



There is much to see and do in the Basque region of southern France and northern Spain from a client's villa base. These range from more traditional tours, to more unique offerings. Below is a small sampling of excursions A Season Away can arrange for clients in the region.

## Food and Wine

- Visit off-the-beaten-path wine cellars where the clients will be able to taste wines with the owner of the cellars, not someone from their marketing or sales staff. Clients will revel in the different owners' passion for winemaking. The A Season Away VillaHosts can make recommendations.
- **Basque cider** is a tradition in the region, owing to its days of rustic mountain life. Visit a producer of this hard cider in northern Spain and make a day of it.
- Tour a sheep's milk cheese farm to learn how this popular Basque cheese is made from milking to the final product. This ewe's milk cheese is called **Brebis**. This is a great tour for children.
- **Tapas bar hopping** in San Sebastian in Spain can be fun, but daunting with more than 100 bars in one concentrated area. Have an A Season Away VillaHost guide you to the best tapas in San Sebastian, introducing you to some of their friends along the way for a great evening!
- Parma may have its ham, but the Basque country has its hams from Bayonne. Visit a breeding farm and a butcher shop to taste some of these flavorful cured pork products, regarded by many as the tastiest meat in France!
- **Macaroons** were invented by a baker in St. Jean de Luz for the 1660 wedding of Louis XIV (France's Sun King) to the Spanish Infante Marie-Therese. Take a private tour of the bakery and learn the secrets of baking perfect macaroons.



## Chocolate:

- Visit the famous "**Chocolate Museum**" in Biarritz with children and learn how it is made and take part in a hands-on demonstration to create your own.
- Since Bayonne is where chocolate was first introduced in France, go behind the scenes and visit a top chocolatier to learn more about the process and watch as little pieces of chocolate art are made (The residents of Bayonne consume more chocolate per capital than anywhere else in Europe!)

## Cooking Lessons

- Meet your **French chef Alain** in Biarritz at Les Halles, the main covered food market, to select the best foods to use in your cooking lesson. Before heading to the chef's home for the lesson, you may well stop and taste fresh seafood and later sample wines from one of the top "cavists" in France. Then head to Alain's home with a professional kitchen and have a hands-on cooking lesson and lunch.



## Sporting Activities

Being by the sea and close to the Pyrenees Mountains invites many sporting activities, including:

- **Take surfing lessons.** You're never too old to learn this Southern California sport imported to the south of France. Gentle breakers, protected bays and long beaches make for quick mastery of this sport at any age.
- Golf was imported by the British when they spent winters here at the turn of the 20th century and there are some spectacular courses among the 12 that dot the area. Biarritz is the sister city to Augusta, Georgia, home to the Masters golf tournament. A Season Away VillaHosts can arrange preferred tee times and golf lessons to tune up your game!



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## Basque Country Excursions

- Spend the day with a commercial fisherman from St. Jean de Luz fishing for tuna, sardines and other "wildlife of the sea." This is hard work, but can be a wonderful trip for a parent-child to appreciate the profession and the sea.
- Learn the challenging game of **pelota** (Jai Alai) from a multiple-year French national pelota champion.
- Take a guided sea kayaking adventure along the Atlantic coast of France and Spain
- Learn the art of "**beachcasting**," or fishing from in and around the enormous ocean waves by a professional.
- The Pyrenees offer incomparable day and multi-day hikes, lead by locals who can guide, keep an eye on changing weather conditions and regale you with stories of Basque culture on the way. One trip even includes a lunch at a converted bergerie or sheep fold with spectacular views.
- Bike with members of a local biking club! Or descend Baigura Mountain on a breathtaking ride!
- Ever tried **off-road four-wheel drive** trips? Head into the hills of the Pyrenees with self-guided vehicles, connected via audio, and head up shepherds' paths for breathtaking, unspoiled vistas.
- River rafting in the Pyrenees is fun and good for all ages as the rapids are not too challenging on the Nive River. Trip includes everything from transportation, to hot showers at the end!



## Pampering

- The seaside of the Basque country is the home of **Thalasso therapy**, or salt water treatments. Let A Season Away arrange one or more sessions to some of the top local spas in Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz for a relaxing and rejuvenating treatment.



## Shopping

- To tell you the truth, some of the best shopping comes from the local markets and antique fairs. A Season Away VillaHosts can steer you in the right direction.
- Aside from traditional boutique shopping in Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz, the action gets better across the border in Spain in **San Sebastian and Bilbao**. A Season Away's VillaHosts can show you the best shops, boutiques and ateliers, based on your "retail therapy" needs.

## Traditional/Non-Traditional Touring

- Spend a day touring in the hills of the Basque Country. Minutes away from the bustle of the more sophisticated Basque coast lays the essence of the Basque Country, its villages. A proud people with traditions dating back to the beginning of time, the history of the Basque people is ingrained in "interior" country. Enjoy the leisurely pace of another time and place while visiting 6 villages, including a lunch in Itxassou, the "cherry" producing village of the region
- Learn to speak French or Spanish or Basque with private lessons for individuals or the entire family. Lessons are less out of a book than fun practical lessons such as visiting local markets to learn to shop, going to restaurants to learn to order from a French or Spanish menu, etc.
- Tour the **Guggenheim Museum** in Bilbao on a day-long excursion, including lunch. The building is almost as important as the modern art it houses: a sculpture of a building crafted in titanium, limestone and glass by controversial American architect Frank Gehry. Its restless form defies description.
- Visit the beautiful oceanfront chateau of **Abbadia**, now a scientific observatory containing magnificent furnishings and decor. Next traverse the bay that separates France from Spain by boat to the Spanish Basque village of Fontarrabia.
- Attend **French rugby** on a local and professional level or Spanish soccer on a professional level.
- Go to musical and artistic performances throughout the region (symphony, opera, ballet, jazz, and more.) A Season Away can not only get hard-to-find tickets, but can also let clients know about local performances worth attending.
- Take **traditional walking tours** of Biarritz, St. Jean de Luz and Bayonne with local guides who can make the region come alive as they customize the tour and presentation to the audience.
- Take a fun drive in the country in a classic French Citroen car, the 2 CV!
- Interested in "**running with the bulls**" in Pamplona? How about watching this excitement from a safe distance? A Season Away can arrange prime seats to take in all this July 6-14 action and then spend the rest of the day wandering in Pamplona or taking in a bull fight.

