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COASTS & ISLANDS CAMINOS

type :	Self-Guided Hiking Tours
level :	
duration :	8 days
period:	Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	ESSW185

Camino del Norte, San Sebastiàn to Marquina - Spain

Camino del Norte, San Sebastiàn to Marquina

8 days, PRICE FROM *€ 900*



The Northern Way, also known as the **Camino del Norte**, is one of Spain's most captivating pilgrimage routes and a favorite among our walkers. Compared to the more famous Camino Francés, the **Camino del Norte** offers a more rugged and authentic hiking experience — fewer crowds, more tranquility, and deeper connection with nature.

The landscapes along the **Camino del Norte** are wonderfully diverse: **rugged cliffs, coastal paths hugging the sea, breathtaking views over the Cantabrian coastline, dense forests, and green pastures** dotted with traditional Basque farmhouses known as "Caseríos." Each section brings new scenery and a different rhythm to your journey.

This route lies at the heart of **"Green Spain"**, offering a striking contrast to the arid plains of the Meseta. Here, the **deep blue Cantabrian Sea** meets lush rolling hills, where the Atlantic breeze and the scent of wildflowers accompany you along the trail.

We highly recommend **adding a couple of extra days at the beginning of your Camino del Norte** to fully enjoy the beauty and gastronomy of **San Sebastián** — the perfect starting point of this journey. The city boasts the **highest concentration of bars and restaurants in Spain**, offering a paradise of pintxos, Michelin-starred dining, and vibrant local culture before you begin your walk.

Route

Day 1 Arrival in San Sebastian

What makes San Sebastian so special? ...

This refined city focusses on enjoying life to the fullest, with all five senses. Let 'Donostia' entice you with its excellent cuisine, summer beaches, **Basque** culture and grand film festival. The city's 'Old Port' district is a must-see, along with the requisite paddle in the sea and stroll through the 19th-century shopping district.

San Sebastian is well-connected and easily reached from **Bilbao** airport (BIO).

Day 2 From Fuenterrabia to San Sebastian, 21 km

Make your way out of the city trekking directly from the hotel. Or skip the urban section and get dropped off at **Ermita Guadalupe** just above Fuenterrabia (**Hondarribia** in Basque). Hiking up toward Jazkibel Peak, the Bay of Biscay spreads out below you and **San Sebastian** shrinks off into the distance. A 1900 military fort, one of at least five built here, requires no explanation from its perch on the border with France. Pause at the **Jaizkibel** cantina – last chance for coffee or beer - then veer down off the ridge through open meadows and heaths to the fjord-like port of **Pasaia**. Jump on the ferry and, once across, return to the city by bus or walk another 9 km back to your hotel. The final section on foot explores a surprisingly rugged coastline, ending abruptly above **Zurriola** beach and the **Urumea** estuary, and ends with a short stretch past the beach and **Kursaal** modern art centre to the harbour, the city's oldest sector.

Distance: 21 km

Elevation gain: +620 / -925 m

Day 3 From San Sebastian to Orio, 16 km

Today you walk 16 km or shorten the hike by taking a bus from the city to **Monte Ezquiel** (elevation 150m) to pick up the Camino del Norte pilgrimage path. The route follows surfaced sections and unsurfaced tracks, maintaining height while the coast path surges constantly up and down below you. Both routes come together in the village of **Orio**. This typical fishing village, situated just where the sea, mountains and mouth of the Oria River meet, has witnessed the passing of pilgrims throughout the centuries. Take time to ramble through the old quarter and 'get lost' on its narrow, cobbled lanes.

Distance: 16 km

Elevation gain: +455 / -600 m

Day 4 From Orio to Zumaia through Zarautz, 17 km

The Camino 'lies low' today, following mainly paved roads from village to village passing the port of **Guetaria**. Stop off in **Zarautz**, a real city, and stroll along the seafront, pause at a café or select a restaurant such as the one owned by Arguiñano, Spain's most famous television chef. Your final stop is a town which gained instant stardom following the release of box-office hit **8 Apellidos Vascos** and some local spots have suddenly become popular selfie decors. Make sure to snap a few pics at the port of Zumaia and **San Telmo** chapel, both of which appear in the film. When your stomach starts to rumble, head for the welcoming town centre a proper Basque port with its own beach, where several good (fish) restaurants await.

Distance: 17 km

Elevation gain: +575 / -550 m

Day 5 Camino del Norte & the Flysh Geopark, 12,5 km

Take the **Camino** out of town then hop over to the GR-121 to enjoy unique and bizarre rock formations along the coastal **Flysch Geopark**. Here you can inspect intriguing sequences of sedimentary rock layers of marine origin created 60 million years ago, veritable works of art sculpted by Mother Nature. The Camino del Norte leads the way at both the beginning and end of this hike, and the last section stops at the station in **Deba**, where you get a slow train back to **Zumaia** (hourly departures, travel time 15 minutes). Once there, it's a 20-minute walk to your hotel.

Distance: 12,5 km

Elevation gain: +750 / -750 m

Day 6 From Olatz to Marquina-Jeméin, 18 km

Set off with a morning transfer then gradually leave the sea behind as you embark on an inland exploration of Basque territory, known for its dense woodlands, rounded hills and sparse population. Venture along wide forest paths and gravel tracks passing remote farms and, perhaps, the occasional pilgrim. Revel in the tranquillity and soothing sounds of the forest then look around the lively town of **Marquina-Jeméin** and **San Mikel** chapel, a strange cult place beneath a huge menhir 'packaged up' in an 18th-century hexagonal building and clock tower. Take a break at a 'taberna' in the town centre then take a footpath along the river to Bizkaia's oldest standing water-powered forge, complete with water wheel still intact. In the early 90s the 500-square-metre forge was converted into a pleasant, comfortable hotel with a spacious lounge and open fire, as well as a large terrace for warm evenings.

Distance: 18 km

Elevation gain: +660 / -550 m

Day 7 Circular routes from Marquina-Jeméin, 12 or 13 km

You may feel reluctant to leave the Camino del Norte, but the lure of a peak just might make up for it. Choose your ascent and hike up to Pico Kalamua or Alto de Urregarai. Both summits are splendid vista points, looking out over high pastures and immense forests across the perfect Basque countryside to the Cantabrian Sea beyond. A morning transfer takes you to the start of your route in either Barrinaga or Marquina-Jeméin, and you return to your hotel on foot in the afternoon.

Distance: 12 o 13 km

Elevation gain: +765 / -800 m

Day 8 Goodbye Marquina

Your programme comes to an end today after breakfast. A one-hour direct bus connects Marquina-Jeméin to Bilbao city centre, where you get the 30-minute shuttle to the airport.

Accommodation

The hotels on this trip have been carefully selected for their location, atmosphere and/or unique services. All rooms are en-suite. Some of the hotels we work with appear here. If a certain hotel is unable to confirm due to lack of availability, we will request a similar one and inform you about the alternative booked.

Extra nights:

Extra nights can be booked at any of the accommodations along the way.

Hotel Niza *** (San Sebastian)
Hotel Niza in San Sebastian is an emblematic family run hotel in an idyllic location just a stones throw from La Concha beach, offering you everything you could want. The rooms offer sea views to La Concha beach.

Taberna - Hostal Xaloa (Orio)
Hostal Xaloa is one of the most emblematic establishments in all of Orio. In our tavern you can enjoy the famous Guipúzcoan pintxos as well as a menu with local products capable of satisfying the most demanding palate. In the hostel you can find the ideal complement to your stay with us. Welcome to your house!

Hotel Flysch ** (Zumaia)
A newly built construction, only 3 years old, designed to ensure that visitors enjoy a restful and comfortable experience. Directly above the famous Flysch - a privileged spot - and only a moment's walk from the San Telmo hermitage. The hotel has a unique decoration, made by the Basque artist Anton Eguiguren, giving a unique personality to each room. The hotel staff pays great attention to details to ensure that guests leave with the memory of a unique and friendly experience.

Hotel Antsotegui ** (Etxebarria)
A charming family run hotel that was a former Medieval forge, closed in the early 19th century. With 15 rooms, all different and unique. They kept the structure and main elements of the original building in the restoration and the small mill that was part of the property and had been working until the 1950´s. With thier own restaurant that offers homemade traditional cuisine using mainly local products.

Practical info



Arrival in San Sebastian

It is easy to travel from Bilbao airport (Loiu) to San Sebastian, since there is a direct connection with San Sebastian.

A bus leaves every hour from 6.45 hrs from the exit of the "Arrivals" hall. It has a possible stopover in Zarautz, on the way to San Sebastian, about 1,15h from Bilbao. In the summer months (July and August) the bus even leaves every half hour from 7.15 hrs.

The bus (line DO50B) only stops in San Sebastian on Pius XII Square. From here, there are 1.7 km to the hotel; most convenient by taxi.

Return from Marquina-Jeméin

From Marquina-Jeméin to Bilbao centre there are direct buses (about 1 h approx. duration). Once you arrive in Bilbao, you can take a shuttle bus to the airport from the central bus station (30 min extra).

Included

What is included

- 7 nights' accommodation in **/*** hotels with breakfast
- Luggage transfer from hotel to hotel
- Transfers according to programme on days 2, 6 and 7
- Detailed route notes and maps, gps tracks, app
- Medical-luggage insurance
- 24-hour telephone assistance

What is not included

- Transfers to the starting location and from the arriving location of the tour
- lunches and dinners, if not otherwise stated
- visits and entrance fees - tips
- personal expense
- possible sojourn taxes
- everything that is not mentioned in the "What is included" section.

Optional Services

These services can be added to the ones included in the base price of the tour:

- Single room supplement
- cancellation insurance
- Transfers to reach the starting location or to leave the arriving location of the tour, which will be quoted on request.