi is a short drive from Bilbao city centre and our visit to the restaurant, accompanied by Jose and one of the Azurmendi staff, will see us embark upon a behind-the-scenes look at the kitchens, the allotments, and the 'research and development' being undertaken here. This visit is so much more than lunch, and it really is a fitting finale before we say goodbye and head to the airport for your flights back.



ELEMENTS OF THE TOUR

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Preparation and Cooking

As guests you will be involved with Jose in three cooking courses:

- One fully inclusive course with you each having your own cooking stations in a professional environment that is the Basque Culinary Center. A University Campus in San Sebastián dedicated to research and innovation in food and gastronomy, unique in the world.

Visits

Visits would be made to local producers to give background and context to the preparation and cooking aspects. We have many successful, small-scale, family-run producers here and some with whom we have experience of visits. These include:

- A farm that specialises in 'Gisantes Lagrima' the tear-shaped pea that is unique here. The farm supplies restaurants with a total of over 40 Michelin stars in the region yet is still extremely down-to earth.
- A family run farm where for the last 8 years they have been persevering with the production of acorn-fed Basque Pigs. Not for 'Jamon' though, but for the finest Chorizo, Txistorra, and black puddings.
- The market visit would precede the visit to the Basque Culinary Center and will take place in the Mercado de San Martin in San Sebastián. Once we select the most suitable local produce, we will prepare it in the Basque Culinary Centre, in our own dedicated large kitchen with individual preparation and cooking stations for the guests. We will also have a Rioja wine-tasting on the premises.
- By way of providing a theme and context, day four will commence with a visit, tour and tasting at an ancient Salt Falt that has been producing salt since pre-history and has been rehabilitated to commence production and who now supply salt to the best restaurants in Spain, and indeed to some of our hosts.
- Idiazabal is seen as one of the great cheeses coming out of Spain and our collaborator has won many awards, but it's not just Idiazabal that she produces. As a family-run business the visit is a very warm indeed and the charismatic cheese-maker will be preparing a very traditional late lunch for us.
- The Txakoli bodega is located close to the cheese-maker meaning minimal transfer times. The modern bodega is located in a spectacular location and our private visit will enable us to make use of the professional kitchen and large dining room, pretty much unique for bodegas in this region.

- The Sociedad Gastronomica is one of the reasons why Basque Gastronomy holds in own. Generations of men bringing goods into the cities to sell, led to the formation of 'Guild' like societies. These private clubs are now legend and we have access to one of the oldest and best located in San Sebastián old town where we will be able to prepare food, dine and drink like locals. José will be assisted by the guests in preparation of a typical 'Sociedad Gastronomica' meal.

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TOTAL PRICE FOR THE TRIP

All prices include IVA

Group size:

Based on 2 people sharing, Group size of 10

- €4495 per pax
- Individual supplement of €580 per pax.

Includes:

- Two nights Four star accommodation in San Sebastián with breakfast
- Two nights Four star accommodation in Bilbao with breakfast.
- All transfers in Basque Country in own private chauffeured vehicle.
- Accompanied by Jose Pizarro during the 3 courses, visits and meals.
- Private dedicated English, Basque Experiences guide at all times.
- Lunch with wine on days 3, 4 and 5.
- Dinner with wine on day 2.
- Pintxo tour of San Sebastián on evening of arrival.
- Visits to local producers, salt flats and D.O. producers.
- Full day course at Basque Culinary Center and market visit.
- Pintxo preparation course at the Txakoli producer.
- Local dish course in a Private Dining Club, 'Txoko' or 'Sociedad Gastronomica'.
- Private guided Guggenheim Bilbao visit in English by expert art guide.
- Public Liability Insurance.



Does not include:

- Flights
- Transfers in UK.
- Any drinks meals snacks or other purchase not highlighted above.
- Visas or any vaccines.
- Tips or gratuities
- Personal Travel Insurance. We would insist on this.

NOTE:

B = Breakfast included – L = Lunch included – D = Dinner included

Accommodation

The accommodation is in the centres of San Sebastian and Bilbao. The first is undisputedly San Sebastián's best boutique hotel. The second is located in the centre of Bilbao opposite the Guggenheim museum and by not being part of a 'chain' the service attention to detail and familiarity is excellent.

Transport & Tour leader

There will be a fully bi-lingual Tour leader/ accompaniment from Basque Experiences at all times. All transfers and transport would be in our own private bus with chauffer.



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