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TOUR ITINERARY

RIDING LEVEL 3

Europe / Spain / Basque Country + Rioja

Basque Coast Bike Tour

Bilbao to San Sebastián: Summer Cycling in Northern Spain

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TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride epic coastal roads through a landscape of lush vineyards, rugged mountains, and electric green countryside
- Experience Basque Country like a local: meet the matriarch of a legendary fishing family, taste artisanal cheeses made by a renowned Basque cheesemaker, and savor traditional Basque cuisine at a family-owned *sagardotegi* (cider house)
- Enjoy an unforgettable meal at the home of our friend Gabriella, one of the Basque Country's most renowned culinary experts
- Explore the vibrant seaside town of San Sebastián, known as Spain's capital of gastronomy
- Spend four nights at Akelarre, the region's most exclusive hotel, set on the slopes of Monte Igueldo above the Bay of Biscay

ARRIVAL + DEPARTURE

Arrival Details

- **Airport City**: Bilbao, Spain
- **Pick-Up Location**: The Artist Grand Hotel
- **Pick-Up Time**: 8:30 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@duvine.com**.

TOUR ITINERARY

Tour By Day

DAY 1 Welcome to the Basque Country

Meet your guides this morning in Bilbao for a transfer to a quiet mountain town, where our adventure begins. After a bike fitting and safety briefing, we'll ride into the green heart of the Basque interior. Our route winds through pastureland and pine forest, where traditional stone farmhouses called *baserris* punctuate the landscape and native Latxa sheep graze on the emerald hills. Soon we'll catch our first glimpse of the Bay of Biscay, a vast expanse of blue against the horizon. Descend into the village of Lekeitio, then follow one of the Basque Country's most spectacular coastal roads to Deba, where lunch awaits at a chic beachfront *taberna*. From there it's just a few steps to our boutique hotel. Spend the afternoon settling into your room and lounging on the beach. This evening we'll raise a glass to the adventure ahead before sitting down to a delicious dinner at the hotel's gastronomic restaurant.

Meals: Lunch / Dinner
Destinations: Bilbao, Munitibar, Deba
Accomplished: 25 miles / 41 km, elevation gain: 2,400 feet / 730 meters
Accommodations: **Hiru Uhinak**

DAY 2 Getaria's Maritime Heritage

The Bay of Biscay creates a magnificent backdrop for today's ride. Setting out from our hotel we'll head inland, climbing into the foothills of the Izarraitz massif and the Urola Valley. This striking landscape is defined by a rich agricultural heritage. Here, apple orchards for traditional Basque cider give way to coastal vineyards planted with native Hondarrabi Zuri grapes used to produce Txakoli, the crisp, slightly effervescent white wine synonymous with the Basque coast. Our destination is the picturesque fishing village of Getaria, where we'll delve into the town's seafaring history with our friend Manuela, the matriarch of one of its few remaining fishing families. 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. Either way, we'll end at Akelarre, the sleek, five-star design hotel where we'll spend the rest of the trip. Settle into your room, then relax with a glass of Cava on one of the terraces overlooking the sea. Tonight we'll regather and visit our friend Gabriella—a renowned food and wine expert on the Basque culinary scene—at her beautiful home, where a private chef dazzles us with a sumptuous feast.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner
Destinations: Deba, Getaria, Igeldo
Accomplished: 21 miles / 34 km, elevation gain: 2,700 feet / 830 meters
Longer Option: 32 miles / 52 km, elevation gain: 4,260 feet / 1,300 meters
Accommodations: **Hotel Akelarre**

DAY 3 Coast, Culture, and Cuisine

Today kicks off with a glorious descent along the ridge road that traces the slopes of Monte Igeldo. Along the way, take in panoramic views of the rugged Basque coastline as the Bay of Biscay sparkles in the distance. Following the banks of the Oria River, continue cycling over gently rolling hills into San Sebastián, the culinary capital of the Basque Country. As we explore the city's cobbled streets and Belle Époque center, your guides unlock the magic of San Sebastián's history and culture, pointing out some of their favorite restaurants and *pintxos* bars for tomorrow night's dinner on your own. At lunchtime we'll head to our friend Juan's waterfront restaurant, where fire touches each fresh, seasonal ingredient. Afterward, transfer back to the hotel for some downtime and a chance to relax at the spa. This evening we'll dine at an elegant family-owned restaurant renowned for its world-class wine cellar.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner
Destinations: Igeldo, San Sebastián
Accomplished: 20 miles / 32 km, elevation gain: 1,480 feet / 450 meters
Accommodations: **Hotel Akelarre**

DAY 4 Flavors of the Basque Country

This morning, spin back down the coast road, crossing the Oria River before climbing through the countryside and into Pagoeta Natural Park. Our destination is Aia, a quaint mountain town where we'll meet our friend Iker at his artisanal *quesería*. There, the esteemed cheesemaker will explain the unique process he uses to craft artisanal cheeses from the milk of Latxa sheep and share some delicious samples. Back on our bikes, enjoy a sweeping descent all the way down to the village of Orio, stopping for a coffee at our favorite local beach bar. From there, transfer by van or tack on some extra miles with another climb up Mendizorrotz. However you choose to arrive, lunch awaits at a historic *sagardotegi* (cider house) that blends timeless tradition with sleek architecture, stunning sea views, and plenty of Basque cider. Tonight you're free to dive back into San Sebastián's world-class food scene, perhaps taking part in the Basque tradition of *txikiteo* (bar-hopping) before rounding out the evening with dinner on your own.

Meals: Breakfast / Lunch
Destinations: Igeldo, Aia, Orio
Accomplished: 20 miles / 33 km, elevation gain: 1,800 feet / 560 meters
Longer Option: 28 miles / 45 km, elevation gain: 3,100 feet / 950 meters
Accommodations: **Hotel Akelarre**

DAY 5

To the Border and Back

Our final day of riding takes us down the east side of Monte Igeldo and into San Sebastián. Spin through the city along a coastal bike path to the historic village of Pasai Donibane, then take on Jaizkibel pass—a favorite of local cyclists and the centerpiece of the Clásica San Sebastián. This shaded climb opens at the summit to reveal spectacular views over the Cantabrian Sea and along the coast toward France. Descend into Hondarribia, admiring the Medieval architecture and colorful fishermen's homes of this charming maritime border town, and pause to refuel with some sweet treats and a quick coffee. From there, choose to tackle the famous climb from the opposite side or hop in the van for a transfer. Lunch is served beside the harbor in Pasai, an idyllic spot to linger with a glass of wine and watch the sailboats glide across the water. Back at the hotel, treat yourself to a massage and a well-earned *siesta*. 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, Hondarribia, Pasai Donibane
Accomplished: 22 miles / 35 km, elevation gain: 2,360 feet / 720 meters
Longer Option: 33 miles / 53 km, elevation gain: 4,100 feet / 1,250 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
Destinations: San Sebastián