

Travel the wine lands of
*Northern Spain
& Portugal*

September 4-19, 2021



Day 1 Barcelona

Arrive in Barcelona, meet your driver in the airport arrivals area, and transfer to your fashionable Eixample neighborhood hotel. Rest up for a very special Catalan gourmet and cultural experience. This evening, stroll to nearby La Pedrera, also known as Gaudí's whimsical Casa Milá, to dine at Café La Pedrera followed by a nighttime guided tour of the various courtyards and interior spaces of Casa Milá, ending with a spectacular audio-visual light show on the Warrior Rooftop. (D)

Hotel Condes de Barcelona (1 night) www.condesdebarcelona.com

Day 2 Barcelona -- Begur

After a leisurely breakfast, meet your driver for the scenic drive along Spain's wild coast, Costa Brava, to the village of Begur. Join in the Fira d'Indians festival in this colorful village. The festival celebrates the close relationship between Cuba and Begur, which has its origins in the many Begurenos who emigrated to Cuba in the nineteenth century and returned, bringing a blend of "new world" indigenous and colonial traditions. Enjoy lunch at your leisure at one of the village's outdoor restaurants or one of the festival's food stands before meeting your driver for the short drive to your seaside hotel. After checking in, walk downhill to the beach, take a dip in the hotel's swimming pool, or relax on the balcony of your ocean view room. In the evening, gather with your friends on the terrace to enjoy local wine and cuisine as you watch the sun set over the Balearic Sea. (BD)

Hotel Aigua Blava (3 nights) www.hotelaiquablava.com

Day 3 Begur – Cadaqués – Pubol -- Begur

With your local guide and private driver, enjoy a full day exploring the northern Costa Brava region – its quaint villages, rugged coastline, and two of the distinct homes of one of its most famous and eccentric residents, Salvador Dalí. Drive north to the seaside village of Portlligat to visit the home of Dalí and his wife, Gala. The flamboyantly decorated home is maintained exactly as it was when the couple lived there. Many of their personal belongings, including photos with famous people, as well as Dalí's artwork are on display. After a tour of the house, drive or stroll the short distance to Cadaqués, considered the most picturesque village on the Costa Brava. Browse the village and enjoy lunch at one of the recommended seaside restaurants before continuing your drive inland to visit the attractive village of Pubol where Dalí bought a medieval castle for Gala. Visit this artistically restored medieval castle to view an extensive display of Dalí's artwork. Return to your seaside hotel to relax and enjoy the evening at your leisure. (B)

Day 4 Begur – Costa Brava – Bell Lloc Winery – Begur

Today you will take a guided 3-mile scenic, partly rocky, hike along the southern Costa Brava region. With two professional guides, begin at a small fishing village to hike what was once an ancient Roman road and later, an infamous smugglers' route. Walk along the scenic rugged coast, through peaceful pine forests, and ending at a historical lighthouse. *For those who prefer not to go on the hike, your driver will take you on a scenic drive before meeting the rest of the group at the lighthouse.* There your driver will take you to Bell-Lloc estate, a traditional Catalan vineyard where you will enjoy wine tastings, lunch, and a visit to the architecturally amazing wine cellars. When your visit to the winery ends, return to the hotel to enjoy the evening relaxing on the terrace or on your room's private balcony watching the setting of the sun and listening to the sounds of the sea. (BL)

Day 5 Begur – Barcelona – San Sebastián

After a leisurely morning, check out of the hotel and transfer to the Barcelona airport for your late afternoon flight to San Sebastián. After the short flight, arrive in San Sebastián, a city framed by golden beaches and lush hillsides where food is treated like an art form. Known as a culinary mecca, San Sebastian has more Michelin starred restaurants per capita than anywhere else in the world. After taking time to settle into your sea view hotel room, join your friends for dinner at a traditional *pinxtos* bar. You will be impressed with the quantity, quality, and variety of *pinxtos* proudly displayed on long countertops at each bar you pass. Ask for a plate, grab your choices by the toothpick and, at the end of the counter, choose your house wine – red or white. Then continue on to the next . . . (BD)

Hotel Lasala Plaza (3 nights) www.lasalaplazahotel.com/en

Day 6 San Sebastián

This morning, take a guided walking tour of San Sebastian's city center and historical sights – the Old Quarter, the impressive churches, the San Telmo Museum. In the afternoon, relax on La Concha Beach, Spain's most beautiful soft sand beach, or climb the hill above the city to visit a historical fort, long a strategic viewpoint for spotting whales and invaders. In the evening, you will participate in a special culinary journey. With an expert chef, help prepare some famous Basque dishes from the coastal villages and mountainous regions, bringing the history and traditions of Basque Country to life. When all is ready, gather with your friends around the kitchen's rustic wooden table to enjoy the gourmet dinner you helped prepare, each course paired with carefully chosen local wines. (BD)

Day 7 San Sebastián – Pasajes de San Juan – San Sebastián

Starting at a spectacular viewpoint above the Bay of Biscay, take a 2-mile scenic and partly rocky hike, a segment of the ancient pilgrimage route of Camino de Santiago, from the Faro de Plata lighthouse to the fishing village of Pasajes de San Juan. On the way, visit the Basque Whaling Museum before taking a short boat ride across the river to the village. *For those who do not wish to go on the hike, you can enjoy the spectacular scenery at the lighthouse and then your driver will chauffeur you from the viewpoint to the museum to meet your friends.* After the boat ride, wander and photograph the colorful, picturesque, one-street fishing village before enjoying a Basque cuisine lunch at the waterfront restaurant, Casa Cámara. (BL)

Day 8 San Sebastián – Bilbao – Lerma – Salamanca

Depart San Sebastian in the morning for a full day sightseeing drive on the way to Castillo del Buen Amor, Castle of the Good Love, for the next two nights near the enchanting city of Salamanca. The first stop is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, a modern architectural marvel designed by the architect Frank Gehry. After a guided visit of the museum, continue the drive south to the medieval village of Lerma, perched on top of a hill that dominates the Arlanza River Valley. Have lunch at the Parador de Lerma, once the majestic Ducal Palace. In the late afternoon, arrive at the Castle, originally an 11th century fortress and later, a 15th century castle that once belonged to the Catholic Kings, Isabel and Ferdinand. Check into your elegantly restored spacious medieval room before strolling through gardens and vineyards, enjoying a glass of wine in the cloister, surrounded by history and tranquility. (BL)

Castillo Del Buen Amor (2 nights) www.buenamor.net/?lang=en

Day 9 Salamanca

In the morning, take a short drive to one of Spain's most stunning cities, Salamanca, nicknamed *La Dorada*, The Golden One, for its sandstone buildings that seem to glow. With a history dating back to the Celtic era, Salamanca is known for its ornate architecture and for the Universidad de Salamanca, founded in the 1100's. The Feria de Salamanca will be on full display today, exhibiting traditional food, crafts, dances, and games as you wander the streets of this compact medieval city. On your self-guided tour, visit the well-preserved historical sights of the Old Quarter, including the Plaza Mayor, an 18th century baroque square considered the most beautiful public plaza in Spain. Have lunch at your leisure in Salamanca, returning to the Castle to spend the remainder of the day indulging in a spa treatment, enjoying a dip in the pool, or strolling the surrounding gardens and vineyards. In the late afternoon, gather with your friends in a private room in the Castle for a tasting of local wines. (B)

Day 10 Salamanca – Belmonte – Porto

Depart the Castle for the scenic drive to Porto, stopping halfway at the intriguing highland village of Belmonte, Portugal, home to Pedro Cabral, the first European to land in Brazil. Belmonte is also the home of a Jewish community that survived 500 years through the dark years of the Inquisition until the 1990's by pretending to be Catholic while secretly practicing their Jewish faith. The community was finally persuaded to "come out" and today there is a synagogue and a Jewish museum. Meet your local guide to learn more before enjoying lunch at Casa de Castelo in the shadow of this stone town's 13th century castle. In the late afternoon, arrive in Porto, the port wine city perched on the steep banks of the Douro River. Check in to your river-view hotel room in the historic Ribeira district. Then, take a relaxing 1-hour "Six Bridges" Douro River cruise through the city. Have dinner at your leisure at one of the many outdoor riverfront restaurants surrounding the hotel. (BL)

Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel (3 nights) www.pestanaporto.com

Day 11 Porto

In the morning, take a guided walking tour of Porto's historical and cultural treasures: the Cathedral, Stock Exchange Palace, Church of Saint Francis, Lello Bookstore and more. Later, if you choose, you can take the vintage trolley to the mouth of the river, where the Douro meets the Atlantic. Stroll along the coastline to view historic forts and lighthouses, rocky beaches and beautiful gardens. In the late afternoon, join your group for a private tour and premier port wine tasting experience at Graham's Port Lodge 1890. After a tour of the caves and tasting of the port, stay for *petiscos* and more wine on the Lodge's terrace offering wonderful views over the Douro River and beyond. (BD)

Day 12 Porto – Douro River Valley – Porto

Enjoy a full day harvest wine experience at Quinta da Pacheca Winery in the famed Douro River Valley where the harvest season is a sign of celebration. The day begins with the cutting of the grape in the vineyards. Straw hat, scarf around the neck, and scissors in hand, you will fill up buckets of healthy grapes. In the vineyard, have appetizers with the workers and later join them all for lunch. After a day in the field, stomping the grapes is the final step. Accompanied by live traditional music, your dancing feet will help produce the excellent nectar – a memorable experience! (BL)

Day 13 Porto – Coimbra – Lisbon

On the way to Lisbon, Europe's sunniest capital, stop in Coimbra for a guided walking tour followed by a riverside lunch at Restaurante Itália (or any restaurant of your choice). Settled by Romans, Moors, then Christians and now a UNESCO World Heritage site, Coimbra is home to Portugal's oldest university. Arrive in Lisbon and check in to your palatial hotel on a city center plaza. Take time for a leisurely walk from your hotel to the historical Praça de Comércio, the grand square on Lisbon's waterfront. In the late evening, experience a Fado dinner performance. Fado, the music of the sea, love and loss, expresses Portugal's sad, romantic tradition. Experiencing the nostalgic sounds of Fado in song, accompanied by Portuguese guitar, is essential to comprehending the Portuguese soul. (BD)

Hotel Avenida Palace (3 nights) www.hotelavenidapalace.pt

Day 14 Lisbon

Enjoy a guided half-day panoramic view of Lisbon to learn about the city's Roman and Moorish roots, the Age of Discovery, the Golden Era, the Great Lisbon Earthquake, the slow decline, and the modern revival. Visit the Castle of Saint Jorge and the surrounding Alfama area, Lisbon's oldest neighborhood. Visit Belem where the buildings and monuments to Portuguese maritime exploration are found. The 15th and 16th centuries were the Age of Discovery and the Golden Era of Portugal, transforming Lisbon into an extravagantly wealthy city ruling a vast empire. Enjoy your afternoon at leisure, visiting more of Lisbon's sights, shopping, or relaxing. In the evening, sail away on a Sunset Cruise aboard a luxury sailing yacht. Sail over the Tejo River to view historical Lisbon from the river, a different perspective. Enjoy local wine and *petiscos* as the setting of the sun casts soft colors on the stunning city of Lisbon. (BD)

Day 15 Lisbon – Serra de Montejunto Mountains – Lisbon

On the last full day of your adventure touring the winelands of Spain and Portugal, you will enjoy a very special experience. Escape the city for the Serra de Montejunto mountain range with views of vineyards, green fields, and the blue ocean. Here, vine growing is ancient, dating back to the Roman era. Arrive at the Quinta de Chocopalha Winery, a small family-run winery on land that has had vineyards since the 16th century. You will enjoy a friendly, family atmosphere combined with dedication and passion for viticulture and winemaking in the beautiful landscape of the Lisbon wine region. The cool, moderate climate of the region produces deliciously concentrated, complex reds and fresh, expressive whites. Visit the vineyards and wine cellar, followed by a wine tasting accompanied by Portuguese cheese. End your tour with a traditional lunch with your hosts. Return to Lisbon in the late afternoon and enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure. Gather with your friends later that evening to raise a glass to friendship and to the beautiful countries of Spain and Portugal. (BL)

Day 16 Lisbon -- Home

Bid *Adeus* to Lisbon as you depart for your flight home. (B)

\$5,950 per person/double
16 days/15 nights

Small Group Deluxe Tour includes:

- 4[★] + distinctive hotels
- Daily breakfast, 6 lunches, 7 dinners
- Local expert guides and professional drivers
- Activities and entry fees as stated in the itinerary
- Transfer from Barcelona airport to hotel
- In-country transfers (flight, luxury vehicles)
- Gratuities for drivers and guides

Not Included:

- Roundtrip airfare to/from USA
- Travel insurance
- Hotel tourist tax (€4-5/room/day)
- Entry fees/meals not stated in itinerary
- Transfer from Lisbon hotel to airport
- Local taxi transfers
- Gratuities for housekeepers & bell hops



"Accept what life offers you and try to drink from every cup. All wines should be tasted; some should only be sipped, but with others, drink the whole bottle." ~ Paulo Coelho