

Technical sheet | Guided hike | Level 3/5  | 6 days of hike – 5 nights

Splendid Nature Parks of the Spanish Basque Country

Highlights

- Discovering the Spanish Basque Country Nature Parks and their summits (1500m), modest but magnificent and iconic for the Basque people
- 6 hikes carefully chosen to offer an overview of the Spanish Basque mountains but also the superb coastline
- Easy access to Bayonne train station (many trains)



Here is a rather sporty holiday full of surprises in a nice atmosphere.

The Spanish Basque Country is mostly renown for its coastline and Ocean, but its hinterland shelters limestone mountains that create natural walls : the sierras. From there, the panoramas are vast and beautiful.

Some of the mountains were listed as Nature Parks, for their beauty, their cultural interest and their heritage. Every day, you will go and hike on these mountains, and the main names of the Basque mountains such as Anboto, Urbasa, Aizkorri, Txindoki and Gorbeia will hold no secrets for you anymore. The main colour here is the green, which makes the landscapes lively and magnificent.

They are impressive and fairly demanding mountains, offering Level-3 hikes (up to 900m of elevation). Such level is indeed required to climb to the highest peaks and to complete the most interesting hikes. As the Ocean still remains an integral part of the Basque Country, you will also spend a day hiking in the Flysch mountains that overlook the sea, between Zumaia and Deba.

Hiking is great but when visiting the Basque Country, it would be a big mistake to miss its culture, its history, its heritage and its atmosphere. Your guide will of course tell you about the remains that you will meet on your way, such as menhirs, dolmens and chapels, but you will also enjoy some interesting « after-hike » moments.

Let's not miss the Arantzazu sanctuary where the legend says the Virgin has appeared. The modern basilica shows the work of several worldwide renown artists such as Jorge Oteiza or Eduardo Chillida.

Simple and delightful moments are also to be mentioned, such as enjoying a fresh drink in the shade of Plaza Mayor plane trees, with tortilla or anchovy pintxos. In the background, you will hear the kids running and playing, and the grandmothers looking after them. Here, life takes place outside, in the streets, the bars and on the main square on the village !

•PROGRAM

Day 1 : Beginning of the holiday in Bayonne – Trois Couronnes Mountains hike

Meeting at 9:30 at Bayonne train station. Transfer by mini-bus for a hike in the Trois Couronnes mountains (Haiako Harria in Basque). These mountains situated just after the border are like the guardians of the Basque Country beaches, but do not be fooled by the modest altitude of their three summits (836m) : they are not as easy as they seem to be and some technical parts will please the most adventurous ones, under the benevolent gaze of your guide who will always be there to provide you good advice !

After the hike, you will reach the village of Segura and check-in at your accommodation for the next two days, a comfortable hotel in a stunning setting.

- Distance : 10 km, duration : 5h, ascent : +700m, descent : -700m.

Day 2 : Aralar Nature Park and Txindoki summit

Short transfer for a hike in the Aralar mountains. They are hosting the iconic Txindoki Peak (1340m), also called the « Basque Cervin ». From there, you will enjoy one of the nicest panoramic viewpoints of the week. As you will be in the heart of the Idiazabal lands – the archetypal « latxa » sheep cheese of the Spanish Basque Country – it will be the perfect time for tasting it !

- Distance : 9,6 km, duration : 5h00, ascent : +910m, descent : -910m.

Day 3 : Aizkorri – Arantzazu Nature Park

Today, you are leaving Segura and heading to the west towards the Aizkorri mountains for the most difficult hike of the week. From the Arantzazu sanctuary, you will climb towards wide meadows, where horses, sheep and cows are peacefully sharing the grass. With the sound of their bells following you, you will reach the Aizkorri chapel, perched on the highest ridge (1528m). On the way down, you might have a stop at the Urbia refuge for refreshments !

- Distance : 17,2 km, duration : 6h00, ascent : +990m, descent : -990m.

Day 4 : Basque Coast Geopark : Coastal hike from Zumaia to Deba

Today's section will take you to one of the most beautiful and interesting areas of the whole Basque Coast, the « Costa Vasca Geopark ». Before reaching it, you will enter the Deba-Zumaia area, recently recognized as a coastal biotope. The itinerary crosses in a few hours an unbroken series of strata representing all together more than 50 million years of the Earth History. It is one of the most important geological sanctuaries in the world.

- Distance : 14km, duration : 5h, ascent : +660m, descent : -660m.

Day 5 : Urkiola Nature Park and Anbotu – Elorrio ridges

Starting from the entrance of the Urkiola Park, you will hike towards the Anbotu (1331m) and its ridges. The limestone terrain shelters various caves, dolines, caverns or rock shelters that brought a multitude of legends, myths and beliefs. Among them are the story of the « laminaks », small elves that are working during the night, and the story of Anbotoko Dama (the Lady of Anbotu in Basque), a goddess representing the Nature.

After the hike, you will head to the village of Elorrio where you will enjoy some free time.

- Distance : 11km, duration : 5h00, ascent : +890m, descent : -890m.

Day 6 : Gorbeia Nature Park

To end this week with a flourish, you are going to explore the protected biotope of Itxina in the Gorbeia mountains. The landscapes are really surprising. You will climb to the top of a karst plateau that shelters various chasms and caves, including the famous Supelegor cave. Once more, legends and viewpoints are on the schedule !

After the hike, transfer to Bayonne train around 16:30.

- Distance : 10km, duration : 3h30, ascent : +600m, descent : -600m.

End of the trip around 16:30 at Bayonne train station

This program is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be necessary, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified. Onsite, our guides are the ones who know best and they may have to adjust the itinerary depending on the weather or should the safety of the group require it.

• DATES AND PRICE

Group size

From 5 to 12 people.

Departures

Departure is secured from 5 people.

From Sunday 17/05/2020 to Friday 22/05/2020

From Sunday 07/06/2020 to Friday 12/06/2020

From Sunday 05/07/2020 to Friday 10/07/2020

From Sunday 19/07/2020 to Friday 24/07/2020

From Sunday 02/08/2020 to Friday 07/08/2020

From Sunday 23/08/2020 to Friday 28/08/2020

From Sunday 13/09/2020 to Friday 18/09/2020

Price per person :

Price per person	730 €
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Extras :

- Single room extra : 180€/ pers

The price includes :

- Full board accomodation from the picnic on Day 1 to the picnic on Day 6
- Transfers
- Guiding by a mountain guide specialised in the Basque Country

The price does not include :

- Travel insurance
- Meals that are not specified as included in the price
- Additional transfers
- Drinks
- Additional visits

Nature of the terrain

Hikes in a mountain environment, on paths, the terrain is varied but often rocky.

Level 3

These trips are designed for people who are looking for active holidays. A reasonable level of physical condition is required. 4h30 to 6 hours of hike per day. Climbing pace* +300 m per hour.

**Be advised : these are average times that only take into account the effective walking time and do not include the stops during the hike.*

• ACCOMODATION / FOOD

Accomodation

5 nights in 2-star or 3-star hotels in a double room.

Single room available upon request, with extra and depending on availabilities.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam)
- Evening meals are often based on Basque specialities and include a starter, a main course and a dessert.
- Picnics are included
- Drinks are not included

Accommodation before of after the trip

Bayonne :

Hôtel Côte Basque : comfortable 2-star hotel situated near Bayonne train station

2 rue Maubec

64100 BAYONNE

Tel : +33 5 59 55 10 21

Hotelcotebasque@orange.fr

www.hotel-cotebasque.fr

Other option : our accommodation in Saint Jean Pied de Port. Please contact us for the transfer from Bayonne



www.maison-iptuxainia.com

• PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Start : On Day 1 at 9:30 at Bayonne train station.

End : On Day 6 at 16:30 at Bayonne train station.

How to get to Bayonne:

- By plane:

Biarritz Mermoz Airport (25km) : daily flights to Paris, London, Lyon, and Clermont Ferrand Hub.

- By train :

Many TER trains to Bayonne from the main cities in France.

Contact SNCF at 36.35 (direct line) or www.oui.sncf.com to confirm the timetable.

- By car :

From Bordeaux A63 Motorway, 207km. From Toulouse, A64 Motorway, 293km, then Bayonne A63 Motorway, « gare SNCF » exit .

If you come by car, we advise you to park it in the SNCF train station indoor car park.

- Euskadi Tourism : www.turismo.euskadi.eus

- Hendaye Tourist Information Centre: 67 bis, Boulevard de la Mer - 64700 HENDAYE - tel +33 5 59 20 00 34 - www.hendaye-tourisme.fr
- SNCF Information : 3635, or www.ter-sncf.com
- Local weather forecast : www.tameteo.com
- Emergency: 112

• WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

Luggage

- A 35L (or so) hiking backpack that you will use to carry your personal belongings during the day.

Clothes

- 1 sunhat or cap
- T-shirts (1 for 2 or 3 walking days). Avoid cotton, very long to dry; rather choose short-sleeved T-shirts (breathable material) in Capilene (Patagonia), Dryflo (Lowe Alpine), Light Effect (Odlo) etc...
- 1 base layer (with the same characteristics) or long-sleeved shirt
- 1 polar fleece jumper
- 1 trekking trousers
- 1 comfortable trousers for the evenings
- 1 wind and rainproof jacket (Gore-tex type), simple and light
- 1 swimwear and towel to go to the spa center. Compulsory if you want to access the health Spa.
- Warm underwears
- Walking socks (1 pair for 2 to 3 walking days). Avoid the « tennis » type socks (cotton), which take a long time to dry and increase the risk of blister; rather choose some Coolmax-based ones.
- 1 pair of waterproof ankle hiking boots (Vibram type soles)
- 1 pair of comfortable trainers for the evenings

This list should be adapted according to the season you choose

Other little things

- 1 high quality sun glasses
- 1 water bottle (1 liter minimum)
- 1 pocket knife (don't forget to put in your checked baggage for your flight)
- Small toiletry bag and towel
- T-roll, suncream, lipstick
- For picnics: cutlery, glass and a sealed plastic box

Your own first-aid kit

- Your usual medication
- Vitamin C or polyvitamin
- Pain medication: paracetamol, preferably
- Adhesive bandage (Elastoplast-type, 6cm wide)
- Adhesive dressings + disinfectant wipes
- Blister plasters (Spenco type, available in pharmacies, drugstores, sport stores...)

Collective first-aid kit

- First-aid kit placed under the responsibility of your Mountain Leader