

Basque in the Glory Tour

- an adventure from our backyard -

11 days & 10 nights: The Northern Camino de Santiago



Over 1,000 years ago, the original way to Santiago wove along the Northern Coast, passing through the fabled Basque Country. Come with us and discover this mysterious corner of the Iberian Peninsula known for its proud people and marked contrasts. A culture that has always been tied to the land, we get a closer look of the Basques as we stroll their lush rolling hills, wander their imposing mountains, and skirt the tides of their rocky coves. We'll get a glimpse of sophisticated cosmopolitan centers and centuries-removed hamlets. Taste their full-flavored cheeses, freshly caught seafood, and crisp subtle wine and you'll soon feel like the King of Navarre!

Day 1: Bilbao – Old town

After our Orientation Meeting, our local art historian takes us on a guided visit of the internationally acclaimed Guggenheim Museum. Frank Gehry's titanium masterpiece evokes images of a flower and a ship – you decide what comes to mind! Next, we will take you for a stroll to discover the charm of Bilbao's Old Quarter - the city's medieval enclave. Travel back in time to the 6th century and visit ancient landmarks like the Cathedral of Santiago and Plaza Nueva. We finish our evening with a lovely dinner.

Accommodations: Bilbao (D)

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch & D=Dinner



Day 2: Bilbao & Hondarribia

After breakfast, we hop in the van and stop for a visit at the Chillida Leku Museum, home to the beautiful garden and country house that display sculptor Eduardo Chillida's impressive sculptures. Later, we make our way to the pleasant fishing village of Hondarribia, where pilgrims arrived by boat and began their pilgrimage to Santiago over 1,000 years ago! We stretch our legs and take our first steps on the Northern Camino de Santiago with a good climb to the Sanctuary of Guadalupe. We finish our day in the old quarter of town, where medieval walls have protected the villa for centuries.

Accommodations: Hondarribia (B,L,D) / Walking: 4 km or 2.5 mi

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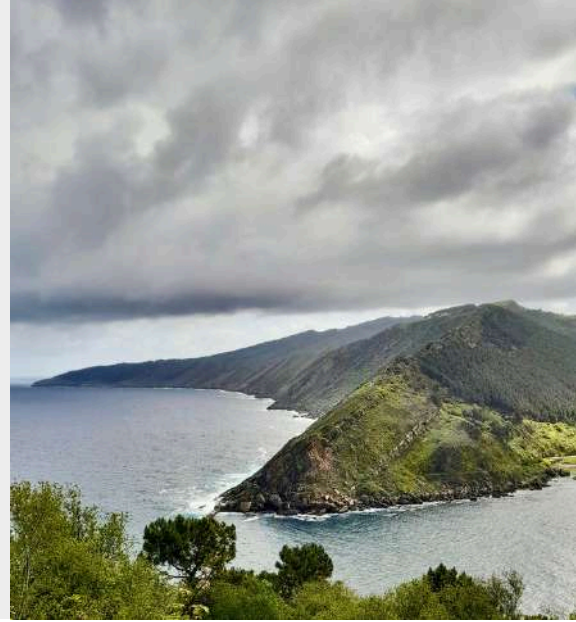
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Day 3: Sanctuary de Guadalupe to Pasajes San Juan

Starting from Guadalupe, the yellow arrows take us a bit higher as we cross along the mountain of Jaizkibel enjoying the views of the beaches and sea below! After strolling the ridge, we work our way down to the port of Pasajes de San Juan, decorated with small fishing boats of another time. After a zurito (small glass of beer), we return to Hondarribia, where we enjoy a fine meal of Basque cuisine.

Accommodations: Hondarribia (B,L,D) / Walking: 12 km or 7.5 mi



Day 4: Pasajes San Juan to San Sebastián

This morning, we return to Pasajes de San Juan and cross over to San Pedro on the other side of the port like the pilgrims did a thousand years ago – via boat! We then work our way past large caseríos, old stone Basque farmhouses, and are soon greeted by the stylish resort town of San Sebastián, a place that has long been popular with the Spanish bourgeois. Here the beauty of La Concha Beach makes it a wonderful place for an afternoon stroll.

Accommodations: San Sebastián (B, L, D) / Walking: 11 km or 7 mi

Day 5: San Sebastián to Orío

With boots on, we leave San Sebastián to ascend Monte Igeldo and stop to enjoy the views of the bay below. The rocky coast of the Basque Country has us going up and down hills and through small hamlets. The many flocks of sheep remind us that the Basques are not just men of the sea, but also pretty good shepherds! With the sea to our right keeping us company, we quickly make our way to the fishing port of Orío. Here we regroup and return for another evening in San Sebastián.

Accommodations: San Sebastián (B, L) / Walking: 15 km or 9.5 mi



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Day 6: Orio to Zumaia

Returning to Orio, we pass through Zarautz and continue along the seaside walkway to Getaria, whose famous sailing son, Juan Sebastián Elcano, was the first to sail around the world. We follow the Northern Camino de Santiago passing the local vineyards of txakoli, the local white wine, until we reach the village of Zumaia, a Basque port famous for its whaling and now its shipbuilding.

Accommodations: Getaria (B, L, D) / Walking: 16 km or 10 mi

Day 7: Zumaia to Deba

Our day begins on the beach in the Basque Coast Geopark, where we'll see 60 million years of history written in the rock formations of Zumaia. On today's walk we alternate between cliffside paths, rolling green farmland and views of the blue sea. Greet a local with Kaixo - Basque for hello - and watch them warm right up! Our day on the trail ends in Deba, where we will admire the stunning Gothic Church of Santa María. Afterwards, we prepare for a Basque meal that you won't forget!

Accommodations: : Getaria (B, D) / Walking: 13 km or 8 mi



Day 8: Markina to Zenarruza Monastery

This morning, we head inland to visit the Basilica of Saint Ignacio of Loyola nestled in the mountains of the Basque Country. Here, we visit the birthplace of the founder of the Society of Jesus and learn about his life and his impact on the world! After lunch, we return to the yellow arrows of the Camino and get some kilometers in before finishing up the day. Our walk ends at the medieval Monastery of Zenarruza, which still offers accommodation and hospitality to pilgrims.

Accommodations: Guernica (B, L, D) / Walking: 9 km or 5.5 mi

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Day 9: Zenarruza Monastery to Guernica

After a lighter day in the boots, we finish our Northern Camino de Santiago with a hike into Guernica through the stunning Basque countryside. Guernica is a name made famous around the world by Pablo Picasso's dramatic anti-war painting of the bombing of the town during the Spanish Civil War. In the Middle Ages, the Lords of Biscay would meet in Guernica under a giant oak tree to celebrate their fueros – self-governing laws that granted the Basques their autonomous rule. We will have a chance to admire the Assembly's Gardens of Peace, the oak tree and possibly even a recreation of the bombing of the city.

Accommodations: Guernica (B, L, D) / Walking: 18 km or 11 mi



Day 10: Guernica to Punta Galea & Portugalete

This morning after breakfast, we head to Punta Galea for our last walk of the tour. La Galea is a walk along the coast of Getxo, where you can enjoy the best bird's eye view of El Abra Port. Our walk ends by crossing the impressive Biscay Bridge (Puente Colgante) as our hotel is on the other side of the estuary. This 125-year-old structure links both side of the estuary and was declared a heritage monument by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Afterwards, enjoy a fantastic farewell dinner feast where we will say Agur!, which we know means goodbye in Basque.

Accommodations: Portugalete (B, L, D) / Walking: 12 km or 7.5 mi

Day 11: Portugalete

Your tour ends after breakfast at your hotel. We hope you have enjoyed your visit of our backyard!

Tour end: (B)

* Please note: this itinerary is subject to slight modifications due to hotel availability, weather, festivals & other occurrences



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What to expect?

Expect to have a wonderful time! We've designed each trip to enjoy the stunning beauty of the Basque landscape, while giving you a true sense of the soul and magic of these exciting people and their culture. We love to share this magnificent country and want you to feel a part of it.

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DATES AND PRICING



Scan or click the QR code to Book.



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?

2 Guides:

Our greatest resource! We know Spain because it is our home. Both of your Fresco guides are experienced professionals that are either Spanish or live in Spain year-round – no hired out summer help!

When specified, local art historians will join us to provide further insights of the specific monument / museum that we visit.

Groups of up to 6 people will be accompanied by 1 guide, groups of 7 -10 people will be accompanied by 1 guide and 1 minibus driver, and groups of 11 or more people will be accompanied by 2 guides and 1 minibus driver.



Meals:

Food speaks volumes about a culture and we love to eat! During our walk days, when possible, we prepare gourmet picnics, using the freshest of local ingredients and selecting the tastiest recipes of the region. Dinners are celebrated in Basque restaurants chosen not only for their menu, but also their atmosphere and service.

All meals except for one lunch and one dinner are included. We are proud to cater to vegetarians and those with food allergies as well.

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch & D=Dinner



Accommodation:

Fresco Tours selects a combination of 3-4 star hotels and charming restored Basque farm houses (Caserios) that offer the best in hospitality, comfort and location.

All rooms have their own bathrooms. Tour prices are based on d



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WHAT'S INCLUDED?



Limited Group Sizes:

Fresco Tours are in small groups to ensure that you receive the individual attention that you deserve. We want to be able to treat each of our clients with a personal touch and we limit the groups to a maximum of 16 participants. We also recognize that each person's Camino is their own personal experience and if you wish, we encourage you to walk on your own – with the assurance that we will be there for you!

Support Vehicles:

Your walks will be accompanied by 2 support vehicles (minimum 7 pax) that are there to provide assistance when needed and look out for your safety. You will have access to the bus every couple of hours, so you won't need to carry a heavy backpack. In addition, the possibility of shorter routes and pick-up options will be offered and explained on a daily basis.



Ground transportation:

All ground transportation between our meeting point in the city of Bilbao, Spain, and our final destination in Portugalete (near Bilbao) is provided on your Fresco Tour.

Luggage transfers:

Your luggage will be transported between hotels. You do the walking, we'll do the lifting!

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Pre-Tour Assistance:

We will help with your travel arrangements prior to and after the tour start and finish of your Fresco Tour, including assistance with hotel reservations and train tickets.

We are happy to provide assistance in arranging your transportation to and from Bilbao.



Click on the map for a full description of each stage.



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