



TOUR ITINERARY

Europe / Spain / Basque Country + Rioja

RIDING LEVEL

3

Basque Country Chef on Wheels Bike Tour

San Sebastián to the Sea: Culinary Culture and Gastronomy in Northern Spain

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the Basque Country like a local, thanks to the personal connections of our Chef on Wheels: visit one of the region's last traditional markets, meet the matriarch of a legendary fishing family, and taste artisanal cheeses made by a renowned Basque cheesemaker
- Forage for wild herbs near our friend's 16th-century farmhouse hotel then learn the secrets of Basque cuisine during an intimate evening cooking class with Chef Mikel
- Discover the Basque tradition of *txikiteo*—bar hopping—in San Sebastián, the region's vibrant culinary capital
- Ride epic coastal roads to a family-owned vineyard to sip local Txakoli wine and enjoy a chef-prepared picnic
- Spend three nights at the Basque Country's most exclusive hotel, set in the coastal hills of Monte Igeldo overlooking the Bay of Biscay



ARRIVAL + DEPARTURE

Arrival Details

- ➔ **Airport City:** Bilbao, Spain
- 📍 **Pick-Up Location:** The Artist Grand Hotel
- 🕒 **Pick-Up Time:** 8:15 am

Departure Details

- ➔ **Airport City:** Bilbao, Spain
- 📍 **Drop-Off Location:** Donastia-San Sebastián Bus Station
- 🕒 **Drop-Off Time:** 11:00 am

NOTE: DuVine provides group transfers to and from the tour from the pick-up and drop-off locations stated on the itinerary. In the event your train, flight, or other travel falls outside the arrival or departure times or locations, you may be responsible for extra costs incurred in arranging a separate transfer.

Emergency Assistance

For urgent assistance on your way to tour or while on tour, please always contact your guides first. You may also contact the Boston office during business hours at +1 617 776 4441 or emergency@dutive.com.

Meet the Chef: Mikel Olaizola

Chef **Mikel Olaizola** is an accomplished chef and DuVine guide with a deep passion for the Basque Country's rich culinary heritage. The San Sebastián native received his Bachelor's degree from the Basque Culinary Center, where he studied gastronomy and culinary arts. From there, he trained in award-winning restaurants in Spain, Japan, and Denmark—including Tokyo's two-Michelin star Narisawa.

Mikel's passion for gastronomic science and research eventually led him back to the Basque Culinary Center, this time as a member of the faculty. During his time there, Mikel coordinated the school's Master's program while teaching, overseeing the test kitchen, and running the Laboratory of Food Development and Technology. Mikel has also collaborated with colleagues from Harvard, MIT Media Lab, and UC Berkeley on a number of scholarly articles.

More recently, Mikel participated in the launch of chef Rasmus Munk's multi-sensory, science-forward Copenhagen restaurant: The Alchemist. He also serves as a member of the restaurant's research and development team, where he helped to create Spora, an innovative new food lab dedicated to sustainable food research.

TOUR ITINERARY

Tour By Day

DAY
1

Market to Mountains

Meet your guides this morning in Bilbao before a transfer to the historic town of Guernica to meet Mikel Olaizola, our Chef on Wheels. Our culinary adventure begins with a visit to one of Basque Country's last traditional markets, where Mikel introduces us to a bounty of local produce and demonstrates the fine art of haggling while we fill our baskets with fresh ingredients for tonight's dinner. After a bike fitting and safety briefing, we'll head out into the Basque countryside and tackle our first climb of the week—a lush and tree-lined route that leads through the mountains to our friend Jon's beautifully renovated 16th-century farmhouse hotel and our home for the night. Our efforts are rewarded with lunch prepared by Chef Mikel. Later, we'll join him to forage for edible flowers and wild herbs, then watch and learn as he transforms our market finds into a feast for the senses.

Meals: Lunch / Dinner

Destinations: Bilbao, Guernica, Axpe

Accomplished: 13 miles / 21 km, elevation gain: 1,269 feet / 387 meters

Accommodations: [Hotel Mendi Goikoa Bekoa](#)

DAY
2

Into the Vines

Today we set our sights on the coast, starting with a short transfer to the 15th-century Basilica of Loyola, where our ride begins. We'll warm up our legs on the way out of town, gradually ascending into the forest before conquering Elosuo, a favorite climb of local cyclists. At the top we'll take in epic views of the electric green countryside and stop for a cold drink in the hidden mountain village of Aizarna. Continue cycling through rolling hills blanketed in vines to a delightful, picnic prepared by Mikel, paired with glasses of Txakoli: a fresh, effervescent white wine infused with the essence of the sea. It's a short ride to the chic, coastal village of Zarautz and our boutique hotel a stone's throw from the Bay of Biscay. Spend the afternoon basking on the beach while surfers ride the waves or take a seaside stroll along El Malecón. Tonight, we'll dine in style at the hotel's gastronomic restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Destinations: Axpe, Azpeitia, Zarautz

Accomplished: 22 miles / 36 km, elevation gain: 3,050 feet / 930 meters

Longer Option: 27 miles / 43 km, elevation gain: 3,770 feet / 1,150 meters

Accommodations: [Hotel UR Bare](#)

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY
3

The Art of Txikiteo

This morning's ride is short but stunning, leading us through grape vines and chestnut groves to San Sebastián, the culinary capital of the Basque Country. Here, Mikel unlocks the magic of the city's world-class food scene and guides us through the delightful Basque tradition of *txikiteo* (bar-hopping). We'll sip local wines and sample savory snacks called *pintxos* prepared by some of his *amigos*. In the afternoon, transfer to the sublime hotel we'll call home for the next three nights, with time for a treatment at the spa or a glass of Cava on one of the hotel's many terraces. Later, we meet Mikel's friend Gabriella—a renowned food and wine expert on the Basque culinary scene—at her beautiful home, where Mikel dazzles us with a sumptuous feast.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Destinations: Zarautz, San Sebastián

Accomplished: 19 miles / 30 km, elevation gain: 1,578 feet / 481 meters

Accommodations: [Hotel Akelarre](#)

DAY
4

Getaria's Maritime Heritage

The Bay of Biscay creates a magnificent backdrop for today's ride along the coast. In Zarautz, we'll make an indulgent pastry stop on the seafront terrace of beloved Basque chef Karlos Arguiñano's hotel-restaurant. After, continue riding to the picturesque fishing village of Getaria. Famous for being the onetime home of Juan Sebastián Elcano, the first sailor to circumnavigate the globe, Getaria is also celebrated for its many historic *parrillas* (grills) where just-caught fish are cooked outdoors in wire baskets over blazing coals. Get an inside look at the town's rich seafaring history with our friend Manuela, the matriarch of one of the town's few remaining fishing families. Today's lunch honors the legacy of Getaria's *arrantzales* (fishermen) featuring just-caught seafood grilled to perfection. Choose to continue cycling along the Urola coastline and tackle the climb known locally as Mendizorrotz, or hop in the van for a transfer back to the hotel. Tonight, delve back into San Sebastián's renowned culinary culture—Chef Mikel can suggest several excellent spots for dinner on your own.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch

Destinations: Zarautz, Getaria, Igeldo

Accomplished: 15 miles / 23 km, elevation gain: 1,115 feet / 340 meters

Longer Option: 28 miles / 45 km, elevation gain: 2,950 feet / 900 meters

Accommodations: [Hotel Akelarre](#)

DAY
5

The New Basque Kitchen

Our final day of riding takes us inland through Pagoetako Natural Park to Aia, a quaint mountain town where we'll meet Mikel's friend Iker at his artisanal *quesería*. There, the renowned cheesemaker will explain the unique process he uses to produce his cow, sheep, and goat milk cheeses and share some delicious samples. Back on our bikes, we'll return to the coast for a beachfront coffee stop. Transfer by van or opt to challenge yourself with another Mendizorrotz ascent. Mikel greets us at the top, ready to share the secrets behind a traditional paella lunch. From there it's a quick transfer or ride back to our hotel. Tonight, we'll gather at sunset to toast the week with an *aperitivo*, then head to the hotel's Espazio Oteiza restaurant for an unforgettable meal showcasing New Basque Cuisine.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

Destinations: Igeldo, Aia, Orio

Accomplished: 20 miles / 32 km, elevation gain: 2,780 feet / 850 meters

Longer Option: 27 miles / 44 km, elevation gain: 3,215 feet / 980 meters

Accommodations: [Hotel Akelarre](#)

DAY
6

Agur!

Relish views of the Bay of Biscay over a relaxing breakfast this morning before we bid farewell to Basque Country. Your guides will transfer you to the San Sebastián bus station for your return to Bilbao (or your next destination).

Meals: Breakfast