

Cycling in the French Basque Country

A wonderful 7 day tour through the best of Basque Country by bike

Tour Code: FR02C



A cycle journey including the best of the French Basque country: amazing coasts, country villages and vineyards, red cliffs and green valleys, traditional villages and great resorts, authentic hotels and genuine cuisine.

All this beauty is even easier to enjoy if you choose an electric bike!

You will experience the hospitality of the Basques: they are friendly, modern and forward-looking and above all very proud of their unique language, history, culture and traditions. You will cycle at the Pyrenees foothills and even reach a mountain top by historic rack Railway. Your trip starts and ends in the vibrant fishing port of St Jean de Luz. In this lovely little fishing village, you will find some excellent restaurants.

In the Pyrenees the "west" is not so wild and temperatures, even in the summer, are comfortable for cycling, while in spring and fall the nearby Atlantic Ocean mitigates the temperatures. Along the way, you will explore Jean Pied de Port, a little and evocative pilgrimage town in the shadows of the Pyrenees, which is an important stage of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela (Way of St. James). Espelette is famous for its peppers, Hasparren for its beautiful the Chapel du Sacre-Coeur and Bayonne is positioned on the sea. We highly recommend this itinerary if you like unspoilt countryside, authentic villages, fortified pilgrim towns and a wonderfully varied coastline: you will enjoy all this cycling either fast or gently, since you can choose an electric bike.

There are no mountains or steep hills, just pleasant lanes across rolling countryside. You will have superb viewpoints overlooking the ocean and beautiful wooded valleys dotted with farms and villages.

The vicinity to the Atlantic Ocean means also a variety of shellfish and seafood, but you will also find excellent local lamb and beef, local cider, black cherries, delicious cheese and the famous Basque peppers from Espelette. In short words...this is the perfect cycling holiday!



Starting days: from 13 April to 31 October

Participants: minimum 2.

Level: 2, easy-medium

Level is easy-medium. The itinerary features cycling that is rarely challenging, never if you choose for the electric bike. You can choose between a road bike, a hybrid bike or an electric bike. The tour is suitable for people who are reasonably fit and enjoy a good day's cycling. The daily distances are short, but there is some significant ascent/descent. The route is for 70% on very quiet roads and lanes, there is inevitably traffic, and it may be quite busy on some sections, especially in July and August. 15% of the route is on cycle paths. 15% on more busy roads inside the towns.

Daily distance: min. 27,5 km / 17 mi – max. 45 km / 28 mi

Total km: 179 km/111 miles

Programme in short:

Day 1 St.-Jean-de-Luz

Day 2 Saint Jean de Luz to Espelette (34 km / 21 mi)

Day 3 Espelette - Saint Jean Pied de Port (40 km / 25 mi)

Day 4 Saint Jean Pied de Port – Hasparren (45 km / 28 mi)

Day 5 Hasparren – Bayonne (27 km / 17 mi)

Day 6 Hasparren- St.-Jean-de-Luz (32 km / 20 mi)

Day 7 departure after Breakfast



Programme day by day

Day 1 St Jean de Luz

Individual arrival at your hotel in Saint-Jean de Luz.

As an alternative and with a surcharge, you can book an airport pick-up and transfer from the airport (20 minutes) of Biarritz or its railway station.

Today you have free time to explore this small cosy fishing village with cobbled alleys and streets as well as its harbour, and choose one of the many lovely restaurants, although you may end up "snacking" all evening on the Basque equivalent of tapas, pintxos, why not? This is an excellent place to start your cycle tour in Basque Country.

Overnight with breakfast in St Jean de Luz.

Day 2 Saint Jean de Luz to Espelette

After a leisurely breakfast, you start your cycling tour.

Then, get ready to start exploring the quiet French lanes that are such a cyclist's delight, especially in the green, unspoilt and gently rolling Basque countryside.

After your first Basque village, the pretty Ascaïn, you have a gentle climb to the col de Saint-Ignaceto before Sare where we recommend you take the magnificent rack railway that clatters to the top of La Rhune with its outstanding views east across the endless Pyrenees, south into Spain, and west to the Atlantic coast.

Also look out for pottoks - wild mountain ponies - and red headed sheep. Back on your bike, you pass the well preserved Ainhoa and then reach Espelette.

The typical Basque village of Espelette is 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 Espelette, 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 nice ride in the the Basque countryside could be just perfect!

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Espelette.

Distance: 34 km / 21 mi

Ascent/descent: +670m/-600m

Day 3 Espelette to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

Today a fantastic ride enjoying red and green colours.

You ride through valleys with a hundred shades of green - the volcanic cone of Mondarrain and also the village of Itxassou are immersed in green: the latest also has a big red reputation as the capital of cherries. The tree covered Nive gorges are highly valued by fishermen for their red spotted trout as they were by Charlemagne and Roland's soldiers as they marched to the Battle of Roncevaux in 778, which ended up being a great Basque victory of green over red. After Bidarray, you cycle past the high red cliffs and peaks of

Iparla before entering a vineyards landscape largely dedicated to the red Irouléguay wine. Today's destination is St Jean Pied de Port, an historic walled city, very popular for being one of the most important stages of the Camino de Santiago (St. James' Way) passing over the Pyrenees into Spain.

Overnight with breakfast in Saint Jean Pied de Port.

Distance: 40 km / 25 mi

Ascent/descent: +950m/-850m

Day 4 Saint Jean Pied de Port to Hasparren

Your day is entirely dedicated to cycling in a hilly countryside. You spent the last two days cycling on the foothills of the Pyrenees (and grateful for not having had to go up and over), and today you are into superb cycling country - rolling hills, rich river valleys, woods, farms, good surfaces, little traffic, and a series of unspoilt villages where you might wish to stop, have a drink, a snack, and a stroll. A really beautiful day awaits you. Your destination is the charming town of Hasparren. It is an appealing and architecturally interesting town with quiet streets, shops, attractive bars and a couple of really good restaurants. You are in the most authentic part of the Basque country.

Overnight with breakfast and dinner in Hasparren.

Distance: 45 km / 28 mi

Ascent/descent: +900m/-990m

Day 5 Hasparren to Bayonne

Today's ride is very exciting because you head from the mountains to the sea! You cycle partly on the "Route des Cimes" (peaks) before a thoroughly lovely route on the banks of the Adour river that takes you right into the heart of the port-city of Bayonne. It is at the confluence of the Nive and Adour rivers, (you've cycled along both of them) and, indeed, Bayonne prides itself on being a cyclists' city with many dedicated routes. For 300 years, and thanks to Richard The Lionheart, it was an English city, and today you can see its wealth and military importance in every big boulevard and merchant's mansion. Today the ride is short and this allows you to have plenty of time to explore around and visit the town.

Overnight with breakfast in Bayonne.

Distance: 27 km / 17 mi

Ascent/descent: +550m/-650m.

Day 6 Bayonne to Saint Jean de Luz

Today is the final stage of your trip and it is all about the Atlantic ocean, or, more accurately, its surprisingly varied coastline. You cycle out of Bayonne following the Adour to the coast before riding between the pine forests and magnificent surfing beaches of Anglet, which couldn't be more different from the Regency style and

wealthy "vibe" of Biarritz - the 19th century beloved resort for European royalty and aristocracy. Next, you will admire the wonderful cliffs and white sand beaches of Bidart and Guéthary. You will cycle back to your point of departure, Saint-Jean-de-Luz via the Pointe Sainte-Barbe, which provides a panoramic view of the bay with the Pyrenees rising majestically behind the town. You're back in St Jean de Luz, one of the prettiest and liveliest towns in the Pyrenees, for your last, amazing night of this trip. You stay in the same hotel as on your arrival day.

Overnight with breakfast in Saint-Jean-de-Luz.

Distance: 32 km / 20 mi

Ascent/descent: +450m/-450m.

Day 7 Departure

After breakfast, end of the Tour and of our services.

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.



Hotels:

You stay in double-twin rooms in authentic hotels with en-suite facilities that are 2, 3 and 4 stars.

Prices per person 2022:

July and August

In double room € 1.085,00

In single room € 1.465

Other dates

In double room € 1.015,00

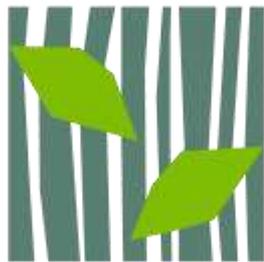
In single room € 1.395

Included in the price

- 6 nights BB, in double standard room
- 2 dinners, drinks not included
- Bike rental
- Luggage transportation (one bag per person, max 20 kg)
- Detailed route descriptions
- 1:25,000 IGN maps as required
- GPS tracks if required
- 24/7 customer phone service.

Not included in the price

- Journey to the starting point (St.Jean-de-Luz hotel) and from the finishing point.
- Transfers (at extra cost)
- Dinners on day 1,3,5,6
- Lunches
- Menu choices at extra cost
- All drinks and beverages
- Entry fees
- Personal and travel insurance
- Other items and all not mentioned under "included in the price"



ECOLOGICOTOURS

ECOLOGICO TOURS

Cantonal 41B / Marmotta B19

6565 San Bernardino

Svizzera/Schweiz/Suisse

info@ecologicotours.com

tel. (0039) 3463254167 – (0041)(0) 79 2457505

www.ecologicotours.com

www.meravigliosaubria.com