

2022 - Taste of Bordeaux

7-NIGHT CRUISE WITH 2 NIGHTS BILBAO, 2 NIGHTS SAN SEBASTIAN PRE-CRUISE AND 2 NIGHTS LOIRE VALLEY, 1 NIGHT PARIS CHARLES DE GAULLE POST-CRUISE

Travel to France's legendary wine capital, Bordeaux. Iconic châteaux, timeless vineyards and delicious wine tastings are plentiful as you visit Libourne, Blaye, Bourg, Pauillac and Cadillac. This trip is a must for anyone interested in the best of French culture, lifestyle, wine and food.

OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	BILBAO	Hotel check-in
2	BILBAO	Guernica excursion "A City of Contrasts" walking tour and introduction to tapas
3	BILBAO	Guggenheim Museum Hotel check-in Evening walk of Old Town
4	SAN SEBASTIAN	"City by the Bay of Biscay" tour Free time
5	SAN SEBASTIAN	Transfer to Bordeaux via Bayonne EMBARKATION
6	BORDEAUX	Morning scenic cruising Saint-Émilion excursion and Grand Cru Classé wine tasting OR Saint-Émilion Excursion OR Château de Vayres OR Saint-Émilion bike tour and wine tasting
7	LIBOURNE	Bastide town and market visit OR Fronsac Wine Tasting OR Château Boutinet hike with wine and tapas tasting Free evening
8	BLAYE	Citadel visit OR Blaye bike tour towards Les Etauliers Blaye to Bourg bike tour Bourg walking tour and Carriage Museum Exclusive wine festival
9	PAUILLAC	Medoc Grand Cru Classé wine tasting and scenic vineyard tour OR Lynch Bages Village visit & local specialties tasting OR Soulac-sur-Mer excursion
10	CADILLAC	Roquetaillade Castle with Sauternes wine tasting OR Roquetaillade and Cadillac visit OR Cadillac bike tour

11	BORDEAUX	UNESCO city tour and Wine Museum and market tasting OR Bordeaux bike tour Bordeaux Cite du Vin visit OR Bassins de Lumières show Illuminations cruise
12	BORDEAUX	DISEMBARKATION Transfer to Tours Free time for lunch Hotel check-in
13	AMBOISE	Château de Chenonceau, Du Clos Lucé and Château d'Amboise
14	AMBOISE	Hotel check-out Château de Chambord and Blois Transfer to Paris; hotel check-in
15	PARIS	Return flight home

ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, BILBAO. Check into your hotel for the beginning of your Basque Country land program.

Day 2, BILBAO. Travel to the Basque town of Guernica, infamously bombed by German and Italian air forces during the Spanish Civil War – and the subject of one of Picasso's most renowned paintings. Immerse yourself in culture and visit the open-air market where you'll find a variety of local specialties, from cheese to peppers to fish. Later in the day, take an informative walking tour through Bilbao and learn how to order Basque tapas, known locally as pintxos, and revered for their small size and big taste. (B)

Day 3, BILBAO - SAN SEBASTIAN. Take a deep dive into the contemporary art within the world-famous Guggenheim Museum, a work of art itself. Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the museum features a daring and innovative façade and showcases work by such artists as Andy Warhol, German artist Anselm Kiefer, and Basque masters Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza. Later in the day, transfer to San Sebastián and check into your hotel. In the evening, take a stroll through Old Town, the second oldest neighborhood in the city, where distinctive architecture and pintxos bars beckon, made even more romantic by the evening light. (B)

Day 4, SAN SEBASTIAN. Discover the charms of the "City by the Bay of Biscay." Known in the Basque language as Donostia, San Sebastián was once a prominent fishing village and was burned to the ground in 1813 after being occupied by Napoleonic troops. However, by 1887, after rebuilding, the city flourished as a popular tourist destination and spa resort. Later in the day, enjoy some free time in the city renowned for holding the second highest number of Michelin stars per square meter. (B)

Day 5, SAN SEBASTIAN - BORDEAUX - EMBARKATION. Check out of your hotel and transfer to Bordeaux via the French Basque town of Bayonne. Later, embark the ship in Bordeaux for your Taste of Bordeaux cruise. (B,D)

Day 6, BORDEAUX - LIBOURNE. Take in the romance of Bordeaux as you pass iconic sights on a scenic morning cruise. Later in the day, dock in Libourne, a gateway to one of Bordeaux's most elite wine regions. Join an excursion to Saint-Émilion, known for its celebrated vineyards, and while here, explore the monolithic church carved out of one piece of limestone rock, and then go under the church to discover its catacombs and caves. Afterwards, enjoy a Grand Cru Classé wine tasting at either Château de Ferrand or Château de Pressac. Alternately, you can enjoy an excursion to Saint-Émilion solely to discover more of the small historic town. If you prefer a more active adventure, pedal through the vineyard-rich countryside to Saint-Émilion and then to Château Soutard for a Grand Cru Classé wine tasting. You can also choose to tour the magnificent Château Vayres, one of the most prestigious historic buildings of Aquitaine. (B,L,D)

Day 7, LIBOURNE - BLAYE. Stroll through the colorful, open-air market, tasting some of the region's specialties. You can also choose to enjoy a tasting of local wines from one of the beautiful wine estates in the Fronsac region. Or, you can get your heart pumping by venturing deeper into town by hiking through one of Libourne's renowned vineyards. Later in the day, set sail for Blaye, where you'll enjoy an evening at your leisure. (B,L,D)

Day 8, BLAYE - BOURG. Once in Blaye, you can join a tour of its 17th-century citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For a more active excursion, take a bike ride around Blaye. Later in the day, you can choose to bike from Blaye through the idyllic French countryside to Bourg. While in the ancient village of Bourg, take a walking tour and visit the Carriage Museum, which houses a wonderful collection of horse-drawn vehicles. Later in the day, experience the hospitality of this charming medieval village with an exclusive wine festival. Meet the local wine growers and taste the fruits of their labors as well as enjoy live French music and dancing. (B,L,D)

Day 9, PAUILLAC. Pauillac, a lovely village on the Left Bank of the Gironde Estuary, is gateway to the famed Médoc region, renowned for producing some of the world's finest Bordeaux wines. You will see some of the most beautiful and famous wine estates, including Château Latour, Château Mouton Rothschild, Château Lafite

Rothschild and Château Pichon Longueville. You'll then visit either Château Gruaud Larose or Château Léoville Poyferré for a tasting of Grand Cru wines. Alternately, you can visit Lynch Bages, a quaint wine estate and village, followed by a wine and local specialties tasting. Or, enjoy a coast drive to Soulac-sur-Mer where you'll see unique sights, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Cordouan lighthouse known to be the oldest in France. (B,L,D)

Day 10, CADILLAC - BORDEAUX. Visit the impressive Castle of Roquetaillade, an amazingly preserved masterpiece of medieval military architecture owned by the same noble family for 700 years and travel to the Sauternes wine region to either Chateau de Rayne Vigneau or Chateau Guiraud to taste the highly prized golden-hued sweet wines produced here. For those wishing to explore more of the history on the decadent castles, you can enjoy a visit to the Roquetaillade castle and Cadillac castle. Or, pedal through the charming town of Cadillac for a guided bike tour. (B,L,D)

Day 11, BORDEAUX. The breathtaking capital of the wine world, Bordeaux is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and classified as a "City of Art and History." You'll have an opportunity to experience much of the rich culture and architecture on a city tour followed by a visit to the famed indoor Les Halles de Bacalan market for a tasting of local specialties to please the palate. Bike enthusiasts will wish to join a tour along the city's amazing network of bicycle paths. Depending on your interests, you have a choice from three excursions in the afternoon. Enjoy a visit to the immersive and interactive Bordeaux Wine Museum, housed in an awe-inspiring building. Alternately, be treated to a spectacular sound and light show, Les Bassins des Lumières. Or, explore the enriching city of Bordeaux at your own leisure. In the evening, enjoy a spectacular illumination cruise, gazing at the iconic structures of Bordeaux as they glow against the night sky. (B,L,D)

Day 12, BORDEAUX - LOIRE VALLEY / AMBOISE - DISEMBARKATION. Disembark the ship and transfer to Tours for free time for lunch before arriving in the Loire Valley, where you will check in to your Amboise hotel. (B)

Day 13, AMBOISE. Visit three of the Loire Valley's regal châteaux starting with the Château de Chenonceau, one of the most beautiful castles in France. This château has been referred to as the "Women's Castle" since it is the only castle in the region that has been built, inhabited and saved by women during the Renaissance. Château du Clos Lucé was Leonardo da Vinci's last home where he completed some of his most famous works under the patronage of the King of France. The Château d'Amboise, perched on a promontory overlooking the Loire River, was the first Renaissance château built in the Loire Valley and features extravagant residences, gardens and a Gothic chapel, where Leonardo da Vinci is buried. (B)

Day 14, AMBOISE - PARIS. Check out of your Amboise hotel and, en route to Paris, visit two more majestic châteaux. While Château de Chambord, located at the heart of Europe's largest enclosed wooded park, began as an unassuming hunting lodge, it is now the biggest château in the Loire Valley with 426 rooms, 77 staircases and 282 fireplaces. Next, either marvel at the residence of seven kings and ten queens of France at the famous Château de Blois where you'll discover the secrets of the French court, or enjoy free time. Afterwards, transfer by motorcoach to your hotel at Charles De Gaulle Airport. (B)

Day 15, DEPART PARIS. Bid farewell to Paris and prepare for your flight home. (B)