

# EXPLORE!

## Wine, Walks and Tapas in Spain

11 days

Spain - Trip code CWW



## Wine, Walks and Tapas in Spain

Some of Spain's best food and wine can be found in the provinces of the Basque Country, La Rioja and Catalunya. On this journey from Bilbao to Barcelona we blend easy walks through wonderful scenery with wine tasting for a great introduction to the quality wine regions of La Rioja, Montsant, Priorat and Cava. There is also a special focus on local cuisine along the way, from fresh Basque seafood to mouthwatering Rigas tapas and modern Catalan dishes. The walks are varied and rewarding, from coastal scenes, along the Camino de Santiago, through vineyards and on top of Montserrat ridge.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Logrono, Rioja** - Walking and wine tasting in one of Spain's most distinguished culinary hotspots
- ★ **Montblanc** - Traditional Catalan dinner with a local family
- ★ **Freixenet Cava Winery** - Wine tasting at one of the Penedes region's most famous estates
- ★ **Bilbao** - Admire the spectacular architecture of the Guggenheim Museum
- ★ **Barcelona** - Home to the astounding work of Antoni Gaudi and the colourful 'La Boqueria' food market

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

#### WALKING GRADE:

##### Easy

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.

#### GROUP SIZE:

##### 10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join trip in the Basque city of Bilbao

Arrive in Bilbao and check-in at the hotel. Situated on the banks of the Nervión River, on the northern edge of the Iberian Peninsula, Bilbao is home to the iconic magnificence of the Guggenheim, one of the world's most famous museums and one of its most spectacular architectural creations. Lying amongst the verdant landscapes of Vizcaya Province, the city is the largest and most culturally dynamic in the Basque region, providing us with the perfect start to this cultural and gastronomic journey.



**Accommodation: Hotel Barcelo Nervion** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Coastal walk with views across the Bay of Biscay

Boarding a local bus to Bakio this morning we head north, to take in the views across the Bay of Biscay and walk up onto the steep cliffs of Gaztelugatxe. Returning via another route, we then have a free afternoon back in Bilbao, where we have an opportunity to visit the world renowned Guggenheim Museum. This evening we have the option to join our Explore Leader for a gourmet tour of the city, taking in the local tapas bars and sampling for ourselves the famous Basque 'pintxos'. Walking: approximately 3 hours/9 kilometres, +/- 350 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Barcelo Nervion** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Visit to Rioja vineyard; walk on the Camino de Santiago

Turning south this morning we begin with a visit to the Vivanco Bodega, one of the most renowned vineyards in the Rioja region. We will have an opportunity to do some wine tasting in Laguardia village before we continue driving into the heart of La Rioja for two photo stops outside the most emblematic bodegas in the whole region - Ysios (built by Calatrava) and Marques de Riscal (built by Frank O'Gehry). Later we reach Azofra and the famous pilgrimage route of the Camino Santiago. Walking part of the route towards Nájera, we have a chance to pay an optional visit to the monastery of Santa Maria de Real, the final resting place of many of Navarre's medieval kings, before completing the journey on to the town of Logroño. Walking: approximately 2.5hours/9 kilometres, +/- 100 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Murietta** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Explore Logrono, capital of La Rioja region

Logrono lies at the centre of the Rioja wine trade and this morning after an orientation walk we visit the fascinating Ontanon Wine Museum and bodega. Here we visit the museum and enjoy a wine tasting. The afternoon is left free to explore Logrono or join your Explore Leader for an optional visit to Bodegas Franco Espanolas, one of the oldest and long established Rioja bodegas in the town. As well as its historic antecedents, Logroño enjoys a reputation as one of Spain's most distinguished culinary hotspots. One of its more interesting dishes is 'Pochas a la Riojana', a local style dish consisting of beans and vegetables.



**Accommodation: Hotel Murietta** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Drive to medieval town of Alquezar via Zaragoza

Travelling by bus today we head next for Zaragoza, a city that was heavily influenced by the Moors, a factor wonderfully illustrated by its numerous examples of Mudéjar architecture. We have a short walking tour of the town, including the impressive El Pilar cathedral. In the afternoon we continue driving into the Sierra de Guara to medieval Alquazar, where we have some free time to explore this unique town built around an Arabic fortress.



**Accommodation: Hotel Santa Maria** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Gorge walk in the morning and then drive to Montblanc; enjoy a local Catalan meal

This morning we take a short walk along a gorge and the River Vero. We then drive a short distance Laus bodega, known for its striking architecture, before continuing on to the charming medieval town of Montblanc, lying close to some of the finest wine regions in Catalunya. After a chance for some free time, we then meet at a local 'Fonda' to enjoy a traditional Catalan dinner with a local family. Catalan cuisine is a wonderfully rich mix of dishes and sauces that are generally followed by deserts of fresh cheese and honey. Walking time: Approximately 1.5 hours/3 kilometres. +150/-150 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Viaurelia** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 7 - Walk through vineyards to Poblet Monastery

Walking from the hotel this morning we head out through the local vineyards to the monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the largest Cistercian monasteries in Spain. There is an opportunity to visit the monastery, then after a picnic lunch of local produce we drive back to Montblanc where there is free time to explore this well preserved, medieval town. In the afternoon we visit Mas Foraster, a famous local wine producer, where we have a wine tasting. Walking time: Approximately 3 hours/ 10 kilometres. +250/-150 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Viaurelia** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 8 - Discover Bodega Scaladei; walk to Cartuia Monastery

This morning we begin the day with a drive to Siurana, a fascinating medieval village built on a rock in the heart of the Sierra Montblanc. This was one of the last Muslim strongholds of the region before their final expulsion in the 17th century. We make a short walk around the village before continuing to Priorat, which next to la Rioja, is probably one of the most famous of Spain's wine growing regions. Here we walk to the 17th century monastery at Cartuia (approximately one and a half hours) before we visit the Bodega Scaladei to enjoy some of their famed produce and learn a little about the sophisticated art of wine and olive oil production. We return by bus to Montblanc. Walking time: Approximately 2.5 hours/7 kilometres. +/-150 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Viaurelia** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Visit Freixenet winery; walk at Montserrat Monastery

Driving into the Penedes region this morning we enter the heart of Catalan Cava production. This region is home to some of the finest Champagne style wines in the world and a visit to the Freixenet vineyard introduces us to one of its most famous estates. A guided tour and some cava tasting give us a good insight into the winery and its products. Next stop is the monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat, the most famous religious retreat in Catalonia, where we take a walk along the mountain ridge to enjoy the stunning views before completing our journey to Barcelona. Walking time: Approximately 3 hours/7 kilometres. +250/-500 metres.



**Accommodation: Hotel Silken** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Explore Barcelona, including La Boqueria food market

The second largest city in Spain, Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and this morning we take an orientation tour around the old city. Home to no fewer than nine World Heritage sites, the city can boast a rich cultural heritage, the spectacular architectural creations of Antoni Gaudi and one of the best food markets anywhere in Spain - 'La Boqueria'. Today this cultural landmark is a visual and culinary delight, with over 200 stalls selling everything from fish and meat to tapas and beetles (yes, really). Later this evening we have the opportunity to enjoy a final meal at one of the city's popular restaurants.



**Accommodation: Hotel Silken** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Trip ends in Catalonian capital, Barcelona



Meals Provided: Breakfast

# Walking and Trekking information

## DAILY DIS

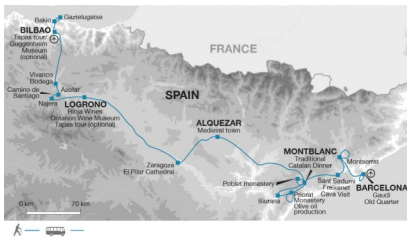
Day 2	9km
Day 3	7km
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	6km
Day 7	10km
Day 8	5km
Day 9	7km

### Walking grade

Easy

### Trek details

Walks on 6 days for between 1.5 and 3 hours. The terrain is generally gently undulating although on one walk we descend 500 metres. We have graded this tour as easy. It is possible to opt out of any of the walks.



## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 10  
Lunch: 1  
Dinner: 1



### Transport

Bus  
Public Bus  
Taxi



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

2 nights premium hotel  
8 nights standard hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

# Spain Holidays & Tours

## Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

## Time difference to GMT

+1

## Plugs

2 Pin Round

## Religion

Roman Catholic

## Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

## Budgeting and packing

## Optional activities

Bodegas Franco Espanolas visit and wine tasting - €12 pp Poblet Monastery - approx. €8 pp

## Clothing

Lightweight cotton clothing is best from June to September, light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, but especially after the start of September, and a warm fleece/light jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights at the beginning and end of the season. Don't forget a swimming costume.

## Footwear

We recommend you bring walking/hiking boots, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

We also recommend taking a water bottle, insect repellent, and sun cream. You may find a walking pole useful.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Country Information

## Spain Holidays & Tours

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Dinner price**

£12.00 - 16.00

**Beer price**

£1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

**Water price**

£1.4

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Euros

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

**Where To Exchange**

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

**ATM Availability**

In cities and most major towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

**Travellers Cheques**

Not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Public Bus, Taxi

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

**Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)



## Visa Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Spain Holidays & Tours

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

