

Travel the wine lands of
*Northern Spain
& Portugal*

September 3 – 18, 2022



Day 1 Barcelona

Saturday, September 3

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 Catalonian 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) condesdebarcelona.com

Day 2 Barcelona – Palamós – Aigua Blava

Sunday, September 4

In the late morning, meet your driver and guide for the scenic drive along the Costa Brava, Spain's "wild coast", to Bell-Lloc Farms, a traditional Catalonian vineyard estate near the village of Palamós. Enjoy premium wine tastings, a locally-farmed lunch, and a tour of the architecturally amazing wine cellars. On the way to the scenic Aigua Blava seaside hotel, stop at a historical lighthouse with spectacular views of the Mediterranean and the Costa Brava. Take a walk on the Cami de Ronda, past the excavation of a pre-Roman Iberian village. The Cami De Ronda, once an ancient Roman road and, later, an infamous smuggler's route, is now a variety of hiking trails that follows the Costa Brava all the way to the border with France. After settling into your sea view room, descend the stairs to the beach and take a dip in the sea, swim in the hotel's scenic private 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 tapas as you watch the colors of the Mediterranean Sea change with the setting of the sun. (B,L)

Hotel Aigua Blava (3 nights) hotelaiguablava.com

Day 3 Aigua Blava – Empúries – Cadaqués – Aigua Blava

Monday, September 5

With your local guide and private driver, enjoy a full day exploring the northern Costa Brava region – its ancient settlements, rugged coastline, and the distinct home of one of its most famous and eccentric residents, Salvador Dalí. First stop is Empúries and the Greco-Roman ruins, Catalonia's most important archaeological site. This port, the Greeks' original point of arrival in Spain, is one of the most monumental ancient engineering feats on the Iberian Peninsula. Continue north to the seaside village of Cadaqués, considered the most picturesque village on the Costa Brava. After a guided tour of the town, browse the village at your leisure, enjoying lunch at a seaside restaurant. After lunch, drive or stroll the short distance to 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 guided tour of the home, begin the coastal journey back to Aigua Blava with scenic stops along the way. The evening is at your leisure. (B)

Day 4 Aigua Blava – Begur – Peratallada – Pals – Aigua Blava

Tuesday, September 6

Today explore the best of Costa Brava's medieval villages, established inland from the coast as protection from pirates. Begin in the village of Begur, made up of colorful narrow streets and an 11th-century hilltop castle that once guarded the village from pirates and other enemies. Start at the castle for fabulous views and wander downhill to the village. Fisherman's huts and Cuban style mansions with amazing views of the sea make up this quaint town. Next stop is nearby Peratallada, a lovely village carved of local stone with a maze of narrow streets and sunny squares, and an 11th c. palace. Last stop is Pals, one of Spain's most charming villages. Perched on a hilltop, it was built around a fortress and has kept its medieval look so well that a visit to Pals is like traveling back in time. Wander the medieval streets, shop for colorful Catalan pottery, and have a patio lunch at one of the cafés on the Placa Major, the lovely town square. In the evening, gather with your friends on the hotel's terrace for a special dining experience with local specialties and regional wine. (B, D)

Day 5 Aigua Blava – Bilbao – San Sebastián

Wednesday, September 7

Check out of the hotel after an early breakfast and transfer to the Barcelona airport for the short flight to Bilbao. Visit the Guggenheim Museum, a modern architectural marvel designed by the architect Frank Gehry. After a guided tour of the museum, continue the journey to 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 Sebastián has more Michelin-starred restaurants per capita than anywhere else in the world. After taking time to settle into your bay view room, split up into small groups and experience San Sebastián's traditional *pintxos* bars. You will be impressed with the quantity, quality, and variety of *pintxos* proudly displayed on long countertops at each bar you pass. Choose a bar, 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 . . . (B)

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

Day 6 San Sebastián

Thursday, September 8

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. This evening, you will participate in a special culinary journey at a Sociedad Gastronomica, an informal private club where members gather to cook typical Basque dishes and socialize with their family and friends. A Basque Country tradition for more than 150 years, it is a privilege to be invited to participate in this cultural experience. With expert chefs, you will help prepare famous Basque dishes before gathering with your friends and hosts around the table to enjoy the delicious dinner. (B, D)

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

Friday, September 9

Starting at a spectacular viewpoint above the Bay of Biscay, take a scenic stroll along a segment of the ancient pilgrimage route, the Camino de Santiago, from the Faro de Plata lighthouse to the fishing village of Pasajes de San Juan. Along the way, visit the Basque Whaling Museum before taking a short boat ride across the river to the quaint village. *For those who do not wish to do all of the hike, your driver will chauffeur you to the Whaling Museum to meet the group.* After the boat ride, wander and photograph this colorful, picturesque, one-street fishing village before enjoying a Basque cuisine lunch at the waterfront restaurant, Casa Cámara. (B, L)

Day 8 San Sebastián – Lerma – Salamanca

Saturday, September 10

Depart San Sebastián in the morning for a full day scenic drive on the way to Castillo del Buen Amor, your home for the next two nights. Leave the Basque Country and drive south through Spain's largest autonomous region, Castile y León, formed from two ancient kingdoms. Explore 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 a majestic 17th century Ducal Palace, now a beautifully restored Spanish parador. In the late afternoon, arrive at the Castle, originally an 11th century fortress, then 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 and enjoying a glass of wine in the cloister, surrounded by history and tranquility. (B)

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

Day 9 Salamanca

Sunday, September 11

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 and food. (B, Tapas)

Day 10 Salamanca – Belmonte – Porto

Monday, September 12

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. (B) [Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel](http://pestanaporto.com) (3 nights) pestanaporto.com

Day 11 Porto

Tuesday, September 13

This 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 River meets the Atlantic Ocean. 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, paired with local cheeses and chocolate, stay for *petiscos* and more wine on the Lodge's terrace offering amazing sunset views over the Douro River and beyond. (B)

Day 12 Porto – Douro River Valley – Porto

Wednesday, September 14

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. While 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 – an authentic Portuguese experience. (B, L)

Day 13 Porto – Nazaré – Lisbon

Thursday, September 15

On the way to Lisbon, stop at Nazaré, one of Portugal's most ancient fishing villages that retains its colorful fishing traditions – freshly caught fish drying on nets on the beach, fishmongers who still wear the traditional seven skirts, fandango folk dancers on the town square. Stop for lunch at one of the beachside restaurants to enjoy a plate of fresh seafood. Ride the funicular up to Nazaré's sister village, Sítio, with spectacular views of the Portuguese coast. From this viewpoint, if the timing is right, you can observe perfect giant waves formed by a submarine canyon. Arrive in Lisbon, Europe's sunniest capital, 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 – 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. (B, D)

[Hotel Avenida Palace](http://hotelavenidapalace.pt) (3 nights) hotelavenidapalace.pt

Day 14 Lisbon

Friday, September 16

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* (Portuguese tapas) as the setting of the sun casts soft colors on the stunning city of Lisbon. (B, Petiscos)

Day 15 Lisbon – Serra de Montejunto Mountains – Lisbon

Saturday, September 17

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 viniculture 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 local cheeses. End your tasting 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 in the evening to raise a glass to friendship and to the beautiful countries of Spain and Portugal. (B, L)

Day 16 Lisbon -- Home

Sunday, September 18

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

\$5,950 per person/double

\$1,050 single supplement

16 days/15 nights

Small Group Deluxe Tour includes:

- 4 * + distinctive hotels
- Daily breakfast + special dining experiences
- 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 & porters



"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