

*This CORK & FORK sample itinerary and pricing have been developed based on a group of 6 and are provided merely as a glimpse of the sort of customized travel experience CORK & FORK would delight in developing for independent travelers and groups.*



# *Epicurean Spain:* **Basque Country & Catalonia**

## **Highlights:**

- Five interactive culinary course experiences: 3 traditional Catalan culinary classes, 1 Pinxtos culinary class plus 1 avant-garde cooking class in Barcelona
- Additional epicurean experiences: Pintxos tour in San Sebastian, an epicurean excursion in Basque Country, tapas tour in Barcelona, Epicurean Walking Tour in Barcelona's old city, olive oil tasting experience in the village of El Masroig
- Insider, private guided wine tours with tastings and winemaker meetings in 3 D.O.s: La Rioja, Priorat and the Basque Country (D.O. Txakoli)
- Deluxe accommodations at a range of properties including a modernist, small luxury hotel in Barcelona, a 19th-century villa in San Sebastian, a stylish contemporary property in Bilbao overlooking the Guggenheim Museum and a charming culinary school located in an old stone residence in a quiet Priorat village
- Private guided tours providing insight into cultural highlights of the region including Barcelona's old quarters, the medieval hilltop wine town of Laguardia, the 12th-century Scala Dei monastery and the fantastic Bilbao Guggenheim Museum
- Fine dining featuring regional specialties, in addition to restaurant recommendations for selected meals on your own



Contact Jim Dondero at CORK & FORK to discuss this itinerary.  
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**Day One:** Arrival in Bilbao (connections from major hubs throughout Europe). Private transfer one hour to San Sebastian. Afternoon at leisure. Introduction to Basque cuisine via a leisurely evening Pintxos tour in San Sebastian's Old Town (Pintxos are the Basque equivalent of tapas). Accommodations: Villa Soro, a 25-room stately villa located just five minutes by foot from San Sebastian's Old Town

**Day Two:** Epicurean Day in San Sebastian: Start with a guided visit of La Bretxa market with its marvelous fish section and outdoor farm stands. Learn the differences between the various types of Iberian hams, taste Basque cheeses and pick up other fresh ingredients for a Pinxtos cooking class at a tasting room overlooking one of the pedestrian thoroughfares of this charming old city. A local chef will lead your lesson, which will include joint preparation of between 8 and 12 pintxos. The session will conclude with a pintxos lunch featuring your creations and wine pairings. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner on your own. Accommodations: Villa Soro.

**Day Three:** Epicurean Excursion in Basque Country. Depart San Sebastian mid-morning for the coastal town of Zarautz. Enjoy a private visit with tastings at a charming family-operated winery that produces Txakoli, the delightful Basque white wine. Continue on to the town of Getaria and enjoy lunch of chargrilled fish on a terrace overlooking the harbor. Following lunch, proceed inland for private visits and tastings at a Basque cheesemaker and baker. Dinner on your own. Accommodations: Villa Soro

**Day Four:** A day-long excursion to Rioja Alavesa, the finest portion of La Rioja wine region located in Basque country, consisting of a private guided tour of the La Rioja. Tour includes visits to two high-end bodegas (such as Ramirez de Ganuza, Finca Valpiedra, Muga or Juan Alcorta), as well as cultural sites in Laguardia, plus a traditional Basque lunch at a favorite restaurant of locals. Transfer to Bilbao. Dinner on your own in Bilbao. Accommodations: Grand Hotel Domine, Bilbao, a contemporary property just across from the Guggenheim museum

**Day Five:** Morning private guided tour of the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim museum followed by a transfer to the Bilbao airport for the 70-minute flight to Barcelona. Transfer to your hotel following arrival. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner on your own. Accommodations: Casa Fuster, our preferred five-star property in Barcelona located in a commanding position on the prestigious Passeig de Gracia

**Day Six:** Day at leisure. Evening cooking class focusing on "nueva cocina," or avant-garde techniques, with one of the talented young chefs of this movement. The course will explore techniques that employ liquid nitrogen, vapor and heat vacuums. The class will be followed by an avant-garde dinner with wine pairings. Accommodations: Casa Fuster

**Day Seven:** Private guided Epicurean Walking Tour of the old city, in addition to visits to the masterpieces of famed architect Antoni Gaudi. Includes a tour of La Boqueria market as well as epicurean stop-offs and tastings to sample Catalan chocolate and other regional specialties. Afternoon at leisure. Evening tapas tour of the Born district. Accommodations: Casa Fuster

**Day Eight:** Ninety-minute private transfer from Barcelona to your Catalan cooking school, a charming, restored private home in a quiet village in the spectacular Priorat wine region. Tapas lunch followed by a private visit to a wine cooperative in El Masroig. Evening cooking class followed by dinner, including local wine pairings. Accommodations: Deluxe, en suite accommodations co-located with the cooking school

**Day Nine:** Following breakfast and a relaxing morning, enjoy a private guided visit to Clos de l'Obac winery, one of the region's best producers, for a private tour with tastings and a winemaker meeting. Lunch at the Cellers de Gratallops. Afternoon at leisure. Early evening olive oil tasting followed by an evening cooking class and dinner, including local wine pairings. Accommodations: Deluxe en suite accommodations co-located with the cooking school

**Day Ten:** Breakfast. Private visit to the Scala Dei monastery, the leading cultural site in Priorat. Private visit with a tour, tastings and winemaker meeting at the La Conreria de Scala Dei winery. Lunch at the El Cairat restaurant in Falset. Evening cooking class followed by dinner, including local wine pairings. Accommodations: Deluxe en suite accommodations co-located with the cooking school

**Day Eleven:** Transfer to Barcelona airport for departure

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### **What's included:**

- Airport meet-and-greet upon arrival in Bilbao
- 10 nights deluxe accommodations as specified
- Culinary classes (5), private wine tours (3) and additional epicurean experiences (5) as specified
- Private guided cultural tours as specified
- Spanair flight from Bilbao to Barcelona (coach class for 70-minute flight)
- Meals as specified: 10 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 6 dinners with opinionated dining recommendations for meals on your own.
- Private transfers throughout the itinerary
- Detailed CORK & FORK travel guide
- 24/7 phone availability of a CORK & FORK representative

**Price Per Person** (based on a group of six with double occupancy): \$7,145

*We would be happy to develop a personalized itinerary to accommodate your budget. Pricing and arrangements are subject to availability and price fluctuation. Pricing will be guaranteed prior to final booking.*

**For More Information:** Contact Jim Dondero at CORK & FORK to discuss this itinerary: 919.536.3200, jim@corkandfork.net