# Hiking in the French Basque Country

A wonderful 7-day walking tour from the Pyrenees to the sea.

**Tour Code:** FR01W




**Self-Guided Walking Holiday in the French Basque Country – From the Pyrenees to the Atlantic Coast**

Experience the best of the **French Basque Country** on this unforgettable **mountains-to-the-sea walking itinerary**. Designed for **independent walkers**, this one-week route takes you through the **Atlantic Pyrenees**, across rolling green hills, and into some of the region's most **traditional Basque villages**.

Your journey begins in the **historic pilgrimage town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**, nestled in the Pyrenean foothills, and follows **ancient footpaths and rural tracks** through unspoilt countryside. Along the way, you'll discover the Basque people's legendary hospitality — they are friendly, proud of their **unique language, culture, and traditions**, and always ready to share them with visitors.

Among the many highlights are a ride on the **rack railway up La Rhune**, the highest mountain in the western Pyrenees, offering panoramic views over France and Spain. The route ends at the charming **Atlantic fishing town of Saint-Jean-de-Luz**, where you can relax on the beach and enjoy superb **seafood and Basque cuisine**.

The climate in the western Pyrenees is ideal for walking: summers are pleasantly warm, and the nearby **Atlantic Ocean** keeps spring and autumn temperatures mild. While the coastal towns of **Bayonne, Biarritz, and San Sebastián** offer vibrant culture and gastronomy, the inland hills reveal peaceful **whitewashed villages** with red and green shutters — the colors of the **Basque flag** — where **sheep farming and cheese-making** remain part of everyday life.

This **self-guided hiking holiday** is also perfect for **food and wine lovers**. Enjoy local **lamb and beef**, fresh **shellfish and seafood**, **Basque cheeses** from the valleys of Aspe and Ossau, **Espelette peppers**, **black cherries**, and regional **ciders**. Don't miss tasting the famous **gâteau basque** and a glass of **txakoli**, the crisp white wine grown on coastal terraces overlooking the ocean.

Enjoy your **independent walking tour from the Pyrenees to the Atlantic**, with full support provided so you can travel at your own pace and experience the **authentic beauty of the Basque Country** — from its mountains to its sea.




**Starting days**: From April 15th to 15th October 2027 No start on Fridays. Saturday as a starting day only possible in Juli and August.

**Participants:** from 1 person

**Level: 2,5 medium**
Level is medium to difficult; the walking is mainly on the foothills of the Pyrenees rather than on the mountains. On some days, you have a choice between easier or more challenging routes. You have 4 to 5 hours steady walking with usually ascents and descents from 200 to 700 metres. You need to have walking experience and be trained.
More challenging options are 6 to 7 hours walking with ascents and descents of up to 900 metres. If the weather is really bad or you are really tired, we can transfer you to your next hotel by car.

**Daily distance:** min. 10,5 km / 6,5 mi – max. 19 km / 11,8 mi
**Total km:** short route 71 km / 44 miles; long route 82,5 km / 51,3 miles

**Program in short**
**Day 1** Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port
**Day 2** Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port - Col d'Ispéguy - Iparla – Bidarray (13 km/8 mi or 16,5 km/10,3 mi
**Day 3** Bidarray - Artzamendi – Itxassou (12,5 km / 7,8 mi or 16 km / 9,9 mi)
**Day 4** Itxassou - Mondarrain – Espelette (16 km / 9,9 mi)
**Day 5** Espelette – Sare 19 km / 11,8 mi
**Day 6** Sare - Rhune - Ascain - Saint-Jean-de-Luz (10,5 km / 6,5 mi or 15 km / 9,3 mi)
**Day 7** End of tour

## Program day by day

**Day 1 Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**
Individual arrival at your hotel in **Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port** (located just 500m from the train station). As an alternative and with a surcharge, you can book an airport pick-up and transfer (time about 1 hour).
Your hotel is close to the centre of this little and evocative pilgrimage town in the shadows of the Pyrenees, an important stage of the **Camino de Santiago de Compostela** (Way of St. James). This is a great place to start your walking tour in Basque Country.

Overnight with breakfast in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

**Day 2 Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port - Col d'Ispéguy - Iparla - Bidarray**
Today you will reach **Col d'Ispeguy** (transfer ca. 30 minutes, included) and start your itinerary here. You will enjoy very beautiful views of the magnificent **Pyrenees:** this is the kingdom of **Griffon vultures.** From here you have a choice between several routes to **Bidarray**, most of them unchallenging. **Alternatively,** there is an easy walking route between **Saint Martin-de-Arrosa and Bidarray.** Bidarray is today's final destination, a lovely little village nestled in a green valley, along the River Nive. No matter which route you choose: this is going to be an unforgettable day.

Overnight stay with breakfast and dinner in Bidarray.
***Walking time:*** Short route 3,5 hours; Long route: 6,5 hours
***Distance:*** Short route 13 km/8 mi; Long route 16,5 km/10,3 mi
***Altitude:*** Short route +150/-380; Long route +800/-1300 m.

**Day 3 Bidarray - Artzamendi - Itxassou**
Another amazing walking day! You will **walk past Alpine pastures** (once used by smugglers as shepherds), visit the lovely summit of **Artzamendi** and then start walking down along streams and little brooks. You pass a beautiful hole in the rock known as the **Pas de Roland**, along the **River Nive:** the legend says that **Roland of Roncesvalles**, wanted to join his troops and being late, gave a big kick in the rock to open his way ... and there appeared a lovely place with a nice beach by the water.
Finally, you will reach the evocative **village of Itxassou**, a little village of about 2,000 inhabitants, still crossed by **River Nive,** with a lovely little **Basque church** we recommend to visit.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Itxassou.
***Walking time:*** Short route 5 hours; Long route: 6,5 hours

***Distance:*** Short route 12,5 km/7,8 mi – Long route 16 km / 9,9 mi
***Altitude:*** Short route + 590/- 650; Long route +880 / -890 m.

**Day 4 Itxassou - Mondarrain - Espelette**
Today, a nice and gentle climb to the top of **Mount Mondarrain** awaits you! The mountain is 2,457 feet, but, once on the top, you will enjoy magnificent views of **the waves of Pyrenean heights**, a really memorable panorama.
Later, you will stroll through **high pastures and valleys** down to the typical Basque village of **Espelette,** perfectly preserved and well known for its festival of red chili peppers. Espelette is also a **variety of chili pepper** (piment d'Espelette in French, Ezpeletako biperra in Basque) with denomination of controlled origin, grown in the **Basque Country** and particularly in the municipality of Espelette (that is why it has this name).
In Espellette, **the castle and church are worth a visit** and, in the village, you can also find an **excellent chocolate producer (Antton).** Some chocolate after a walk on the mountains could be just perfect!

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Espelette.
***Walking time:*** 5,5 hours
***Distance:*** 16 km / 9,9 mi
***Altitude:*** +620/ -760 m.

**Day 5 Espelette - Sare**
Another day of wonderful walking through **villages and hamlets,** and along country lanes and farm tracks - the remarkable **Ainhoa being the highlight**. The village of **Ainhoa**, located a few km from the Spanish border, was founded in the **12th century** as a place of rest on the way to Santiago de Compostela.
**Walking is easy**, mainly through beautiful rural countryside: however, you will have interesting places to see, things to do, and even have a look at artisan producers of **food, drinks and artifacts.** Your stay is in Sare, where you can feel the very soul of Basque culture. It has everything: architecture, gastronomy, traditional dancing, pelota, **the Axuria and Rhune mountains** (which you will climb tomorrow), and all just **14 kilometres from the coast.** Sare has 253 houses dating back to the 15th century, 14 oratories and many small sanctuaries. During your stay, do not miss the **famous Gâteau Basque,** a delicious cake with black cherry or custard filling, especially since, in Sare, there is a museum celebrating the cake.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Sare.
***Walking time:*** 4 or 5,5 hours
***Distance:*** 19 km / 11,8 mi
***Altitude:*** +620/ -600 m.

**Day 6 Sare - Rhune - Ascain - Saint-Jean-de-Luz**
This is your final stage, maybe **the highlight of the trip**. Today you will reach **the summit of La Rhune** with its 360° views east towards the endless Pyrenees you have crossed, south towards Spain, and west to the Atlantic coast. **You have a choice:** you can either walk up and do a steady walk (but absolutely doable) or take the magnificent rack railway, its wooden carriages slowly clattering their way to the top.
On the way up you can spot **pottoks** – wild mountain ponies - and **red headed sheep.** Then a rewarding walk down awaits you, up to the lovely **village of Ascain,** the last Basque village of your trip. **We will take you to St Jean de Luz** (transfer time 20 minutes, included). **St Jean de Luz** is one of the prettiest and liveliest **towns in the Pyrenees:** it boasts a lovely harbour area, bars and

restaurants offering tapas and excellent fish dishes. Tonight, you are free to have dinner in one of the many places in town.

Overnight with breakfast in Saint-Jean-de-Luz.
***Walking time:*** Short route 3,5 hours; Long route: 6 hours
***Distance:*** Short route 10,5 km / 6,5 mi; Long route 15 km / 9,3 mi
***Altitude:*** Short route + 500/- 500; Long route +880 / -840 m.

**Day 7 Departure**
After breakfast, end of the Tour and of our services. Your hotel is situated just 750 metres from the train station of Saint-Jean-de-Luz.
Upon request and with an extra fee (to be made in advance), we will arrange a transfer back to Biarritz airport or a taxi to the train station in Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Transfers also available to Pau or Bordeaux.

**Hotels: **, *** and ******
The accommodation includes characterful, high quality hotels as well as owner-managed boutique hotels.

**Meals**
You will eat very well, and find a surprising range of dishes and recipes, regional and traditional with an often-distinctive contemporary twist. Dinner **is NOT included** in Saint Jean de Luz and in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Wine and other drinks are not included in our price, so you pay locally.

**Prices per person 2027**
**15/04/2026 – 30/06/2026 and 01/10/2026 – 15/10/2026**
In double room and triple room € 1.085
In single room € 1.505
Supplement solo traveller € 230

**01/07/2026 – 30/09/2026**
In double room and triple room € 1.160
In single room € 1.600
Supplement solo traveller € 235

**Included in the price**
- 6 nights and breakfast
- 4 dinners (drinks not included) (no dinner in St.Jean-de-Luz and St Jean Pied de Port)
- Luggage transportation (max 15 kg)
- Transfers specified in the programme as included
- Detailed walking directions and descriptions
- GPS tracks
- 1:25,000 IGN maps as required

**Not included in the price**
- Journey to the starting point and from the finishing point.
- Transfers (not specified and at extra cost)
- Dinners on the night 1 and 6, lunches and picnics
- All drinks and beverages
- Entry fees
- Personal and travel insurance that we highly recommend
- Other items and all not mentioned under "included in the price"

**Cancellation fee:**

- **More than 31 days** before the start date: we retain 10% of the amount of the trip.
- **Between 31 - 22 days** before the start date: we retain 25% of the amount of the trip.
- **Between 21 - 15 days** before the start date: we retain 50% of the amount of the trip.
- **Between 14 - 8 days** before the start date: we retain 75% of the amount of the trip.
- **Less than 7 days** before your start date: we retain 90% of the amount of the trip.

**Start/End of the tour:** Saint Jean Pied de Port/ Saint Jean de Luz

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