

# Basque Country

SPAIN & FRANCE

SPONSORED BY



Michigan State University  
Alumni Office

October 19-27, 2024

Other dates available upon request



## Dear Spartan Alumni and Friends,

Delve into today's thriving, exuberant Basque culture on this seven-night, first-class journey! From your well-situated base in San Sebastián, a dazzling city with gorgeous beaches and a world-class food culture, explore Basque villages, Bayonne's Gothic cathedral and the celebrated seaside town of Biarritz. Chat with local Basques over dinner, journey to Hemingway's Pamplona, visit the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and more!

In addition to enjoying engaging excursions, you'll come away with a deeper understanding of this ancient culture, thanks to enriching insights shared by expert local guides and lecturers. Plus, with an experienced Travel Director seamlessly handling all the details, you'll be able to relax and appreciate your surroundings.

When you factor in the camaraderie of a small group, it makes for a remarkable adventure that's not to be missed. Reserve today to share in this amazing Basque Country experience!

Go Green!

Regina Cross BS '91  
Director, Spartan Pathways Travel Program  
888-697-2863

The Michigan State University Alumni Office strongly recommends you purchase travel insurance. Travel insurance information will be sent to you with your email confirmation from the MSU Alumni Office.

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### UNESCO World Heritage

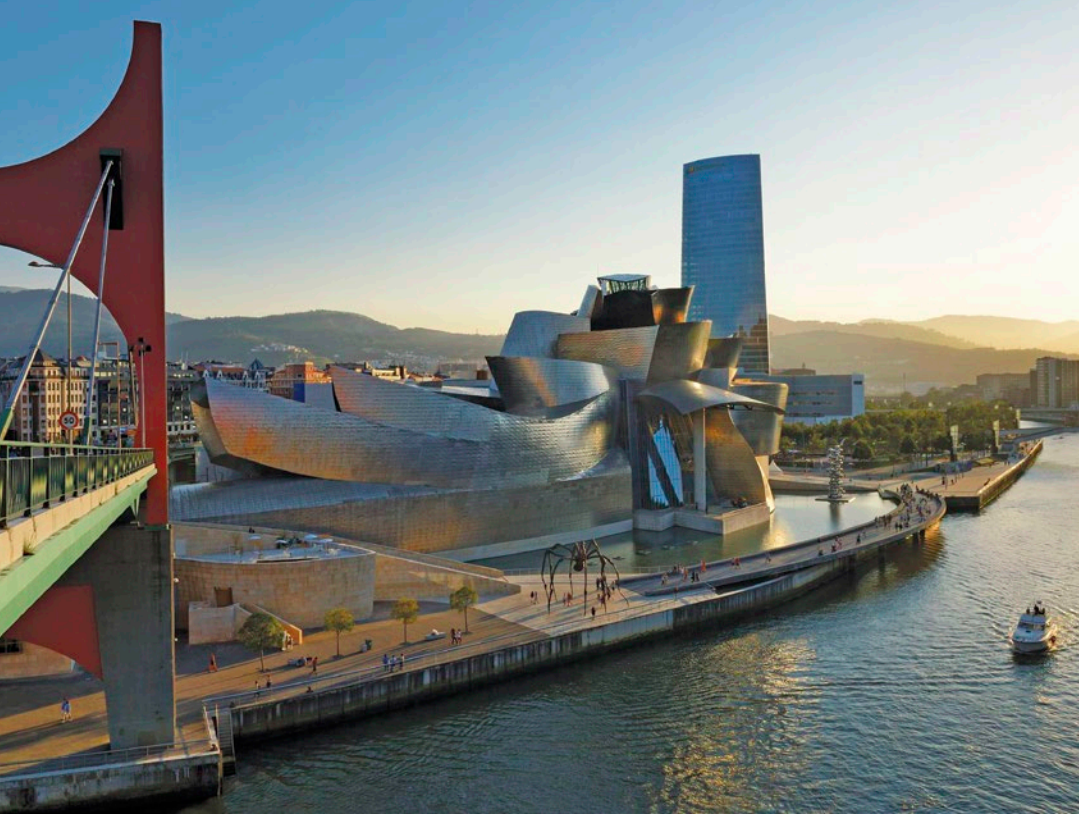
#### Routes of Santiago de Compostela



Above: Cloister of Sainte-Marie  
Cathedral, Bayonne

Right: Sainte-Marie Cathedral





# A World of Discovery



Come along on an exceptional journey to the breathtaking Basque homeland that extends across northern Spain and southwest France along the Bay of Biscay. The Basques, one of Europe's oldest people, have maintained their individuality and language over thousands of years. You'll encounter a proud, ancient culture with a dual identity in a region brimming with heartfelt traditions, vibrant communities and captivating beauty!

Top: Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Above: Traditional Basque dancers

Cover: Old Town, Pamplona | Mail panel: Basque art | La Concha Bay, San Sebastián

## Inspiring Moments



- Discover what it means to be Basque in its **Spanish and French regions**.
- Marvel at the shimmering **Guggenheim Museum Bilbao**, Frank Gehry's wondrous masterpiece.
- Bask in lovely La Concha Bay and world-class dining in **San Sebastián**.
- Get firsthand perspectives on Basque life at a **dinner with local residents**.
- Delight in picturesque **Espelette**, where flame-red strands of peppers adorn whitewashed homes.
- Fill your glass right from the cask in a rustic *cidrerie*, a **Basque cider house**.
- Learn about the **Routes of Santiago de Compostela** as you visit sites on this renowned network of pilgrimage paths.

ALUMNI CAMPUS  
ABROAD®



Promenade, San Sebastián

### Day 1 | In Transit

Depart your gateway city for Bilbao, Spain. 🌐

### Day 2 | Bilbao, Spain | San Sebastián

Upon arrival, transfer 🚗 to the Catalonia Donosti Hotel in San Sebastián.

Meet your fellow travelers at a Welcome Reception and Dinner this evening.

### Day 3 | San Sebastián

**San Sebastián.** Known as Donostia in Euskara, the Basque language, this sophisticated resort town dazzles with gorgeous beaches and bays and a culinary reputation second to none.

In fact, many people believe it is the best city in Spain, if not one of the top cities in the world, to enjoy a meal. On a guided walk, see the old town highlights, including the Basílica de Santa María del Coro and the grand Belle Epoque buildings. Stroll along the boardwalk that hugs La Concha Bay and its beach for picture-perfect waterside views.

**Free Time:** The afternoon is yours to explore San Sebastián on your own. Perhaps take a walk on the Paseo Nuevo, which takes you around Monte Urgull, one of the two hills that overlook the city.

#### **Enrichment: A History of Northern Spain.**

For thousands of years, the Basque people have inhabited this mountainous region and preserved their distinctive culture as well as their language, one of Europe's oldest. Delve into the story of this alluring corner of Spain, known as Euskadi, or Basque Country.

🌐 **AHI Connects | Meet the People.** Food is essential to Basque culture, and meals are cherished as a time to catch up with family and friends. Join a diverse group of residents for a delicious dinner and conversation about life in the Basque region.

### Day 4 | Bayonne, France | Biarritz

**Bayonne.** This lovely gem at the confluence of the Adour and Nive rivers is France's Basque capital. On a guided walk in the old town, visit the Gothic Sainte-Marie Cathedral, a stop on the Way of St. James pilgrimage route, and admire its elegant, 13th-century cloisters. At a cozy cider house, relax over lunch and pour yourself a glass of cider right from the cask!

**Biarritz.** This chic seaside town has been a popular resort since the 1850s. Take a guided walk from St. Eugénie Church and continue along the waterfront to the Rocher de la Vierge

Basque cider cask





St. Eugénie Church, Biarritz

outcrop for sweeping coastal views. Visit the old fishing port and the medieval watchtower.

## Day 5 | Bilbao, Spain

**Bilbao and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.** See Bilbao's landmarks on a scenic tour, then visit the stunning museum designed by architect Frank Gehry, one of the 20th century's most important buildings. View the modern and contemporary art collection with your guide, then savor lunch in town.

**Free Time:** Find a nice spot for dinner in San Sebastián. Choose a traditional restaurant or try the more casual *pintxos* (*tapas*) bars.

## Day 6 | Sare, France | Espelette | Saint-Jean-de-Luz

**French Basque Traditions and Espelette.** Step back in time at Maison Ortilloplitz,

Maison Ortilloplitz, Sare



a restored, 16th-century farmhouse in Sare, and learn about the everyday customs of French Basque families. Later, stroll through colorful Espelette, famous for its red peppers, and pause for lunch in town. First brought to the area in 1650 by a local sailor, the peppers are integral to Basque cooking and officially protected as a regional product.

**Enrichment: Basque Strength Games.** A local expert discusses *herri kirolak*, traditional rural sports based on farming tasks like chopping wood, lifting heavy stones and sawing.

**Saint-Jean-de-Luz.** In the 17th and 18th centuries, fishermen in this pretty beachfront town traded their nets for swords and cannons to become feared pirates. Gain insights about its intriguing past on a walking tour.

**Enrichment: The Romance of Hemingway and Spain.** Appreciate Ernest Hemingway's passion for Spanish culture, which greatly influenced his writing.

## Day 7 | Pamplona, Spain

**Pamplona.** Hemingway brought worldwide attention to Pamplona's chaotic Running of the Bulls in his novel, "The Sun Also Rises." Meander down the atmospheric streets where

Pamplona



## Included Features



### Accommodations (with baggage handling)

– 7 nights in San Sebastián, Spain, at the first-class Catalonia Donosti Hotel.

### Extensive Meal Program

– 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners, including Welcome and Farewell Dinners; tea or coffee with all meals, plus wine with dinner.

### Your One-of-a-Kind Journey

– **Small group:** Sized just right at 28 guests.

– **AHI Travel Assurance plan** covers Accident and Sickness Medical Expense, Trip Delay and Emergency Evacuation for U.S. residents.

– **Enrichment by expert speakers** enhances your insight into the region.

– **Engaging excursions** showcase the local culture, heritage and history.

– **🗺️ Electives** and free time to pursue your individual interests.

– **🌱 AHI Sustainability Promise:** We strive to make a positive impact wherever we travel.

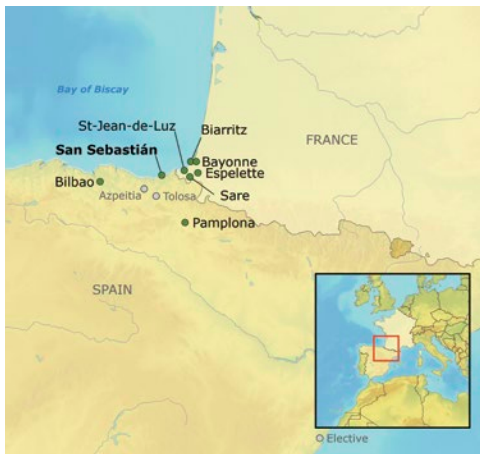
– **🌍 AHI Connects | Local immersion.**

– Welcome and Farewell Receptions to mingle with fellow travelers.

– A personal VOX headset to hear your English-speaking guide clearly.

– Tipping of guides and drivers.

– Complimentary travel mementos.



crowds throng each July during the weeklong festival of San Fermín. See the bullfighting ring, Castle Square and Pamplona Cathedral before enjoying lunch on your own in town.

**Enrichment: *The Way of St. James.*** Europe's oldest pilgrimage route, a network of paths with stops in Basque Country, ultimately leads to the shrine of St. James located in Santiago de Compostela. Learn about its enduring spiritual and cultural appeal from an expert.

### Day 8 | San Sebastián

**Free Time:** Plan a fun agenda in town today or choose to join the Elective Activity.

**🗺️ Elective | *The Heart of Gipuzkoa.*** Head into the beautiful countryside of the Gipuzkoa province to Tolosa. Take in its charming old town and lively market. Travel next to Azpeitia, the birthplace of Saint Ignatius of Loyola who founded the Jesuit order. Tour the Sanctuary of Loyola, which includes a baroque basilica. Lunch is included along the excursion route. Tonight, celebrate your wonderful Basque journey at a Farewell Reception and Dinner.

### Day 9 | In Transit

After breakfast, transfer ➡ to the Bilbao airport for the return flight ✈ to your gateway city.

**Note:** Itinerary may change due to local conditions.

**✈ Flights and ➡ transfers** included for AHI FlexAir participants.

**🗺️ Elective experiences** available at an additional cost.

### Note About Activity Levels

We have designated activity levels for all excursions on this program. For more details, please call or visit our website.

### Excursions on this itinerary require:

- walking on cobblestones, unpaved paths and/or uneven surfaces
- getting on and off motor coaches

Basilica de Santa María del Coro, San Sebastián



## Accommodations



### Catalonia Donosti Hotel | San Sebastián



Our travel experts have carefully selected this first-class hotel for its prime location in the center of San Sebastián. Housed in a former 18th-century convent, it combines comfort, style and historic character, offering an ideal base for exploring the Basque region and immersing yourself in local life. Of utmost importance is the superior quality of its services, amenities and accommodations, allowing you to enjoy your stay fully.



# Reserve your trip today!

To book your journey,  
please call our AHI Travel Experts  
at **833-303-1333** or  
visit **michst.ahitravel.com**.

## Program Dates

### Travel dates †

**October 19-27, 2024**

† Travel dates include any overnights required for international travel. These dates may vary depending on air schedules.

### Tour dates\*

**October 20-27, 2024**

\* Tour dates begin on the scheduled arrival date at your destination and end on the scheduled departure date from your destination.

## Land Program

<b>Full Price</b>	<b>\$3,845</b>
<b>Special Savings</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Special Price*</b>	<b>\$3,595</b>

\*Special Price valid if booked by the date found on the address panel.

**Receive Bonus Savings when you Pay in Full at booking.**

**Call for details.**

VAT is an additional \$295 per person.

All prices quoted are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy and do not include air transportation costs (unless otherwise stated).

Special offers, promotions and discounts cannot be combined.

Single accommodations are an additional \$895 (limited availability).

**Please note:** Program-specific terms and conditions are available at <https://michst.ahitravel.com/destinations/1811A?schoollid=100>. You can also request a copy from our travel experts. Any payment to AHI Travel constitutes your acceptance of the terms and conditions set out therein, including but not limited to the cancellation terms.

## AHI FlexAir

### Let us arrange your flights

**Our experts are ready to assist you in booking flights. Our personalized air program offers the following advantages:**

- **price guarantee** to protect you from fuel surcharge increases after ticket purchase
- arrival and departure **transfers** on group dates
- **flexibility** to change or cancel your reservation without penalty up to 60 days before departure on most flights
- **assistance** in the event of schedule changes or delays

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Saint-Jean-de-Luz



Peppers, Espelette



Basque cross mosaic



Traditional pintxos

## AHI Travel Expertise



From your reservation to your return home, we are here to ensure you have the adventure of a lifetime.

### *Before you go:*

**Travel Consultants** stand ready to answer your questions as they guide you through the reservation process.

**Travel Coordinator** offers personalized assistance with flights, electives and special requests.

**Travel Information** provides pre-departure details and enrichment about your destination.

### *Once you arrive:*

**Your Travel Director**, a seasoned, multilingual professional, manages daily logistics so you enjoy a seamless experience.

**Handpicked Expert Guides** offer fascinating insights and share their passion for their country with you.

**Knowledgeable Lecturers** deepen your appreciation for the region and its history, culture and current events.



Saint-Jean-de-Luz



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**Explore the culturally vibrant and beautiful Basque region!**

**AHI Travel's** mission is to deliver inspirational, educational and cultural programs that delight travelers.

**With AHI you can rely on:**

- Experienced Travel Directors who attend to every detail of your journey.
- An exceptional travel value.
- Unique access to local sites.
- Flexibility and customization.
- Safety and security.



**Please call or refer to our website for the most current program information, discounts and pricing**

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