



## CULTIVATING TASTE IN BASQUE COUNTRY May 6th – 13th, 2027

### *Join me for a week in Basquelandia*

The Basque Country is a fiercely independent region with hundreds of miles of coastline along the Bay of Biscay. The Euskaldunak people are characterized by their own language and culture, and a society built around the appreciation of food and wine.

To spend a week exploring Basque Country from end to end – Spain to France, effervescent Txacoli to Rioja's reds, tapas to tasting menus, farmhouse tables to farmers markets and sea views to cobbled streets – is to immerse yourself in one of the world's most enchanting culinary destinations.

Early spring is a terrific shoulder season in the Basque Country. Many of the crowds have not arrived yet and the wineries and cideries are tending their fruits. The temperatures will likely be consistently pleasant in the 65 - 70's but layers and raincoats are always recommended. On warm, sunny days the beach out front of the hotel will likely have a few brave sunbathers and swimmers.

Basque cooking enjoys a reputation for being one of the best cuisines in the world. Indulge in Basque charcuterie, farmstead sheep's milk cheese as well as the many outstanding wines of the region. Picnicking in the garden with Marketplace delicacies and cooking in one of the world's most reputable cooking schools will be part of your dream come true.



## *Itinerary*

### **St. Jean de Luz: *Let's go to France!***

#### **Thursday, May 6th**

Arrive in the charming fishing port of St. Jean De Luz on the French Basque coast. Check into our seaside Hotel, a most elegant and charming Hotel that is just steps from the sea.

Dip your toes into the sand or relax on the terrace. After a walk along the historic port, we'll dine tonight at a favorite traditional Basque Restaurant featuring fresh locally caught seafood, charcuterie, and local Basque wines.

#### **Friday, May 7th**

Each morning you will enjoy breakfast by the sea with local specialties. Our private coach picks us up for a full day in the bright green hills of the western Pyrenees. The picturesque Basque Country farms and the villages of Espelette, Cambo de Baines and Ascain will delight you. This is the Pilgrim's route that people walk across the mountains and on to Western Spain along le chemin de Saint Jacques.

We'll visit some of the top food producers of the area: Visiting Cambo les Bains for a chocolate museum and tasting, Espelette to taste peppers, artisan saucisson from the producers, and enjoy lunch before a tour of the traditional fabrics of the Basque region. Returning to the coast and our little village to freshen up, have a glass of wine, and then off to a wonderful dinner at one of the most famous restaurants in a historical building filled with charm.

#### **Saturday, May 8th**

Another breakfast by the sea to sip and savor the magic of a small historic town hugged by the sea.

What better way to discover an area than by its food? Discover the Basque Country at the St. Jean de Luz charming Market Hall. At our morning destination we will shop for a garden lunch at my friends charming



B & B. Gateau Basque, sheep's cheese, jambon de Bayone and Txacoli white wine will all be featured in our garden lunch. We'll explore the historic monuments built for the marriage of Louis the Fourteenth to the Infanta of Spain, Maria Theresa including the beautiful Baroque Church in the heart of St. Jean de Luz. Our afternoon will be free for shopping, a beach visit or a wine in a small sidewalk café.

We will enjoy a fabulous dinner filled with the freshest seafood of the region at a Michelin Star Restaurant that I visit yearly and that will delight your palette and your senses.

### **Sunday, May 9th**

This morning we will have a private bus from St Jean de Luz to spend the day in Hondarribia and explore this seaside gem through its food, wine, and history. We will visit one of the most charming Basque towns that sits right on the French border just a short drive down the coast from San Sebastián.

We start our visit in Hondarribia's medieval Casco Viejo, a treasure of an old town surrounded by a fortified wall that reveals picturesque streets dotted with colorful Basque architecture. We'll then head to a txakoli bodega for a unique tasting of this special, slightly fizzy white wine that's so firmly rooted in the local terroir, we will have a wine tasting and pixtos with a view of the vineyards. After a short boat ride across a picturesque river we will have lunch in a historic village with a water view and Paella.

Returning this afternoon to St Jean de Luz for a rest or shopping before a Bistro dinner.





## **Rioja Region:**

### **Monday, May 10th**

Today we will leave St Jean de Luz and we will enjoy a full day trip to the famous Rioja region with our guide, the top-notch wine expert for our day in wine country.

It'll be spring in Rioja, so we'll see the vines just starting to pop with grapes, mostly Tempranillo and Garnacha. Today we'll take a daytrip to explore the wine region, where we'll visit a few wineries and enjoy a Riojan lunch plus a visit to the ancient town of Laguardia.

The Rioja D.O.C. is Spain's largest wine region with more than 500 wineries in the area. The region dates from the Neolithic area and is home to atmospheric hilltop fortress towns with medieval walls and Gothic churches. Savor the world-class wines and unforgettable views.

After our Rioja visit, we will arrive at our Hotel in San Sebastian in the late afternoon, ready to discover all its culinary treasures.

Welcome to San Sebastian and the Southern Basque Countries! Voted European Cultural Capital of the year, Donostia (San Sebastian's Basque name) is a beautiful small city wrapped around the shell shaped bay called La Concha. From our centrally located luxury hotel, you can explore on foot, by bike or taxi to all of the city's great shopping.

### **Tuesday, May 11th**

Our morning will feature an exciting and educational cooking class at the famous MIMO San Sebastian Food Kitchens with a Basque Cooking Class, after a visit to the famous fresh market, just steps away. The sea and the mountains surrounding the Basque capitals are rife with ancient traditions and the freshest of ingredients. In this culinary class journey, you will learn to prepare the





famous Basque dishes from both the coastal fishing villages and the mountains. We will bring the history and traditions of Basque Country to life in this hands-on cooking class. Class ends with a full and delicious lunch. Late afternoon is free for shopping or exploring the town.

In the evening, we will enjoy Cocktails and Tapas at one of my favorite tapas bars.

### **Wednesday, May 12th**

Enjoy the quiet morning with coffee in your room or a stroll along La Concha Beach.

After breakfast, we'll leave for a special day in Getaria, south along the picturesque coast and in the morning we will visit the Balenciaga Museum and stroll the one street fishing village before our lunch. Our lunch will be at one of my favorite restaurants with a sensational view and a superb meal to match. The coastal drive is breathtaking as we return to San Sebastian. Then time is for resting, shopping or visiting the ice cream shops.

If food is the way to the heart, then the kitchen is the way to the soul. We will do it like the Basque. Tonight, we will enjoy a Pintxo tasting tour. Pintxos (Basque tapas) line every bar in San Sebastian's famed Old Town, but knowing where to find the best ones is an art. While it's hard to have a bad meal in town, knowing exactly where to go for the best, freshest, and most exciting pintxos takes local, insider knowledge. We will dive straight into the culinary heart of the city for a night of eating and drinking unlike any you've ever experienced.

### **Thursday May 13**

Today you will enjoy a seaside breakfast and head off to your next adventure, or stay an extra day in San Sebastian.





## ***Booking Conditions***

- We invite you to join us, and invite your best friend or partner.
- We will be a small group of no more than 10, so early sign up is suggested.
- Room styles are given on a first sign up preference.

Due to unforeseeable circumstances, it may sometimes be necessary to alter the scheduled activities or itinerary. All efforts will be made to keep any changes to a minimum and, where they are necessary, to make alternative arrangements which are of an equally high quality. Savory Spoon Travel and Janice Thomas are not responsible for any injury, loss or damage to person or property while guests are in route to and from or while on this culinary trip or participating in any of our activities.

**Cost of tour is \$6,999.00 for double occupancy and an \$1,000 additional for single supplement.**

\$1,000.00 deposit due with reservation. Balance of \$5,999 due by December 5th, 2026.

### **Cancellation Policy**

- Refund considered only if guide needs to cancel.
- Ask your travel agent when planning your flight or use these suggested companies for travel insurance: [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com), [www.globaltravelinsurance.com](http://www.globaltravelinsurance.com), [www.travelex-insurance.com](http://www.travelex-insurance.com).
- MedJet Assist: MedjetAssist is a membership program that arranges air-medical transport to the member's hospital of choice within their home country.

### **Checks written to:**

**Savory Spoon Culinary Travel**

P.O. Box 423



Ellison Bay, WI 54210

## *Janice Thomas*

Chef Janice Thomas has 40 years in the food industry. In addition to operating four restaurants and a catering company for 20 years, Janice has been teaching cooking classes in Arizona, Oregon and Wisconsin since 2003. Since 2004 Janice has owned and operated the highly successful Savory Spoon Cooking School in Ellison Bay, Door County Wisconsin. Studies at the renowned Cordon Bleu in Paris and with well respected chefs in France, Italy, Sicily, Mexico, and China, have enhanced Janice's repertoire in food. Extensive travel in Mexico afforded Janice the opportunity to cook with a wide variety of chefs where she developed her love for the distinctive flavors of the southwest. Thus, was born Janice's specialty in many different food fusions. Janice likes to say "Combining the flavors of many cultures results in an explosion of taste delights."

Do you dream about exploring a new destination - guided by a Chef and Culinary Cultural Guide who knows every hidden gem? My passion is crafting culinary journeys that blend food, wine, history, and culture together seamlessly. With meticulous attention to detail and intimate group settings, I ensure every traveler enjoys an unforgettable experience. Each one of my trips are created to be a life-enriching experience with memories that last a lifetime.

