

2026 SEASON

# Basquelanders

## Autumn Harvest Special

Basque Country

Travel Itinerary

**6 NIGHTS / 7 DAYS**

*This journey exists three times this autumn.*

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W H A T   A W A I T S   Y O U

# The harvest doesn't wait.

*Neither should you.*

There is a moment in September when the Basque Country changes. The light softens. The air off the Cantabrian carries something heavier, slower. And in the vineyards of Rioja Alavesa, in the cellars of Getaria, in the stone-walled bodegas that have been reading this land for generations, everything accelerates.

This is *vendimia*. Harvest season. The moment the whole year has been building towards.

We designed this journey around it. Not because harvest makes a good backdrop — but because it changes what you are allowed to see. The winemaker who would normally send you to a tasting room is now in the vineyard at dawn, deciding whether today is the day. The cellar that is usually quiet hums with something urgent and alive. The must fermenting in the tank is this year's wine, hours old, and it smells like the earth it came from.

This journey is led by one of us — someone who spent more than a decade building the wine tourism and export programme at one of Biscay's finest txakoli producers, who knows these cellars not as a visitor but as someone who has worked in them.

*This is not a wine tour. It is the Basque Country at the moment it is most itself.*

## AT A GLANCE

<b>Duration</b>	6 Nights / 7 Days
<b>Departure</b>	Bilbao Airport
<b>Return</b>	Bilbao Airport
<b>Group size</b>	Small & intimate
<b>Base 1</b>	Bilbao — 5-star hotel (4 nights)
<b>Base 2</b>	San Sebastian — 4-star hotel (2 nights)
<b>Season</b>	Autumn 2026 · Harvest Season

*Bilbao · Urdaibai · Gernika · Getaria · Rioja Alavesa · San Sebastian · Hondarribia*

DAY 01 · BILBAO

# Bilbao

Where Everything Begins

You land. The taxi crosses a bridge over the Nervion river and suddenly there it is – a titanium building that looks like it arrived from another galaxy. That's the Guggenheim. That's Bilbao. The week begins here. Tonight, around a table, you will meet the people you are about to share this with.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### Arrival & hotel check-in

Private transfer from Bilbao Airport to your hotel in the heart of the city.

### City introduction

A guided walk through Bilbao's DNA – its history, its reinvention, its unshakeable pride.

### Pintxos tour

Lunch the real way. Bar to bar, *pintxo* by *pintxo*, *txakoli* in hand. No tourist traps. Just the bars worth knowing.

### Guggenheim Museum

Frank Gehry's masterpiece. Even if you're not into art, the building alone is worth the trip.

### Casco Viejo

Seven narrow streets, centuries of stories. The old town at its most alive.

### Welcome dinner

The week begins around a table. Good wine, the people you will spend the next seven days with, and the first conversation about what lies ahead.



DAY 02 · URDAIBAI

# Urdaibai

The Wild Basque Coast

Today we leave the city and drive into one of Europe's most beautiful coastlines. Dramatic cliffs, fishing villages that smell of salt and diesel, and a winery visit with the family that actually makes the wine.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### **Gatzelugatxe**

A hermitage on a rocky island, connected to the mainland by a winding stone staircase. One of those places that earns its silence.

### **Mundaka & Bermeo**

Two fishing ports, two different personalities. Both completely real.

### **Private winery visit**

We don't visit wineries. We visit the people who make the wine. In harvest season, that means something different: the winery is alive, the decisions are being made in real time, and what you taste is this year's story, still being written.

### **Gernika**

History. Memory. Resilience. The town Picasso made famous — and its own story, told honestly.

### **Local bar lunch**

Not a restaurant. A bar. The kind where fishermen eat.



DAY 03 · GETARIA

# Getaria

*The Sea Before the Vines*

Getaria is a fishing village built on two obsessions: the sea and txakoli. Today you live both. Out on the water first, then up to the vineyards where the harvest is either imminent or already underway, and finally back to the harbour for the finest grilled wild fish you have eaten in a very long time.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### Getaria village

The birthplace of Juan Sebastian Elcano, first man to sail around the world. Small town, enormous history.

### Private boat along the Flysch

Sixty million years of geology seen from the water. The cliff face reveals itself completely differently from the sea. More imposing, more ancient.

### Family winery visit

Three generations. One obsession: txakoli. In September and October the vines are at their most loaded, and the decision of when to pick hangs over everything. You'll meet the winemaker at the most important moment of her year.

### Aperitivo above the sea

The winemaker pours txakoli on a terrace facing the Cantabrian. Beside it: local conservas, smoked bonito, antxoas, Idiazabal. Then down to the harbour.

### Harbour lunch

Wild fish grilled over charcoal at the port. From the boats that came in at dawn. No menu. Whatever they brought in that morning.



DAY 04 · RIOJA ALAVESA

# Rioja Alavesa

*The Other Side of the Mountains*

We cross the mountains and the landscape changes completely in half an hour. Less green, more stone, open sky. And everywhere: vines. During harvest season Rioja Alavesa is a different place. The bodegas are running at full capacity. The air smells of fermentation. Most producers aren't receiving visitors — they are doing the most important work of their year. We are received because of who we are to them, not what we are willing to pay.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### **Boutique winery**

Private access during harvest. The cellar is humming. The tanks are filling. The winemaker walks you through what is happening right now, in real time, in this exact vintage.

### **Lamb chops over vine cuttings**

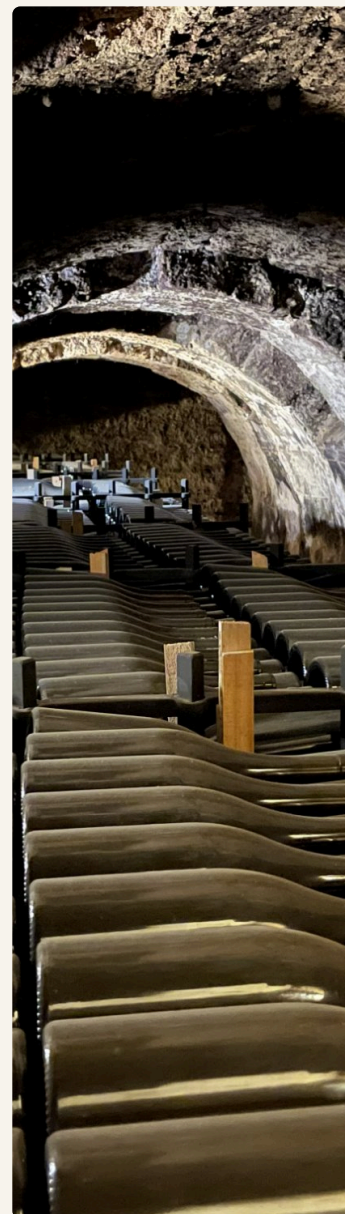
*Chuletillas de cordero* grilled over *sarmiento* at the vineyard. Wine from the *porrón*. The smell of vine cuttings, the sound of a long lunch with nowhere else to be.

### **Laguardia**

A perfectly preserved medieval walled town sitting on a hilltop above the vines. A short walk, a long memory.

### **Underground calados**

Wine cellars dug by hand under the village streets centuries ago. Still in use. Still extraordinary.



DAY 05 · SAN SEBASTIAN

# San Sebastian

*A City That Feeds You Well*

*San Sebastian. Donostia in Basque. A city that wears beauty effortlessly — the bay, the old town, the mountains, the beach, all within walking distance of each other. And the food. Always the food.*

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### **Guided city walk**

La Concha bay, the old town, Zurriola, the river. The lay of the land.

### **Local markets**

La Bretxa market. Where the chefs shop. Where the city breathes.

### **Pintxos experience**

The bars of San Sebastian's old town are in a different league. Every *pintxo* is a conversation. We'll show you the ones worth having.

### **Free afternoon**

San Sebastian rewards wandering. Save some appetite.

### **Dinner at Arzak**

Not just any Michelin star. Arzak is where it all began — the restaurant that put the Basque Country on the world's table. Three stars. Four decades. Still the one worth making the reservation for.





DAY 06 · HONDARRIBIA

# Hondarribia

*Cider, History & the French Border*

One hour east of Bilbao — and just minutes from your hotel in San Sebastian — Hondarribia is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Spain. It also happens to sit next to cider country. Today combines both.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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### **Hondarribia old town**

Flower-covered balconies, stone walls, the ancient gate. Quiet, beautiful, unhurried.

### **Coastal walk**

The bay separating Spain from France. Hendaye on the other side. Salt air, and France just across the water.

### **Local Cider House**

This is not a tourist attraction. This is where Basques have been drinking cider for centuries. You pour it yourself from the barrel. Low ceilings, long tables, laughter.

### **Cider House lunch**

*Txuleta*, salt cod omelette, local cheese. Cider flowing. Another essential Basque ritual.



DAY 07 · FAREWELL

# Farewell

*Until Next Time*

*The last morning. Breakfast at the hotel, one final coffee, a few conversations you'll carry home. Then the airport — and that particular feeling of leaving a place you already miss.*

W H Y U S

## We are Basque. This is our home.

*And the access we offer exists because of who we are here, not because of what we sell.*

We don't partner with wineries. We are friends with the people who make the wine. The kind of friends who are invited to harvest, not the kind who book a slot.

We don't hire guides. Your host is Gaizka Picaza, who spent a decade building the wine tourism and export programme at one of Biscay's finest *txakoli* producers. He didn't learn about the Basque Country. He is the Basque Country.

Eight people, one week, and a level of access that was earned over years. Not purchased for a season.

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H A R V E S T S P E C I A L

## The vines turn.

## The cellars wake up.

*And this journey disappears until next year.*

You cannot visit the Basque Country during *vendimia* the way you visit it in July. The bodegas are not receiving. The winemakers are not available. Everything that matters is happening behind closed doors. Unless you are already inside.

We are already inside. And three times this autumn, we are taking eight people with us.

**8 places each. 24 in total.**

When the last place fills, this version of the Basque Country is gone until next September.

**21–27 Sep · 5–11 Oct · 19–25 Oct**

*Your first conversation starts closer to home than you think.*

# Ready to explore?

Your Basque adventure starts with a message.

## GET IN TOUCH

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Ask your host at El Basque.

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If you would rather bring your own circle, one of these departures may be available as a private group. We'd suggest not waiting.

YOUR PLACE

# \$7,900

per person · 8 places per departure

**21–27 Sep · 5–11 Oct · 19–25 Oct**

Spaces are limited. Reserve yours before they close.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

All ground transportation

Daily breakfast

Selected lunches and dinners

All winery & cellar visits

Hosted by the Former President of Biscay's Wine Tourism Association

4 nights at a 5-star hotel in Bilbao

2 nights at a 4-star hotel in San Sebastian

Private airport transfers

24/7 personal support from your host

## NOT INCLUDED

International flights

Personal expenses

Travel insurance

Dinners (free choice)