

Walk Spain

Rioja Vineyard Trail



La Rioja region – visit Bilbao – beautiful scenery – private wine tasting - vineyard visits – relaxed walking – varied routes - small groups - private guide carefully paced - exclusive restaurant meals - boutique hotels

Enjoy the full variety of Rioja's scenery, wine and food in the company of your expert local guide.

Walk at a relaxed pace in mountains, vineyards, forests and villages.

Dine out a la carte in some of the region's finest restaurants.

Increase your appreciation of wine with a tasting course led by a leading winemaker.

Sleep in a carefully selected range of small hotels and inns as you move across the region.

This is a Pura *handmade* holiday with an activity rating *medium* and a comfort rating *first*.



Enjoy a relaxed combination of walking, good food and wine.



"The best holiday I have ever had. The walks and scenery were breathtaking. The food experience was second to none, from picnics to top restaurants and all the meals in between. Thank you once again for the holiday of a lifetime but most of all to Xabi an excellent guide whom we felt became a friend." Trevor H

Holiday Itinerary

Day 01 | Bilbao | **arrive and explore**

Fly to Bilbao and spend one night in the city, staying in a first class hotel in the city centre.

This evening you might like to head out into town to try one of the city's famously good restaurants.

Please note: flights for this holiday are quoted separately.

Day 02 | Rioja | **Guggenheim to La Rioja**



This morning take time explore the old centre of Bilbao as well as Frank Gehry's famous titanium clad Guggenheim museum.

Meet up with your Pura Aventura guide just before lunch who drives you to a restaurant to try some traditional Basque food.

After lunch have a sneaky siesta as you drive to the region of La Rioja, just over an hour away.

The area of the vineyards is wedged between mountains to the north and south.

As you arrive from the north, your guide will take time to stop at the Mirador de Tolono, a viewpoint with views across the whole valley to the high mountains of the south.

From here you can see what gives this tiny area its precious micro-climate.

Drive down into the valley of the Rio Ebro to your boutique hotel in a small village near Haro, the heart of wine production in La Rioja.

Settle in to your boutique hotel where you spend the next three nights.

Relax for a while before your first introduction to the region's famous cuisine.

Riojan food is a unique combination of seafood from the coast to the north, meats from the plains to the south and vegetables from the fertile valley of La Rioja itself.

Meals on this holiday are eaten sometimes in the restaurant of your hotel and sometimes in other restaurants.

Lunch will either be a picnic prepared by your guide or will be taken in a restaurant. (b,l,d)

To book or for more information call us on **01273 676 712**

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Traditional harvesting methods are still the norm in many wineries.



Looking across vineyards to the castle at Davalillo



Relaxed but informative wine tasting course



High mountain scenery in the south of the region.

Day 03 | La Rioja | **walk and wine tasting**

Today starts with a visit to the one of the finest and most traditional wineries in the region, Muga.

At this bodega everything is made of oak. They even have their own master coopers on site to make the barrels & casks for the wines.

Barrel making is actually fascinating to watch, particularly the final stage where they seal the wood over flames.

From the nearby village of Briones, set off walking a relaxed but pretty route through vineyards towards the castle at Davalillo.

The valley is wide and open at this point so you enjoy lovely views of the mountains to the north and south, hilltop villages and the castle ahead.

Enjoy a picnic lunch at the castle before returning to the hotel to relax. Walk 9.8km, 3hrs, ▲90m, ▼90m

This afternoon contains one of the highlights of your holiday: a private wine tasting course with Jorge Martinez, winemaker for Bodegas Luberri and one of the region's foremost wine experts.

End your day with dinner in the hotel restaurant, enjoying the wines you have just tasted. (b,l,d)

Day 04 | La Rioja | **walk in the high hills**

This morning you visit the fascinating wine museum at 'Dinastía Vivanco'.

Continue to the ridge of the Sierra de San Lorenzo, from where you have spectacular views of the plains of Rioja and a series of 2,000m peaks.

Walk from a pass to the peak of San Lorenzo: at 2,270m it is the highest in the region. Walk 4.6km, 2hrs, ▲300m, ▼300m

Return to your hotel to relax before dinner. (b,l,d)

Day 05 | La Rioja | **markets and tapas**

Visit a bodega this morning on the outskirts of Logrono, the main city of La Rioja.

Have free time to wander the pretty streets of the old town near the cathedral.

Explore the Abastos covered market with its delicious array of foods.

Next to the market is the famous Calle Laurel which is made up entirely of tapas bars and restaurants.

Take time to wander along the street and soak up the atmosphere.

This afternoon, carry on to the east of the region to spend the next two nights in the village of Arnedillo.

The area around Arnedillo has a dry, Mediterranean climate which means that the flora and fauna change dramatically. (b,l,d)

Day 06 | La Rioja | **walk and relax**

Despite the dry land around you, a short drive away is the verdant beech forest of the Hayedo de Santiago.

It is a lovely area and provides a cooling contrast to the scenery you have encountered at the start of the week.

Lunch is a picnic served in the forest.

Walk 9.3km, 3hrs, ▲460m, ▼460m (b,l,d)

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Stalls in the Abastos market of Logrono.



Walk through the beech forests of Santiago



Enjoy a meal where each course is complemented by its own wine.



Stay in an intimate small inn at the end of your holiday.

Day 07 | La Rioja | visit Rioja Alta

Change hotels for the last time late as you make your way across to the central south area of La Rioja.

Stay in a small inn, high above a village looking out over the distant Ebro Valley.

This afternoon you drive the short distance to the Penas de Isallana, a series of sheer red rock formations which are home to dozens of vultures.

The first part of the walk is a steep ascent through pine woods and then out onto the very top of the Penas.

Enjoy great views and hopefully a close encounter with some vultures.

Walk 9km, 3hrs, ▲ 350m, ▼ 350m (b,l,d)

Day 8 | La Rioja | sculpture forest

This morning walk through a natural park with a difference, as you follow a route combining natural landscapes with art.

Eight different artists were commissioned to create sculptures from raw materials of the forest.

The sculptures will never be repaired and with the passing of time they blend back into nature.

Really this walk is worthwhile because the beauty of the landscape and the forest that it crosses.

Walk 13km, 4hrs, ▲ 350m, ▼ 350m

Return to the hotel to relax before your farewell dinner in a first rate restaurant nearby.

The restaurant is run by two brothers. One is the chef, the other the sommelier, both are self taught. Recipes derive from their mother's traditional cooking.

Ingredients come from the hills around and about but the food is remarkably sophisticated and delicious.

The sommelier explains their choice of particular wine to go with particular foods.

It really is quite a revelation to experience the difference a well chosen wine can make. (b,l,d)

Day 9 | travel | return home

Drive back to Bilbao early this morning for your flight home. (b)

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Holiday Information

Pura Handmade

This holiday is unique to us.

We have designed and deliver this holiday using our own people and carefully selected local suppliers to create a *Pura Handmade* holiday.

You are looked after by a Pura team on the ground in la Rioja. The selection of hotels, walks, activities, visits and meals are unique to us.

In creating this holiday we have been very careful to give you a full insight into the landscapes and culture of this little visited region.

We are proud to say that this holiday was featured on the BBC Holiday Program during its last season.

How active?

Walking is the main activity and some of the days are reasonably strenuous. You should enjoy walking to get the most from this holiday.

Our walks are for anyone reasonably fit & active.

However, because we always 'return to base' you can choose to take a day off to relax at any stage.

How comfortable?

A first class hotel in Bilbao and then three comfortable, characterful boutique hotels in La Rioja.

Meals are a combination of picnic lunches and a la carte dinners in some of the finest restaurants in the region.

Wine is not included with dinner since there is such a huge choice on offer. Clients usually 'go Dutch' each evening.

How independent?

This holiday is a guided small group (eight maximum).

Who is it for?

Typically people in the 50-60s age range, 80:20 mix of couples and solo travelers. It's for those who want to learn a bit more about appreciating good wine.

Why La Rioja?

This small region of northern Spain is known worldwide for its wine, but also has beautiful and varied landscape from the contrast of the fertile plains of the Ebro River to the mountains of the south.

Its position on the pilgrims' way to Santiago also makes it an area of great cultural interest, with Romanesque churches and monasteries, some of them converted into wonderful hotels. From here we explore the wineries, paths and landscapes of La Rioja.

The region has a rich tradition of innovative cuisine.

How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits. To help preserve the integrity of these destinations we:

- Keep groups small to minimise environmental impact.
- Work directly with local businesses and organisations to directly benefit local economies. We use small, locally owned hotels and restaurants.
- Work with local guides so that our holidays are more interesting for clients and more beneficial locally.

La Rioja is one of the few regions in Spain which is not suffering dramatic movement of young people out of the villages to the cities.

A major factor in this is that young people can make a good living by entering the hospitality industry, market gardening or viticulture.

On this holiday we use small, locally owned hotels and inns. Evening meals are eaten in a carefully selected range of village restaurants. Visit family run wineries.

All of this helps contribute to the continued development of a sustainable long-term future for the rural population of La Rioja.

As with all of our Spanish holidays, your booking directly benefits the mountain conservation charity www.Quebrantahuesos.org

When should I go?

Really any time between April and October.

La Rioja is situated south-east of Bilbao near the north coast of Spain. Precipitation levels are high & conditions can be variable.

The warmest & driest months are July-September. Spring & Autumn temperatures are 5°-18°C; in summer 10°-28°C.

Spring and early summer is a very pretty time of year for flowers and the scenery generally.

The harvest generally happens in September into early October which means vines heavy with grapes.

Not based in the UK?

We are very happy to discuss your requirements if you are not travelling to and from the UK. Please call us on **+44 1273 676712** between 9am and 6.30pm weekdays.

Not quite right?

If this holiday's not quite right for you, call us to discuss your ideas or consider:

Picos Walk Stretch yourself with beautiful guided walks in the mountains then relax in lovely small inns.

Rioja Inn to Inn Walk from inn to inn along the hills of southern La Rioja.

Prices & departures

2012	16 Jun 29 Sep £1,690pp
Price includes	Twin/double en-suite hotel rooms; full-time Pura Aventura guide; all activities and entrance fees per itinerary; private transport; meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary.
Not included	Flights; drinks with meals; personal expenses; tips.
Flights	Flights are Heathrow/Bilbao with Iberia or Stansted/Bilbao with Easyjet.
Please note	Whilst we keep this itinerary as up to date as possible, the definitive list of our departure dates and prices can be found at www.pura-aventura.com/departures

Prices are per person based on twin share or double accommodation. Prices may be subject to change: please confirm at booking. WSRW12

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