



Michel & Liz with the Club Chefs Assn. in Spain - 2008

Spain & the Basque Country

May 14-25, 2011

SATURDAY, MAY 14

Departure for Spain.

SUNDAY, MAY 15

Arrival at the Bilbao Airport, designed by Santiago Calatrava. We transfer by deluxe motor coach to San Sebastian enjoying a spectacular panoramic tour of the city before checking into the SILKEN AMARA PLAZA HOTEL, our exclusive hotel for 4 nights. The hotel's unusual exterior and state-of-the-art technology, contrasts with a classical interior in perfect harmony with the legendary elegance and charm of San Sebastian. San Sebastian or Donostia, its Basque name, is situated on the Cantabrian coast 20 kilometers from the border with France. It is a medium sized city with a population of approximately 200,000. Surrounded by lush, green mountains on one side and the sea on the other it is considered by some to be one of the most beautiful cities in Spain. It has long been a popular tourist destination and especially during the Belle Époque period that is reflected the beautiful architecture. The city's famous Old Quarter consists of narrow streets lined with small shops, bars, restaurants and pensiones. On Friday and Saturday evenings the Quarter comes to life! This is the best place to sample Basque cuisine. You can have a set menu in one of the restaurants or try some delicious pintxos - similar to tapas; which are laid out on the counters of every bar. It is a Basque custom to go from bar to bar to sample the various offerings and enjoy a small glass of wine. As an introduction to San Sebastian, a pintxos tour is planned for you this evening.

MONDAY, MAY 16

After breakfast, we depart for the historic Old Quarter to visit the Brecha Market where we see a dazzling array of meat, fish and other regional specialties and enjoy a private guided tour of old quarter and the city center with its unique Art Nouveau architecture and restored 15th century San Vicente Church. In the late morning we participate in a hands-on cooking class preparing a traditional Basque menu for lunch. The remainder of the day is free for shopping and leisure time. Dinner on own.

TUESDAY, MAY 17

After breakfast, we visit a cheese producer and then travel to the picturesque seaside village of Getaria. We visit the Txomin Etxaniz Winery with a tasting followed by lunch at RESTAURANT KAIKAI-PE to enjoy the fresh catch-of-the-day. Getaria is the birthplace of Juan Sebastian Elcano, Magellan's navigator and fashion designer Balenciaga. Getaria is the heart of the country's smallest D.O. wine region: Txakoli de Getaria, a tart white wine made from Hondarrabi Zuri and Hondarrabi Beltza. After lunch we return to San Sebastian for time at leisure and dinner on own.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18

The entire day is at leisure to discover more of San Sebastian. On our way to dinner at Restaurante Akelarre, 3-star Michelin, we enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the bay and extensive coastline from the top of Mount Igeldo. Chef Pedro Subijana will present a cooking demo of the cuisine we will enjoy for our gastronomic dinner.

THURSDAY, MAY 19

After breakfast we depart for Bayonne. Along the way we discover the beautiful fishing village of Saint Jean de Luz that grew up around a medieval hospital. Here the Corsairs built impressive mansions from which to watch their boats at sea. In 1660 Louis XIV, the Sun King, chose San Juan de Luz as the site for his wedding to Maria-Theresa, a tribute to the town's importance. Today it is most famous for its Kanoaga Caramels and Gateau Basque a traditional baked custard tart often filled with black cherry jam. There is time to explore the local market and for shopping before lunch at RESTAURANT LE ZOKO MOKO in an 18th century house near the port.

Upon arrival in Bayonne we check-in for 2 nights at LE GRAND HOTEL in the heart of the old town. Next we attend a match of "Pelote Basque" at Trinquet Saint Andre. A welcome kir and a special surprise is enjoyed at the Grand Hotel before dinner at RESTAURANT LE CHISTERA.

FRIDAY, MAY 20

After breakfast we visit Les Halles, the local market. Bayonne is marked by its splendid Gothic Cathedral, narrow colonnaded streets lined with boutiques and chocolate shops, 16th & 17th century mansions and a citadel designed by Vauban. Bayonne is a city of festivals; Feria in August when cows are let loose in the streets, the Basque ball game of pelote and of course, bullfighting. Here gastronomy is a tradition and the Bayonne Ham is absolutely delicious. After the market visit, we depart for Cambo les Bains for a visit and a demo at Chocolate Puyodebat. Next is the village of Helette to visit Fromagerie Agour. A lunch of regional cuisine is enjoyed at nearby RESTAURANT MENDI ALDE in Osses. After lunch we visit La Truite de Banka, a unique trout farm where the fish are raised in free flowing pure spring water. This is a fascinating visit with proprietor Francois, a truly passionate man who shares his vast knowledge of trout. The day concludes in the Valley of Les Aldudes with a fabulous visit and tasting at Pierre Oteiza, an artisan producer of ham, salaisons, foie gras, and more. We see the famous pigs - the "pie noir" du Pays Basque that roam freely all year in the mountains. We return to Bayonne for a free evening with dinner on own.

SATURDAY, MAY 21

After breakfast we depart for Haro, the capital of La Rioja Alta. At the historic Hotel Los Agustinos, we enjoy a private wine tasting presented by a local wine expert and a selection of the best wines of La Rioja, learning the different techniques of wine tasting and the unique characteristics of these regional wines. Next we visit the fabulous REMELLURI ESTATE in Labastida. This is one of the most important wineries in Rioja, famous for its successful style of blending modern technology with traditional methods. This is one of the few Chateaux-style wineries in Rioja, located in a peaceful setting at the base of the Cantabrian Mountains. Here we enjoy a superb lunch of regional cuisine and the highly acclaimed wines from Remelluri. After lunch we depart for Briones for an extraordinary guided visit of Vivanco Museum, the world's largest wine museum to experience the wine culture over the centuries - in Spain and Europe. We travel to Logrono for a 2-night stay at the HOTEL MARQUES DE VALLEJO. There is free time before a private guided tapas tour along the Calle Laurel, one of the most famous gastronomic streets in Spain boasting hundreds of bars, each specializing in a different and authentic fresh tapas variety. A real culinary experience!

SUNDAY, MAY 22

After breakfast we depart for Villa Lucia in Laguardia for a tasting of various products; cheese, olive oil and the most expensive and sought after ham in the world - Iberico with a slicing demonstration by a professional ham master. The tasting is followed by a private cooking demonstration by a prominent local chef featuring local and traditional dishes and tapas, prepared with fresh products from the local market. We enjoy lunch at VILLA LUCIA before returning to Logrono. There is time to relax at the hotel or for shopping in Logrono before dinner. Tonight we enjoy dinner in a charming mansion in the historic part of Logrono. This house is the building used by the oldest gastronomic society in La Rioja for their culinary experiences. Prior to dinner we enjoy a cooking demo by a member of this society.

MONDAY, MAY 23

After breakfast we return to Laguardia for a privately guided tour by a local historian of this most astonishing medieval town in Europe. Laguardia is located on a hill, surrounded by a valley of vineyards and a backdrop of the Cantabrian Mountains. Stroll the narrow-cobbled streets and enjoy the stunning views, small wine and food shops and bars. Next we go to Elciego and for a guided tour and wine tasting at Marques de Riscal, pioneer in the Rioja wine region. Its wines have earned some of the most distinguished international awards. The amazing Hotel Marques De Riscal was designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, designer of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. After this visit we enjoy an outstanding gourmet lunch at the acclaimed restaurant in the MARQUES DE RISCAL HOTEL. After lunch we depart for Bilbao and check-in for 2 nights at the MIRO HOTEL. The evening is free to discover the old city and its culture and gastronomy.

TUESDAY, MAY 24

After breakfast we depart for a privately guided tour of the “Casco Viejo” - the old city and the Ribera Market. Next is the Guggenheim Museum to enjoy a welcome cocktail and hors d’oeuvres before the guided tour. The remainder of the afternoon is free to enjoy lunch on your own, the 20th century center of modern Bilbao for some last minute shopping or to visit the historic 7 streets that form the heart of the old city. Our Farewell Dinner is at Restaurante Serantes specializing in Basque cuisine.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

After breakfast departure for the Bilbao Airport for return flight to U.S.

Buena Viaje!



Salud!

Program includes: 10 nights hotel accommodations with daily breakfast, point to point ground transportation by deluxe motor coach & airport transfers, unique gastronomic dining experiences, professional & cultural visits, hands-on & cooking demos as per the itinerary, recipes, certificate of participation & a commemorative chef coat, all taxes & tips.

\$4,495.00 per person, double occupancy

\$650.00 single occupancy

AIRFARE NOT INCLUDED

~ Reservations ~

A deposit of \$1,000.00 per person is due with your registration. Final trip balance is due March 16, 60 days prior to departure. A confirmation will be mailed upon receipt of your reservation. Itinerary may be subject to change. The trip cost may be subject to change due to the fluctuation in the exchange rate with the Euro. Extended stays in Europe are also available upon request. Round-trip airfare is also available from The World of MBI upon request.

A Passenger Travel Protection is recommended and is available through our office. Our Food & Wine Tours are approved by the American Culinary Federation for Continuing Education Units.

[Make Your Reservation Today!](#)