



Across Spain and Portugal With Paradores & Pousadas

Fortified cities and tiny fishing villages, rugged Atlantic coastline and commanding Pyrenees peaks, iconic shrines to both religion and fine art, and intimate lodgings in historic paradores and pousadas – it all awaits on this singular small group journey from Lisbon across the north of Spain, ending in vibrant Barcelona.

**With an Post-Tour Extension:
Barcelona – On Your Own**

Itinerary

Created on Jul 16, 2024

Across Spain and Portugal

Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Lisbon, Portugal

DAY 2: Arrive Lisbon

We arrive in the Portuguese capital and transfer to our hotel. As guests' arrival times vary, we have no group activities planned during the day. Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner.

Accommodations: Corinthia Lisbon

Meals: Dinner

DAY 3: Lisbon

A morning tour introduces us to the city on the River Tagus; the afternoon is free for independent exploration.

Accommodations: Corinthia Lisbon

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Lisbon/Oporto

Leaving Lisbon, we head north, stopping in the small fortified town of Obidos and in the seaside village of Nazaré. Early this evening we reach our *pousada* in lovely Oporto, Portugal's second largest city and a UNESCO site.

Accommodations: Pousada Pestana Palácio do Freixo

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5: Oporto

Highlights of our city tour today include the historic city center, Baroque Clerigos Church, and the sophisticated Foz oceanfront district. Afterwards, we enjoy an hour-long cruise on the Douro River. Our tour ends with a visit to a port lodge for a tasting of the fortified wine exclusive to the region.

Accommodations: Pousada Pestana Palácio do Freixo

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6: Oporto/Santiago de Compostela, Spain

En route to Santiago, we stop in the old Galician town of Pontevedra. We continue on to Santiago, capital of Spain's northwest Galicia region, arriving mid-afternoon at our *parador*, where we dine tonight.

Accommodations: Parador de Santiago de Compostela

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7: Santiago de Compostela

The last stop on the celebrated pilgrimage route of the Way of St. James (*Camino de Santiago*) and presumed repository of the remains of St. James the Apostle, Santiago de Compostela ranks among Spain's most beautiful and visited cities. We discover this important cultural and educational capital on today's tour, featuring the cathedral housing the silver crypt believed to hold the remains of St. James. From here we enter Plaza del Obradoiro, the monumental square surrounded by Santiago's most important buildings. This afternoon is free for independent exploration in this eminently walkable and lovely UNESCO World Heritage city with historic buildings lining its winding, narrow streets.

Accommodations: Parador de Santiago de Compostela

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8: Santiago/León

Leaving Santiago this morning, we travel east to vibrant León, another stop on the Way of St. James pilgrimage route and known for its religious festivals and Easter Week processions. Upon arrival, we encounter the city's impressive historical and architectural heritage as we visit the 13th-century León Cathedral, one of Spain's most beautiful with its sculpture-covered façade and impressive stained glass windows; and Casa Botines, a Modernist structure by architect Antoni Gaudí. We reach our hotel early this evening and dine there tonight.

Accommodations: Parador de León

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 9: León/Bilbao

Today we stop in the elegant port city and Cantabrian capital of Santander for a tour and lunch. Then we travel on to Bilbao, the industrial port city almost magically transformed by the construction of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in 1997.

Accommodations: Meliá Bilbao

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 10: Bilbao

This morning's tour begins in Bilbao's medieval Old City, with its charming mix of narrow cobblestone streets and inviting squares. We see the Catedral de Santiago (c. 1379), once a stop on the pilgrimage route; monumental Plaza Nueva; and busy seaside La Ribera market. Then we take a guided tour of the Guggenheim and its contemporary art collection. Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the jaw-dropping structure of limestone, titanium, and glass has drawn acclaim, attention, and visitors to this popular, revitalized city. Our last stop is Bilbao's Fine Arts Museum where we view a rich collection of Spanish and Basque artworks.

Accommodations: Meliá Bilbao

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11: Bilbao/Basque Country

A day-long excursion begins with a poignant stop: Gernika (Guernica), heart of the Basque region and the town razed by Nazi bombing in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War which was immortalized in the namesake painting by Picasso. Then we pass through countryside historically home to the Basque people of Spain's Atlantic Coast and western Pyrenees. At the seaside village of Bakio, we follow a coastal road of wild beauty to the islet of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe, with its hermitage to St. John the Baptist. We stop in the key fishing town of Bermeo then continue on to the medieval fishing village of Mundaka, where we enjoy magnificent views of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve of streams and a salt marsh surrounded by sheer cliffs.

Accommodations: Meliá Bilbao

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 12: Bilbao/Pamplona/Bielsa

We travel today to the Pyrenees town of Bielsa, stopping en route in fabled Pamplona, known for its annual Running of the Bulls tradition.

Accommodations: Parador de Bielsa

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 13: Bielsa

Fresh mountain air and stunning scenery are on tap as we visit Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Touring by coach and on foot, we see the limestone Pyrenees chain and its lush valleys, dotted with clear blue streams and beech, fir, and pine trees.

Accommodations: Parador de Bielsa

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 14: Bielsa/Barcelona

We travel today by coach to the world-class city of Barcelona, arriving mid-afternoon. After a brief orientation walking tour, we are free for dinner on our own in this most gastronomic of cities.

Accommodations: El Avenida Palace

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15: Barcelona

This morning's city tour features Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter), a maze of medieval streets, and Las Ramblas, the tree-lined pedestrian mall that attracts locals and visitors alike, day and night. We pay homage to Barcelona's native son, flamboyant artist Antoni Gaudí, by visiting his fanciful Parc Guell and the landmark Sagrada Família, his surreal – and unfinished – cathedral. Following a *tapas* lunch, the remainder of the day is free for independent exploration.

Accommodations: El Avenida Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 16: Barcelona

Our Gaudí tour continues this morning at Casa Milà, whose curving stone face inspired the nickname “La Pedrera” (stone quarry). A UNESCO site, Casa Milà now houses a cultural center. This afternoon is at leisure; tonight we bid *¡adios!* to Spain and our fellow travelers at a farewell dinner.

Accommodations: El Avenida Palace

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 17: Depart for U.S.

We transfer to the airport this morning for our connecting flights to the U.S.

Meals: Breakfast

This tour itinerary was generated for Across Spain and Portugal on Jul 16, 2024. Please visit the Across Spain and Portugal page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/europe/across-spain-portugal/> for the latest and most accurate information.