

BESPOKE ITINERARY - LUXURY - SMALL GROUP

Gastonomic Spain Rioja & The Basque Country

12 DAYS / 11 NIGHTS



*A Gastronomical
Food, Wine, &
Culture Tour*

Dominique Rizzo

FOOD, WINE
& CULTURE
TOURS

FULL ITINERARY

Travelling to

Bilbao, La Guardia, Logrono, Elciego, Rioja, San Sebastian, Briones, Haro, Merino, Basque, Zumia, Biarritz, San Jean de Lux, Pasajes

DAY 1 Bilbao

We meet you in the lobby of our hotel in the morning ready to check out. Leaving our luggage at hotel we meet our guide for a fabulous walking tour of Bilbao. We visit City Hall, Round Square, Arriaga Theatre, 14th century Gothic Cathedral of St James, the old Quarter and the Ribera Market stopping in the bustling Plaza Nueva for a lunch of local Pintxos. We return back to our hotel to take our transport to Laguardia in Rioja. (Considered one of the most beautiful villages in Spain). The town is the middle of wine-country with spectacular views. We check into our Luxury family boutique hotel then meet you in the evening for a welcome cocktail in the hotel caves, dinner is a celebration of local fare in our hotel. L/D

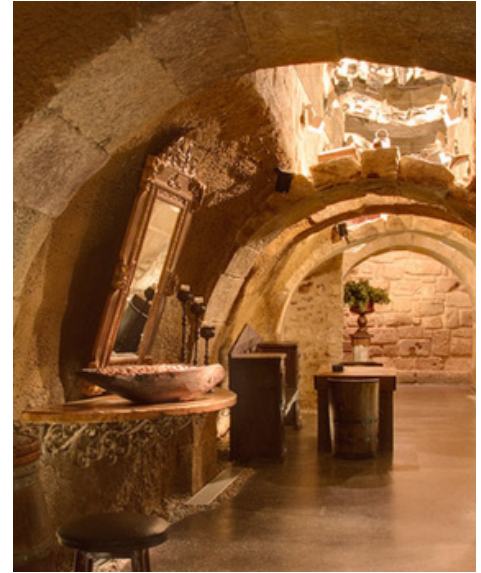
Over Night in Laguardia

DAY 2 La Guardia - Wine & Tapas in Logrono

After enjoying breakfast, we head out on foot for a historical guided tour of our town, La Guardia. Following our tour we drive to Marques de Riscal, one of the first wine cellars in this region which dates back to 1858. Located in the medieval town of Elciego, and only a few kilometres from the Santiago Pilgrimage route, the Hotel Marques de Riscal and its surrounding "City of Wine" provide the ideal starting point from which to explore the nature, tradition and exquisite gastronomy associated with wine.

The winery is attached to the only luxury hotel created by architect Frank Gehry whose goal was to promise to enchant guests with exceptional designer touches and enviable views of the countryside the medieval town of Elciego and the striking architecture of the building itself. After our tour we stop to enjoy our first Michelin star experience for lunch at Venta El Moncalvillo. We venture back to the hotel and give you free time for siesta until we meet in the evening for a walking Tapas Tour of the bustling city of Logrono. Logrono, the capital of la Rioja is home to Calle Laurel a popular street in the old quarter of Logrono. Arguably the best gastronomic street in Spain, it has almost 100 tapas bars, each one specialised in a different style of tapa and showcasing unique styles not found anywhere else in Spain. B/L/D

Overnight in La Guardia



DAY 3 Olive Oil - Private Gastronomy Cooking Class - Walking in Logrono

Today we visit an authentic traditional olive press which is at the same time an ethnographic museum for being an important source of the oleic patrimony of Rioja Alavesa. Experience the traditional extraction system using giant conic stone meals, we enjoy a tasting and submerge ourselves in the stimulating world of this prized liquid gold.

Following our olive oil experience, we drive to Logrono to experience the history and culture on foot as we take a guided tour of this wonderful city. Our banquet lunch is a combined local market tour and a cooking demonstration in a private member only Gastronomy Society in an historic mansion located in the old quarter of Logrono. One of the members will be cooking a special meal based on typical dishes of La Rioja with seasonal ingredients. Bear in mind that the area of Rioja and Navarra is considered the garden of Spain with the best and tastier fruit and vegetables. We give you some free time to enjoy Logrono, a spot of shopping, a wander through the city or simply take your place at one of their many cafes and just watch the city go by. Your evening is free for you to enjoy the town of La Guardia, dine in one of the local restaurants, take a stroll along the fortified wall, or simply relax in the hotel. B/L

Overnight in La Guardia.

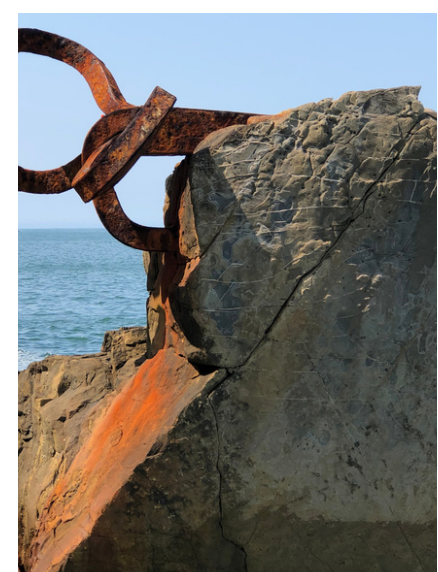
DAY 4 Wine and Food - Murrieta- Heredad Ugarte- Ysios

This morning we drive to Marques de Murrieta (Centenary Winery) for a guided tour and wine tasting. This winery was closed to everyone for almost 10 years and after a renovation of almost 20 million Euros the result puts Marques de Murrieta in place as one of the most spectacular wineries in the world.

We then drive to a unique winery next to the mountains with views of the vineyards for a gourmet traditional lunch. We enjoy a typical menu of specialty dishes from the Rioja region in particular the famous lamb chops grilled over dry vine branches in an open stone fireplace. On our way back to the hotel we stop to see one of the most incredibly designed wineries Ysios, an architectural landmark in Rioja.

We give you another evening free to relax and get you ready for check out the next day. B/L

Overnight in La Guardia.



DAY 5 Laguardia-Winery-Briones-Haro-San Sebastian

After our check out we indulge in another wine tasting experience to the exclusive family winery of Miguel Merino where we explore their family tradition and their family history of wine making. We relax with a guided tour to the towns of Briones and Haro stopping for lunch in an historic courtyard of a former convent for lunch. We then transfer to the city of San Sebastian. Beyond its three beautiful beaches, this seaside resort enticements include art, architectural pearls of the Belle Epoque and, of course, dining on delectable small plates at the local pintxo bars. We check into our hotel and meet later in the evening for dinner. B/L/D

Overnight in San Sebastian

DAY 6 San Sebastian

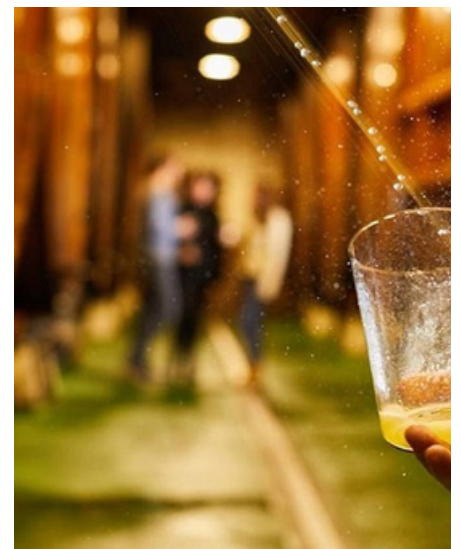
Put on your walking shoes as today we take you on a guided tour of San Sebastian. This is a bus and walking combined city tour taking you through the old town, temples, museums and cathedral in the city centre. You will have the chance to admire San Sebastian from its best viewpoint, Mount Igeldo, which will give you the full perspective of the city. We enjoy a short stop in the "Peine de los Vientos" to visit the most symbolic place of the city, and then a complete walk through the city, with multiple stories and tales that happened in San Sebastian during the history. Lunch is with the locals and the tradition of "Bar Hopping" as we enjoy local Pintxo in the old quarter. We leave you free for the rest of the day and the evening to enjoy the city for yourself. B/L

Overnight in San Sebastian

DAY 7 Cider House and Farm visit (Lunch)

Naturally fermented ciders have been a long tradition in this region and today we will show you why with a visit and tasting of the Basque Cider "Sagardoa. While on this tour you will enjoy a walk around the apple orchards and you will learn about pollination, fermentation process and presses, understanding how the Petritegi cider has evolved from 18 century to the present day. After our cider tasting, we drive inland, through green rolling hills to a Basque farmhouse run by the same family since the 16th Century. Here is where the endangered indigenous Basque Pig is reared in the traditional way, out in the woods. By the hand of a member of the family, devoted to recovering the indigenous Basque pig, you will learn how those pigs are reared and understand the traditional role of these self-sufficient traditional Basque farms. Here we sit with the family to enjoy a very special home-made meal in the family's dining room. The meal is prepared using only home-made products including their ham and charcuterie, wild mushrooms and local vegetables. After our banquet lunch the rest of the afternoon and evening in San Sebastian is free. B/L

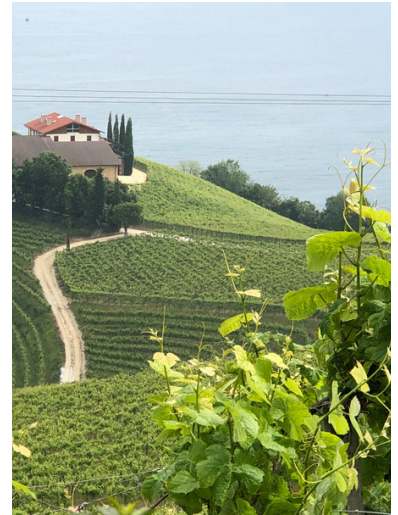
Overnight in San Sebastian



Day 8 San Sebastian Market Tour - Pintxo Cooking Class

Eat light for breakfast because today is all about the food of San Sebastian. We start with a local market tour followed by a Pintxo cooking class and lunch. Learn how to prepare some of the region's quintessential pintxo dishes balancing the perfect taste of local and traditional cuisine. We explore the blend of avant-garde cuisine, including techniques with low temperature cooking, sous vide and some molecular gastronomy. You will need a siesta after lunch with free time until we meet you for dinner taking you to one of San Sebastian's hidden gems. Recommended by the late chef Anthony Bordain, Casa Urola sits on one of the busiest lanes in the Parte Vieja. It appears to be just another pintxo bar – but pass the bar and climb the wooden stairs to enter its hidden second-story restaurant. Their food is fine dining with a focus on dishes highlighting the outstanding seasonal produce. B/L/D

Overnight in San Sebastian



DAY 9 Sheep's Milk Cheese - The Cliffs of Zumia - Getaria - Hondarribia

Today we make our way to Idiazabal sheep cheese farm, located in the rolling Basque hills. We taste and learn about one of the culinary icons of the area. The owner will lead us through the farm, giving us an intimate insight into the production starting with the milking process in the Milking Room right through to participating in the process of cheese-making. We finish with a cheese tasting session paired with local wines and cider.

We drive to the cliffs of Zumaia, a spectacular sight of strata formations which rise vertically from the sea, creating a unique and magical landscape. Continuing our exploration of the landscape we visit the stunningly beautiful Txakoli wine region. We discover a family owned winery showcasing the famed Txakoli wines, made with local grapes varieties that grow on terraces overlooking the sea. For lunch we drive to the seaside fishing port of Getaria. We take pleasure in a relaxing stroll with our guide through the enchanting Medieval streets of the centre, admiring the picturesque colour and charm of the fisherman's houses with their beautiful wooden balconies. The town's location, perched on the hills overlooking the sea, offers spectacular views that will stay in your memory forever.

We then transfer to the medieval town of Hondarribia and check into our Hotel a former castle with fantastic views of the surrounding landscape. The evening is free for you to explore the town and perhaps practice a little Spanish. Hondarribia is now becoming one of the gastronomic epicentres of this region with many well-known young Spanish chefs coming to the area opening restaurants and boutique bars showcasing some of the best and local produce. B/L

Overnight in Hondarribia



DAY 10 Biarritz - St Jean De Lux - Michelin Dinner

Now is the time to polish up on your French as we drive to the stylish beach town of Biarritz on France's southwestern coast. We lead you through a walking tour exploring this popular spot. Once the holiday spot for nobility, Biarritz is now Europe's surfing capital. Biarritz lacks the Riviera's glitz, but you'll see affluent holiday-makers in designer gear and surfers in flip-flops speaking languages of French, Spanish and Basque. Known for its famous beaches, therapeutic water and a thriving surf scene, Biarritz offers a unique atmosphere where posh restaurants and spas live harmoniously side-by-side with laid-back pizza joints.

We then drive to the more relaxed crescent shape town of St Jean de Luz. Famous for the wedding of King Louis XIV of France and the King of Spain's daughter, Maria Theresa, in June 1660. St Jean de Lux has something for everyone. First class Michelin restaurants, cafes, bistro's, shopping, art, antiques, and home to the church of St John the Baptist. Many of the buildings date back to the 17th century, a time when Saint Jean de Luz was one of the most important fishing ports of France. We sample some of the local products bringing together the best of Spain and France then enjoy lunch in on of the acclaimed local restaurants. After lunch, the rest of the afternoon is free to have a wander around this quaint little town for yourself. Returning back to the hotel in Hondarribia, you have free time for a siesta before we meet for our Michelin star dinner in restaurant Alameda. B/L/D

Overnight in Hondarribia.

DAY 11 Bilbao

With a relaxed start to the day we check out and transfer from Hondarribia to Bilbao with a panoramic tour of the Zubi Zuri or White Bridge designed by Calatrava and the Izosaki Towers Bizkaia, the Hanging Bridge, close to the port, it is regarded as one of the outstanding architectural iron constructions of the Industrial Revolution and World Heritage by the Unesco since 2006.

We check into our hotel giving you some free time before we meet for our final tour to the Guggenheim Museum, with farewell cocktails on the terrace in the Guggenheim museum followed by Dinner in the Bistro B/D

Overnight in Bilbao

DAY 13 Farewell

After breakfast we say farewell, transfer you onto your next adventure and wish you a wonderful onward trip.





Inclusions

- Fully escorted tour, 12 days, 11 nights in the beautiful scenic surrounds of Rioja and the Basque Region of Spain and South West France
- Specialised escorted service of Chef Dominique Rizzo, Director and Curator of Pure Food, Wine Culture Tours
- Private Spanish Guide for 11 days
- Air-conditioned spacious private bus with our own private driver
- All accommodation and hotel taxes in 4 & 5 star Hotels/Agriturismo and Spa Resorts selected for their personalised service, amenities, locations and their food (Room upgrades are available upon request, prices to be quoted upon application)
- Maps, travel hints and tips, Spanish language brochure, details of hotels
- All Private, escorted visits and tastings
- Meals – All breakfasts are provided, 10 lunches and 5 dinners are also included, some morning/afternoon teas and aperitives are provided as stated– where lunches/dinners are not provided, morning activities, tastings and included lunches and dinners are of ample abundance
- Beverages - All beverages with meals including wine, beer, juice, soft drink, tea and coffee are provided
- All guided tours as specified in the tour are included
- Admission to all historical sites, galleries and museums mentioned in the itinerary are included
- Tips for Restaurants and Guides

The fee does not include

- Airfares
- Everything not included in itinerary (Tour Inclusions)
- General expenses - phone calls, laundry, room upgrades
- Transfers to and from airports/train station on the tour start and finish date
- Security and government taxes outside the tour dates
- Beverages and meals outside of described “Tour Inclusions”
- Room service beverages and meals when not participating in the scheduled meals
- Tourist Taxes where applicable in some hotels
- Travel and medical Insurance

Highlights

- Cocktail with canapes in the hotel cave in La Guardia
- 2 winery visits and tasting and lunch in Michelin star restaurant in Rioja
- Private tapas guided tour in Logrono
- Olive Oil Experience, food market tour in Logrono
- Private cooking demonstration in Gastronomic Society
- Traditional lunch with matching wines
- Guided visit to Merino, Briones and Haro
- Guided tour in San Sebastian with Pintxos Private Pintxo cooking class
- Cider house visit and tasting with local products
- Local Basque Pork farmhouse visit and lunch
- Goat cheese farm visit & tasting
- Visit to Zumaia cliffs
- Txakoli wine visit/tasting
- Guided visit to Getaria Michelin star dinner in Hondarribia
- Private visit to Biarritz & St Jean de Luz with food tastings
- Guided tour of Bilbao
- Private guided visit to Guggenheim museum with Cocktails and Dinner



TRAVEL WITH DOMINIQUE RIZZO TO EXPERIENCE THE BEST

Food, Wine and Culture Tour

The menus, selected restaurants and dining experiences are hand chosen to give you a variety of tastes and flavours allowing you to experience foods from the land, sea, city and mountain. We consciously include zero kilometre venues and restaurants with Slow Food accolades who support sustainability, preservation of tradition and local produce.

Our 4 & 5 star Hotels, Resorts and country style accommodation is also personally selected for not only its quality, but also its location, services, hospitality and the relationships we have built up over the years. We want to ensure you are not only very comfortable and relaxed but you also get to experience all aspects of a regions terrain and lifestyle.

Our guides are personally selected for their knowledge of the regions, their spoken English and their humour. This ensures you enjoy informative, interesting and fun guided tours. We do when necessary use whispers or small group microphones to ensure you can wander at your own pace without missing out on understanding the history and unique aspects of each area we visit.

We are not about racing you around the country. We prefer to stay in each of the accommodation for a minimum of 2 -4 nights giving you an opportunity to unpack and settle in.

Moderate walking is involved on guided tours, we can certainly accommodate people who are a little slower on their feet. Luggage services are available to assist with retrieving luggage off and on our bus and to and from the hotels/rooms if required.

The places we visit do include some of the main tourist sites of a region. Although unique to Dominique Rizzo Tours are the sights and activities that are personally booked for these tours alone. You will not find these on any other Tour.

We include everything! Even days and evenings off from the tour for you to relax on your own or to further explore a destination. There are no hidden costs, add ons or payments that are further required to complete the full itinerary. You are welcome to opt out of any of the activities to do your own thing, although we have selected each of the activities to give you an opportunity to see, do and taste as much of Sicily as possible with siesta time in-between.

Our tours suit couples, singles and people of all ages. Our tours are privately booked with a minimum of 10 and maximum of 14 guests so that you get personalised attention, comfort when travelling and opportunity to visit boutique establishments, restaurants, and unique venues not suitable for large number tours.

We can certainly cater for dietary intolerances and can accommodate coeliac, dairy free and vegetarians.

Our cooking classes are for everyone from the novice cook to the budding chef and are fun and informative giving you an opportunity to pick up some new skills and learn about the cuisine.

Chef Dominique Rizzo has been running her Food Tours for over 7 years and is a complete professional with an attention to detail and service. On tour she is on call to assist you anyway she can. This tour is about creating a memorable travel experience of a lifetime for YOU. Our desire is for you to enjoy a relaxing holiday where you can get the most out your time away. We have selected the best so you can completely immerse yourself in the culture, lifestyle, food and wine of a region.