

Lisbon & Northern Spain

Day 1 Arrive in Lisbon, Portugal. Welcome to Lisbon! At 6 pm, meet your Tour Director and traveling companions for a welcome dinner with wine at your hotel. (D)

Day 2 Lisbon. Lisbon was the center of Europe's longest-lived overseas empire. Portugal's imperial ambitions date back to Prince Henry the Navigator's 15th-century discoveries in West Africa. Morning sightseeing with a Local Guide features a drive through the Baixa quarter's main squares. Then, enjoy a walk through the cobblestone alleys of quaint ALFAMA, the popular quarter of the seamen and Fado singers. Drive along the grand Avenida da Liberdade up to Pombal Square, and stop for pictures of Belem Tower and the Monument of the Discoverers. Also visit JERONIMOS MONASTERY with the tomb of Vasco da Gama. Exciting optional excursions are available to Sintra and the royal palace of Queluz, and dinner at a typical taverna with Fado-style entertainment. (B)

Day 3 Lisbon–Fatima–Oporto. Start the day with a visit to the SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY in Fatima. Then, continue to Oporto, where sightseeing with a Local Guide includes a panoramic drive to the mouth of the Douro River, the soaring cathedral, the richly decorated CHURCH OF SAO FRANCISCO, and the STOCK EXCHANGE with its contemporary ARABIAN HALL, inspired by Granada's Alhambra. Next, visit the [LF] famous Sandeman & Co. PORT WINE CELLAR to taste the Port wine produced from grapes of the Douro Valley. (B)

Day 4 Oporto–Vigo, Spain–La Toja Island–Santiago de Compostela. Follow the coastline and enter Galicia. Stop in Vigo, built over a Roman settlement, see the remnants of the former city walls, and hear about its turbulent history. Continue to La Toja, a small island just off the shore, which has become a popular holiday resort. [LF] Enjoy a coffee at the Gran Hotel La Toja, a spa resort. The island is famous for its spring waters, discovered in the early 19th-century. Also admire the unusual church completely covered with seashells before returning to the mainland to continue your journey to Santiago de Compostela. This evening, dinner has been prepared for you at one of the city's fine local restaurants. (B,D)

Day 5 Santiago de Compostela. Santiago de Compostela is one of the most popular pilgrim destinations since the Middle Ages. For over a thousand years pilgrims have been walking the Camino de Santiago. Guided sightseeing includes a visit to the CATHEDRAL, where the relics of St. James the Apostle, brother of St. John the Evangelist, are held. Afternoon at leisure. (B)

Day 6 Santiago de Compostela–Luarca–Oviedo. Along the Asturian coast is Luarca, a renowned quiet town of white houses. Time to join the locals in the taverns or to walk around the port. Then, enter España Verde (Green Spain) and arrive in Oviedo, capital of Asturias. Guided sightseeing features the CATHEDRAL OF SAN SALVADOR, and [LF] an exclusive visit to the CÁMARA SANTA DE OVIEDO (holy chamber of Oviedo). Dating back to 802 AD, it houses the Arca Santa chest reliquary of the Sudarium of Oviedo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (B)

Day 7 Oviedo–Santillana Del Mar–Bilbao–San Sebastian. This morning, stop in picturesque Santillana del Mar, and walk through its cobblestone streets. [LF] Enjoy a visit to the nearby ALTAMIRA NEO CAVE, which offers an excellent insight of the upper Paleolithic cave paintings of the original cave, which was the first one where prehistoric cave paintings were discovered at the end of the 19th century. Continue to Bilbao, the great port city of the Basque region, and enjoy a special highlight: a guided visit to the GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, an amazing feat of construction created by North American architect Frank O. Gehry. Arrive in Basque Country and lovely San

Sebastian, the “Pearl of the Cantabrian Coast.” (B)

Day 8 San Sebastian. San Sebastian is a popular resort that attracts tourists from everywhere—not just for its picturesque location and harbor, but also for the many festivals that are held here yearly, like the San Sebastian Film Festival. Enjoy a guided walking tour of the Parte Viejo OLD QUARTER, then, time to try out the tasty pintxos snacks, which you will find in many bars. You may wish to join an optional excursion to the beautiful resort of Biarritz to make the most of your stay. (B)

Day 9 San Sebastian–Pamplona–Saragossa. In Pamplona, at the foot of the Pyrenees, a special treat awaits you: [LF] enjoy a walk along the Calle Estafeta, where the famous “running of the bulls” takes place, and have lunch with traditional tapas and Rioja wine at Basaburua restaurant. Then, continue to Saragossa for your overnight stay. (B,L)

Day 10 Saragossa–Barcelona. This morning, visit PLAZA DEL PILAR, one of Spain’s grandest squares. Free time to visit the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, where, according to legends, the Virgin Mary appeared to St. James. Then, continue to Barcelona, Spain’s second-largest city and the host of the Olympic Games in 1992. (B)

Day 11 Barcelona. Sightseeing with a Local Guide features the Columbus Monument, Plaza de Cataluna, and Paseo de Gràcia. Highlight is a visit to the spectacular SAGRADA FAMILIA BASILICA, Gaudi’s masterpiece, and enjoy a panoramic view of the city and harbor from Montjuïc Hill. This afternoon, an optional excursion to Montserrat can be arranged, and this evening, a special farewell dinner with wine has been prepared at La Fonda del Port Olimpic restaurant to say adios to your traveling companions. (B,D)

Day 12 Barcelona. Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (B)