

adventurewomen

THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

SPAIN & FRANCE

Hiking the Basque Country



September 24 - October 1, 2017

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TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Follow scenic footpaths that were walked by pilgrims over 1,000 years ago
- ▶ Explore sophisticated and stunning San Sebastián
- ▶ Experience the unique mixture of Spanish and French culture, cuisine, and language
- ▶ Walk past cathedrals, beautiful landscapes, and through white stucco villages
- ▶ Visit a bustling French market town in the foothills of the Pyrenees

QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1: Arrive San Sebastián, walk on a cliff-top with stunning views, welcome dinner
- Day 2: 4 hour hike on the first part of the Camino, explore San Sebastián
- Day 3: Hike part of a long-distance footpath into Sare and explore the beautiful village
- Day 4: Take the Blue Pony Trail to the witch museum and caves in Zugarramurdi
- Day 5: Enjoy a loop walk above Ainhoa and enjoy panoramic views
- Day 6: Hike on the GR10 on the Spanish and French border above St. Etienne
- Day 7: Take a pilgrim's path to St. Jean Pied de Port, farewell dinner
- Day 8: Depart San Sebastián

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is this trip
right for me?

We rate this trip as moderate with 2 days of high energy and requires that you be in very good physical condition, and be able to hike 5-8 miles a day. Some of the landscape is quite mountainous. Many of the hikes are on footpaths through the woods or on old stone staircases, while others are on well surfaced roads. Paths are through rolling terrain and can be rough and uneven, so good hiking boots are recommended, as well as a walking stick if you prefer to hike with one. A typical day consists of 3-5 hours of leisurely hiking, with stops that include plenty of time for lunch, and exploring villages, cultural, and historical sites.

the important
stuff

We have a partnership with FitForTrips, a company that will design an individualized fitness plan for you to ensure that you are prepared for the trip. Visit <https://fitfortrips.com/partners/adventure-women/> for more information.

how do I get
there?

You should come with a flexible, adventurous, and enthusiastic spirit, and a wonderful sense of humor that adventure travel requires.

pack your
bags!

the fine print

your adventure
in depth

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Forms and Final Payment:

Once you book, you will need to fill out and return to AdventureWomen:

- Information Form
- Booking Conditions Form
- Copy of Flight Information
- Copy of Issuing Page of Passport (photo page)

Final payment is due to AdventureWomen in a cash form (check, money order, or wire transfer) on or before June 26, 2017.

Passports and Visas:

Citizens of the United States must have a passport valid for six months beyond your travel dates with at least two blank facing pages. If you do not have a passport, please apply now!

Money:

The currency of Spain and France is the Euro. As of August, 2017, US \$1 = €0.85. Credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs will be acceptable. We recommend bringing \$200-300 in US cash and exchanging it for Euros when you arrive.

Suggested Gratuities:

- ▶ Head Guide: \$100
- ▶ Assistant Guide: \$50

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Arrive: Arrive in San Sebastián, Spain (EAS) on September 24, 2017 by 12:30pm. The group pickup will depart the airport at 1:30pm from the arrivals area.

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Depart: Depart San Sebastián, Spain (EAS) on October 1, 2017 after 1:30pm.

We are happy to help you make your flight and travel arrangements. Please contact us at:

how do I get
there?

(800) 804-8686 or (617) 544-9393
email: info@adventurewomen.com

If you'd like to do anything prior to or following the AdventureWomen trip, we'd be delighted to help you arrange any trip extensions you're interested in.

pack your
bags!

Note: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last-minute registrants, we must release hotel rooms two to three months prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

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Packing Considerations: September weather in this climate generally has daytime average temperatures in the comfortable 70s, with nighttime temperatures in the 50s. As in all outdoor activities, you must be well prepared for weather changes.

Clothing and Gear:

- Duffel bag or small suitcase
- Daypack (should be large enough to carry spare layers, a packed lunch, and water)
- Rain cover for daypack
- 1 pair telescopic hiking poles (optional)
- Medium-weight, waterproof hiking boots (make sure they are broken in!)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- 3-4 pairs hiking socks
- 2-3 short sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended)
- 2-3 long sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended)
- 1 medium weight fleece sweater/jacket
- 1-2 pairs of pants
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1-2 sets of nicer clothes for dinner
- Gore-Tex/waterproof jacket
- Gore-Tex/waterproof pants
- Hat for sun protection
- 5-7 pairs underwear
- 2-4 sports bras
- Sleepwear
- 3-4 gallon size Ziploc bags (for dirty boots/clothes)

AdventureWomen Essentials:

- Travel documents (passport, airline tickets, money)
- 2-3 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Write down/print out travel insurance number
- Locks for your suitcase/duffel bag
- Travel alarm clock with spare batteries
- Headlamp or small flashlight with spare batteries
- Binoculars (8x40/42 models are excellent choices; center focus models are easiest)
- Digital camera, memory cards, battery charger
- Power adapters
- Sunglasses, case, and strap
- Spare glasses, contact lenses, cleaner, saline, etc.
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Your AdventureWomen insulated bottle (good for hot or cold drinks!)
- Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- Mosquito repellent
- Hand wipes/hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Soap, shampoo, and conditioner
- Small packet of tissues

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Essentials Continued:

- Tampons and panty liners (avoid plastic applicators)
- Earplugs: We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs. Available at most drugstores or at www.earplugstore.com
- Assortment of stuff sacks and Ziploc bags
- 1-2 bandanas/Buff
- Reading material/journal and pens

Personal First Aid Kit:

- Prescription medicine you usually take (in original containers)
- Personal epi pen (if you need one, don't forget to pack it!)
- Bandages, Gauze, Ace bandage, blister prevention
- Antiseptic wipes/spray
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cotton-tipped applicators
- Oral rehydration tablets/packets
- Antidiarrheal medication
- Mild laxative
- Antacid
- Cold remedies
- Ibuprofen/acetaminophen
- Eye drops
- Tweezers, scissors (travel size), safety pins

If you prefer to buy a complete kit, we recommend the Smart Travel first aid kit.

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Switching Trips

If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a

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DAY 1

Sunday
9/24/17

Arrive in Hondarribia

Welcome to the Basques! This region is home to the Basque people, their language, culture, and traditions. The area is neither linguistically nor culturally homogeneous, but is a wonderful place to explore.

Arrival and Transfer

You will rendezvous at the San Sebastián Airport, at 1:30pm for the group pick up, and be transferred to the medieval, walled town of Hondarribia, located on the border of France and Spain. If you choose, meet at the hotel at 2:00pm instead of at the airport.

Cliff-Top Walk

This afternoon head out for a cliff-top walk, with magnificent views of the Bay of Biscay. On a clear day you can see all the way down the coast to San Sebastián. The trail takes you right down to the sea, where some of you (brave souls) might want to take a dip in the chilly Atlantic!

Welcome Dinner

Celebrate the first dinner at one of the best restaurants in town, within walking distance of the hotel.

Accommodations

Hotel Jaizkibel

Meals Included

dinner

Hiking Time

2 hours

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DAY 2

Monday
9/25/17

Accommodations

Hotel Jaizkibel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch

Hiking Time

4 hours

Hondarribia

San Sebastián and its surrounding area is home to a high concentration of restaurants boasting Michelin stars. Based on the 2013 ranking, two of the world's top ten best restaurants can be found here. Additionally, the city features tasty snacks similar to tapas called pintxos, which may be found at the bars of the Old Quarter.

Coastal Walk

Leave the hotel and walk the first part of the northern route of St. James, which is better known as the Camino de Santiago del Norte. This is where many pilgrims started their long journey to Santiago de Compostela. You will probably bump into a few pilgrims along the way!

Take a scenic coastal path, passing a lighthouse and enjoying magnificent views.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch as a group today.

Explore San Sebastián

After lunch, transfer into San Sebastián, a chic coastal city with stunning architecture and the foodie capital of Spain.

It's impossible to lay eyes on stunning San Sebastián (Basque: Donostia) and not fall madly in love. San Sebastián frequently tops lists of the world's best places to eat. Its Playa de la Concha is the equal of any city beach in Europe. Enjoy a guided tour of the city this afternoon.

Head to Hondarribia and Dinner

At the end of the day shuttle back to the hotel, and enjoy a free evening for dinner to pick one of Hondarribia's wonderful restaurants.

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DAY 3

Tuesday
9/26/17

Hondarribia to Ainhoa

The GR 11, also known as the ruta Transpirenaica in Spain, is part of the extensive GR footpath network of paths, tracks, and trails. It runs through the Spanish Pyrenees, passing only briefly into France. The trail starts at Cape Higuer (Basque Country), crosses Navarre and Aragon, and finishes at Cap de Creus in Catalonia.

Hike to Valle de Bidasoa

Hike one of Europe's long distance footpaths, the GR11, into the serene Valle de Bidasoa. There are more than one hundred long distance trails in Spain, and like in France, these are called GR (Sendero de Gran Recorrido) and marked with red and white signs. The trail starts in the picturesque village of Bera, and follows small roads and paths through farms and forests to the top of the ridge where there are panoramic views of the Pyrenees and the dramatic Atlantic coastline.

Ascend above tree line before descending to Sare, where you can explore this afternoon.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch on your own today.

Check-In and Dinner

Explore Sare this afternoon. The village is famous for its beautiful houses and the regional specialty "Gateau Basque" - a cake filled with black cherry jam. Enjoy dinner as a group at the hotel.

Accommodations

Argi Eder

Meals Included

breakfast, dinner

Hiking Time

4 hours

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DAY 4

Wednesday
9/27/17

Accommodations
Argi Eder

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

Hiking Time
5 hours

Ainhoa

According to legend, a young woman from Zugarramurdi had the power to fly, and strange occult activities were held regularly in a cave near town. The Spanish government rounded up the accused in 1610 and tried them in the largest trial of its kind in history. Over 7,000 individual cases were tried and 53 individuals were found guilty of practicing witchcraft. Years of non-superstitious beliefs later, all the alleged witchcraft was deemed traditional folk medicine and the Inquisition was deemed an atrocity.

Morning Hike Return to the village of Sare by van, and then pick up the “blue pony trail”, which passes the Grottes de Sare and takes you along one of the old smuggler’s routes into France, where you cross the border into France and stop for lunch at a venta. Ventas are the places where contraband was exchanged when smuggling was at its height. Today most of them are bars and restaurants, although you can still buy duty-free alcohol and cigarettes here! After lunch, hike into Zurrumurdi.

Witch Museum This village owes its origin to the Urdax monastery. The original inhabitants worked the land for the monks, and it later became famous for smuggling, before settling into farming and crafts. Many of the houses are at least 400 years old and were inhabited by so-called witches, for which the village is famous.

The town seems to have taken back its identity not by distancing itself from its historic tragedy, but by embracing its legacy, warts and all.

The Caves of Zugarramurdi Visit the famous caves before continuing your hike onto Urdax.

Dinner Transfer back to Ainhoa from Urdax and enjoy dinner on your own.

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DAY 5

Thursday
9/28/17

Ainhoa to Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry

The Basque language or euskara is the oldest living language in western Europe. Basque has fewer words than French, although over time it has absorbed many words of Iberian, Latin, Gascon, and Arabic origin, as well as countless words borrowed from French and Spanish which have been more or less made Basque in order to express new realities or nuances specific to these languages.

Morning Hike Walk directly from the hotel up into the hills above Ainhoa. This panoramic walk starts by walking up to a tiny chapel. From here, you'll enjoy excellent views of Ainhoa and the surrounding areas. On this hike, you'll climb up to 2,000 feet, with companions of pottocks, wild horse, sheep, and vultures.

Lunch Enjoy lunch on your own in Ainhoa.

Transfer to Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry Transfer to Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry this afternoon. The village is named for the rose-colored granite and soil which gives the River Nive a rosy hue when it overflows its banks. We will also see the rose granite used for building farms and houses in the valley.

Dinner Enjoy dinner at the hotel this evening.

Accommodations
Hotel Arce

Meals Included
breakfast, dinner

Hiking Time
4 hours

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DAY 6

Friday
9/29/17

Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry

The GR 11 is a French GR footpath, or hiking trail, that runs the length of the Pyrenees Mountains. It roughly parallels the French-Spanish border on the French side.

Hike the GR11 Today you transfer to Banca, where you walk on a section of the GR11, the great long distance footpath connecting the Atlantic and Mediterranean coast. The climb takes you up onto a ridge which is the border between France and Spain.

Lunch Have lunch al fresco before descending to St. Etienne di Baigorry.

Accommodations
Hotel Arce

Meals Included
breakfast

Hiking Time
5 hours

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DAY 7

Saturday
9/30/17

Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry

Pied-de-Port means 'foot of the pass' in Pyrenean French. The routes from Paris, Vézelay, and Le Puy-en-Velay meet at Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and it was the pilgrims' last stop before the arduous mountain crossing.

Trace the Pilgrim's Path to St. Jean Pied de Port

Like millions of pilgrims before you, today you trace the pilgrim's path to St. Jean Pied de Port. St. Jean Pied de Port is a beautiful bustling French market town in the foothills of the Pyrenees, which creates a natural border between France and Spain. It is the traditional starting point for the Camino Frances, the most popular of all the Camino routes.

The town was so-called because it was the doorway to the Pyrenees, and you will pass through the historic Saint Jacques Gate to enter the town. From here pilgrims left the village by way of the Spanish Gate and then passed into Spain over the Pyrenees. St. Jean is famous for its livestock markets and its sheep cheese, or Brebis. This is also the best place to find a beret, which although adopted by the French, is originally Basque!

Lunch Have lunch on your own this afternoon.

**Farewell
Dinner** In the late afternoon transfer back to St. Etienne in time for a farewell dinner to celebrate the end of a fabulous adventure!

Accommodations
Hotel Arce

Meals Included
breakfast, dinner

Hiking Time
5 hours

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DAY 8

Sunday
10/1/17

Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry and Depart

All adventures must come to an end, but it's just the beginning of great memories!

Head to the Airport

This morning you will be transferred back to the San Sebastián Airport by 11:00am for departures.

Meals Included
breakfast

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

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Accommodation Details

Hotel Jaizkibel Straddling the French border, the Jaizkibel Hotel is a boutique, four-star hotel, of cutting-edge design, located in Hondarribia-Fuenterrabia, an exclusive coastal enclave on the Txingudi Bay. Just a few minutes from one of the Basque Country's finest golden beaches, it is just a stone's throw from San Sebastián airport, and 20 minutes away from San Sebastián.

Argi Eder The comfortable rooms at Argi Eder are decorated in a country style, and you can enjoy the blooming garden and swimming pool. The restaurant serves contemporary cuisine made from fresh local products and features an exceptional wine collection.

Hotel Arce The charming Hotel Arce was a former smuggler's inn beautifully converted to a small hotel. Located at the foot of the Ispéguy pass, this typical Basque style hotel offers an outdoor pool and elegant rooms either overlooking the garden, the river, or the Pyrenees mountains. The setting - by a river in a typical Basque village - is a magical one, best appreciated from the dining terrace, which juts out over the water and is sheltered by a canopy of chestnut trees. Nothing could be more pleasant than a relaxed breakfast by the water's edge.

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Included/Not Included

Included:

- ▶ All hotel accommodations throughout the trip
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ All gratuities for meals included as per the itinerary
- ▶ Fully-guided sightseeing and walks as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ Professional guide throughout the trip

Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to and from Spain
- ▶ Optional activities as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages
- ▶ Fees for passports, visas, or immunizations
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature