



presents

**BARCELONA CITY TO BASQUE COUNTRY**

**“LAS COCINAS DE ESPAÑA”**

**September 8 – September 16, 2024**

**and**

**LA RIOJA WINE COUNTRY EXTENSION**

**September 16 – 19, 2024**



An exciting journey into all things Catalonia and Basque, two dominant and autonomous communities of the peoples of Spain. On our journey, we will become one with the Spaniards and enjoy the “Kitchens of Spain”, from our main meal during the Siesta time to the late evening Tapas and Pintxos strolls.

**Arrive Sunday, September 8** Welcome to Barcelona, the capital of the autonomous community of Catalonia. Check into our centrally located, 4-star hotel and we will begin our journey with a **Tapa Party** dining on delicious tapas and cocktails. Catch up with old friends and meet and greet new ones!

**Monday, September 9** Our first cooking class is the quintessential **Paella**. It is said that the word paella originates from the Latin term “patella”, which was a flat plate on which offerings were made to the gods. Today paella is the Catalan word for frying pan.



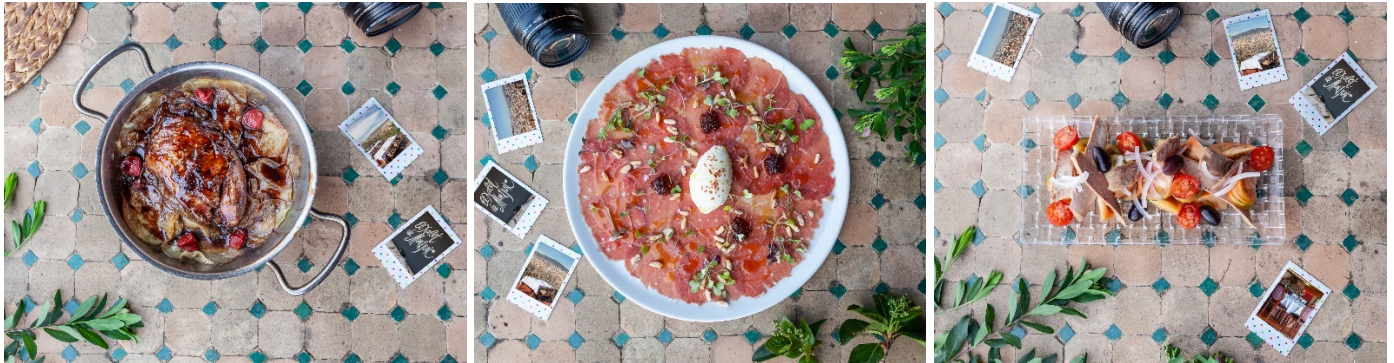
In the evening, we will ramble down **Las Ramblas**, and wander up to **Montjuïc** to ride the famous cable car to our dinner in the heart of **Montjuïc Park**.



The **Montjuïc Cable Car** has been the most special way to discover the charms of Barcelona. Its 820 yards of route allow you to gaze at unparalleled views, culminating your journey in the Montjuïc Castle on the top of a mountain that represents the living history of the city.

We will dine at the restaurant **El Xalet de Montjuïc**. A gastronomic space that combines its Mediterranean and signature cuisine with a spectacular view of Barcelona at your feet.

*El Xalet  
de Montjuïc*



Afterwards we will stroll down the famous **Magic Fountain of Montjuïc**, built for the International Expo in 1929. Since its inauguration, the fountain has become a symbol of Barcelona that illuminates the Catalan capital with its lights and jets of water dancing to the rhythm of music. Every day, at different times, some 700 gallons of water per second dance through the fountain's three concentric pools, driven by a water-recycling system.



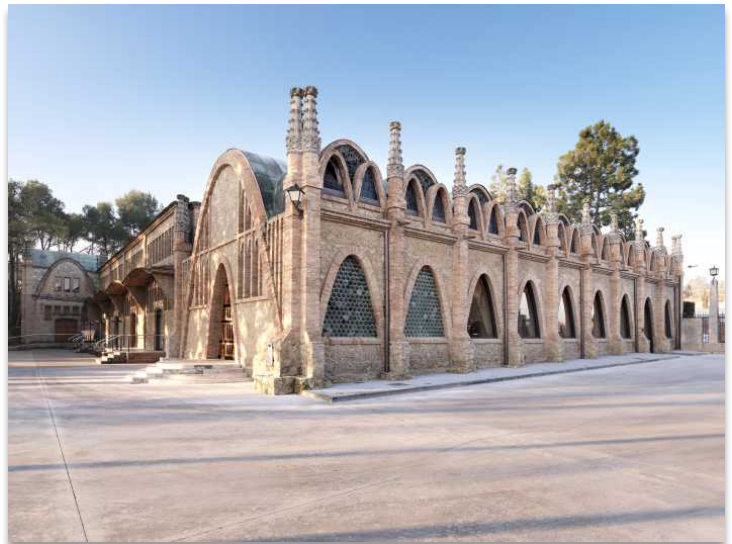
**Tuesday, September 10** we cook again! We will visit the Mercado de Ninot market with our chef and head to the kitchen to prepare our lunch of local and regional produce and proteins.



Late evening, we will meet together to visit three different barrios (neighborhoods) such as Barri Gòtic Quarter, El Born Barrio and Barceloneta Barrio for guided walking tapa strolls.

**Wednesday, September 11** we head off to Codorníu house and gardens on an exciting journey to the origins of Cava. Codorníu, is the oldest and second-largest producer of Cava, the Spanish traditional method sparkling wine. Founded in 1551 near Barcelona, it is one of the oldest companies in Spain and one of the oldest wineries worldwide.

## CODORNÍU



For our final night in Barcelona, no visit would be complete without the dining experience with the Tablao Del Cordobes Flamenco group. A tablao is a dedicated flamenco performance venue and Tablao Flamenco Cordobes is considered Barcelona's best. With a heritage of more than 50 years and decor inspired by the dynasty that built the Alhambra, it draws stars of the art form from across Spain.

Tablao  
FLAMENGO  
CORDOBES  
Desde 1970



**Thursday, September 12** we head to ground zero of the Spanish culinary world. Basque Country (Euskadi) is an autonomous community in northern Spain with strong cultural traditions, a celebrated cuisine, with a distinct language that pre-dates the Romance languages. The Basque country is located in the western Pyrenees, straddling the border between France and Spain on the coast of the Bay of Biscay. Euskal Herria is the oldest documented Basque name for the area, dating from the 16th century.

We will depart Barcelona for a 1-hour flight to Bilbao, home to the famous Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. This museum of modern and contemporary art was designed by Canadian-American architect Frank Gehry. The museum has an exhibit of 250 contemporary works of art, and the building itself is a great work of contemporary architecture. We will visit the museum before transferring to our lunch by the sea at restaurant Kaia-Kaipe in Geteria.



## Kaia Kaipe

Kaia-Kaipe restaurant is defined by what is not seen. Their cuisine is based on local and seasonal products, their special grill, and the hatchery that always allows them to serve fresh seafood.

Our lunch will include a visit to the hatchery.



After lunch we head to Donostia-San Sebastian, a resort town on the Bay of Biscay, known for its Playa de la Concha beach framed by a picturesque bayfront promenade and world-renowned restaurants helmed by innovative chefs. Basque country has its own language, and most signs will have two names, one for Basque (Donostia) and one for Spanish (San Sebastian).

“The best food in Spain is in San Sebastian...it’s that simple”...Anthony Bourdin. “And it’s in San Sebastian where there are more chefs, cooks and food crazy people in all of Spain, possibly the world.”

After checking into our beachside hotel, we will have some time to relax and discover our surroundings, then meet up for our guided **“Pintxos (pin-chos) Stroll”** where we’ll dine on **“a little, often”**. Parte Vieja (old town), with its cobblestoned alleys and upscale shops, offers vibrant neighborhood pintxo bars, pairing local wines with bite-size regional specialties.



**Friday, September 13** we head to the hills, visiting farms along the way. Basque county is known for its sheep's milk cheeses, the infamous Iberian Pig, Euskal Txerri in the Basque language, and we will discover Txakoli: Spain's refreshing, effervescent, hard-to-pronounce wine (cha-ko-lee).



Back in San Sebastian, we will visit a Txoko (cho-ko), literally “small corner”, that is a Basque word used to refer to **Basque Gastronomic Societies**. In San Sebastian, there are over 200 Gastronomic Societies, local clubs where the men come together to cook their heritage dishes and drink their hard ciders.

The remarkable feature of the txoko is that the members themselves do the shopping and cooking. These gastronomic societies are distinctly Basque members-only, where people cook at all hours (often quite late), but ultimately, it's just an excuse to get together with friends and family, keeping Basque recipes, language and culture alive. We will have the privilege to peak behind one of these club doors and enjoy a hearty meal.

**Saturday, September 14** Bonjour, Basque! We'll spend the day exploring the French side of the Basque Country as we transfer to Saint-Jean-de-Luz for a visit and free time (SHOPPING!!).



Then on to Bayonne for local product tastings at their Saturday market, ending in Biarritz for a dessert tasting in the renown Hôtel du Palais in front of the sea.

# Zelai Txiki

Our lunch tastings will leave us hungry for a nice dinner at Zelai Txiki, a Green Michelin Star restaurant. Beautiful Basque food served without fuss, minimalistic style but maximum taste! A superb location on the slopes of Mt. Ulia, providing impressive views from its panoramic terrace.



# mimo

**Sunday, September 15** we will have our final hands-on cooking experience at **Mimo – Bite the Experience**. Featured on National Geographic as one of the ten best cookery schools in the world, Mimo is a dream realized for two chefs who want to share the Basque cooking experience with other traveling food lovers.





# MIRAMAR

JAUREGIA / PALACIO

And our final **Gala** experience will be held at a very special place, **Miramar Palace**, where we will be feted with a catered dining experience! The Miramar Palace is an emblematic and unique building with a privileged location facing the Bahía de la Concha. Built in 1893 at the request of Queen María Cristina, is an architectural complex from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that has become an incomparable setting for hosting events.



**Monday, September 16** we say goodbye to Donostia-San Sebastian and transfers to the airport (EAS airport code) are provided. Note: Bilbao airport transfers can be arranged for an additional cost

Or you may wish to extend your stay and tour on your own, but we HOPE you will continue on with us on the **La Rioja Extension** for a few more days dedicated to the famous Spain wine region and its tempranillos grape!

Producers Note: For the main program and the extension, at the time of printing, September 2023, the dates of the trip are confirmed, and the hotels are confirmed. While the activities are also confirmed, the producers reserve the right to make slight changes in the schedule of activities and or/restaurants and/or towns to create a better flow of events and accommodate travel times between meals, events, and activities.

## LA RIOJA EXTENSION

La Rioja is a province and autonomous community in northern Spain with a renowned wine industry. Below the Cantabrian Mountains, vineyards occupy the Ebro valley, with Logroño as its capital.

**Monday, September 16** we will transfer to **Pamplona**, a 75-minute drive. Here we will have a guided tour of the city made famous by Earnest Hemmingway in his book *THE SUN ALSO RISES*, learning ourselves about the Running of the Bulls during the Feast of San Fermin. We'll grab some pintxos for lunch.



We arrive at our hotel in Logroño and relax and refresh before our dinner at Contino Winery.



Viñedos del Contino, the first château in La Rioja, is a 153-acre estate located in the Rioja Alavesa. The history of the property dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and derives its name from a saint and a guardian who watch over the winery. The “contino” was that officer in charge of a guard of a hundred soldiers who “continuously” watched over the royal family since the times of the Catholic Monarchs. Tradition tells that San Gregorio, the patron saint of vineyards, passed through the lands of this same La Rioja Estate.

Here we will be treated to an open bar and catered dinner.



Tuesday, September 17 we visit the **Erroiz Olive Orchard** and modern press for a tasting of their **Basque Olive Oils** with two paired pintxos.



At Erroiz, they are dedicated to the production of high-quality extra virgin olive oil where they process the 'Arroniz' type of olive, which although not being very widespread, is recognized for its intense flavor aroma that leaves a spicy taste on the tongue and palate. They only process olives from their own olive groves and from those of farmers from the Rioja Alavesa, especially those from their own village.

Next, we will transfer to **Bodegas Baigorri** for a visit and tasting.



The winemaking process at award-winning **Bodegas Baigorri** is completely driven by gravity. Built 105 feet underground, the winery harnesses gravity to avoid the use of pumps or mechanical methods of any kind that might damage the grapes or wine. The winery is as much a work of art as the wines it produces.

# HEREDEROS DEL MARQUÉS DE RISCAL



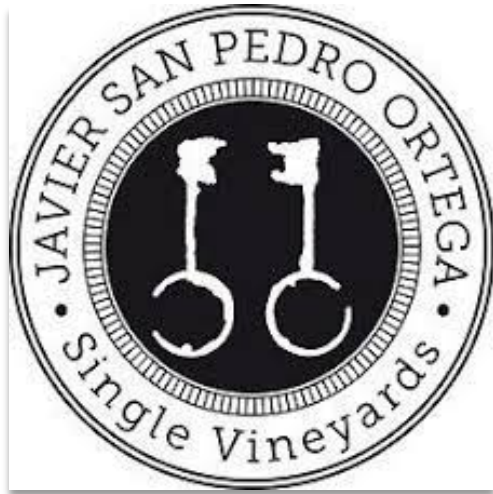
And now for the WOW! Factor of La Rioja!

**Marqués de Riscal** has been chosen as the second-best vineyard in the world in the 2023 World's Best Vineyard awards, a recognition the hundred-year-old wine cellar has received for the third year in a row. This stunning 21<sup>st</sup>-century chateau was designed by Frank Gehry and is a true masterpiece. And as you will know by the time we arrive for this visit, Spain dines at lunch and snacks at night. We will have the exquisite dining pleasure of a lunch here. Prepare to savor a one-of-a-kind experience of all the senses as we enjoy the chateau menu, overseen by Michelin-starred Chef Francis Paniego, and a sommelier curated wine pairing. After lunch we return to the hotel to relax and freshen up for another winery visit to Altanza Bodegas.



**Altanza Bodegas** was founded by a group of friends who shared the dream of making classic timeless Riojas with a modern touch and authenticity. They built a state of the art winery based on 3 principles: their own **Valvarés Estate** vineyard, Tempranillo grapes, and French Oak. Tapa dinner at the winery.

**Wednesday, September 18** we go to Elciego to mountain bike (e-bike option) with a stop for wine tastings Bodegas Javier San Pedro Ortega for a new winery experience.



(He's cute!)

Javier is the fifth generation of a family of winemakers from LaGuardia, a privileged place in the Rioja Alavesa. He began learning his trade with his grandfather and at the age of 17 he made his first wine in his father's winery. Finally in 2013, he decided to undertake his personal project, his own namesake bodega brought to life by an innovative young team that seeks to surprise and differentiate itself from the classic Rioja wine.

After our Ortega visit, we will transfer back to the hotel to refresh and check out and make our way to **Bodega Marqués de Murrieta Winery** for a long lunch and wine pairing.



The origin of the **Marqués de Murrieta** winery is also the origin of Rioja. Don Luciano Murrieta, applying the techniques learned in Bordeaux, produced the first Rioja wine in 1852, with the intention of it lasting over time. He was clear from the beginning that a quality Rioja wine with good aging would have the capacity to be exported outside Spain, and he did not hesitate to send that mythical 1852 vintage to countries like Mexico and Cuba, becoming the first Rioja to be exported.

After our luxury seven course gastronomic tasting menu and wine pairing, we will depart for Madrid and our final night. Dinner has an option to meet at the hotel lobby and wander....

**Thursday, September 19** we have airport transfers to MAD, or plan to stay and explore Madrid, and/or venture down to Toledo.