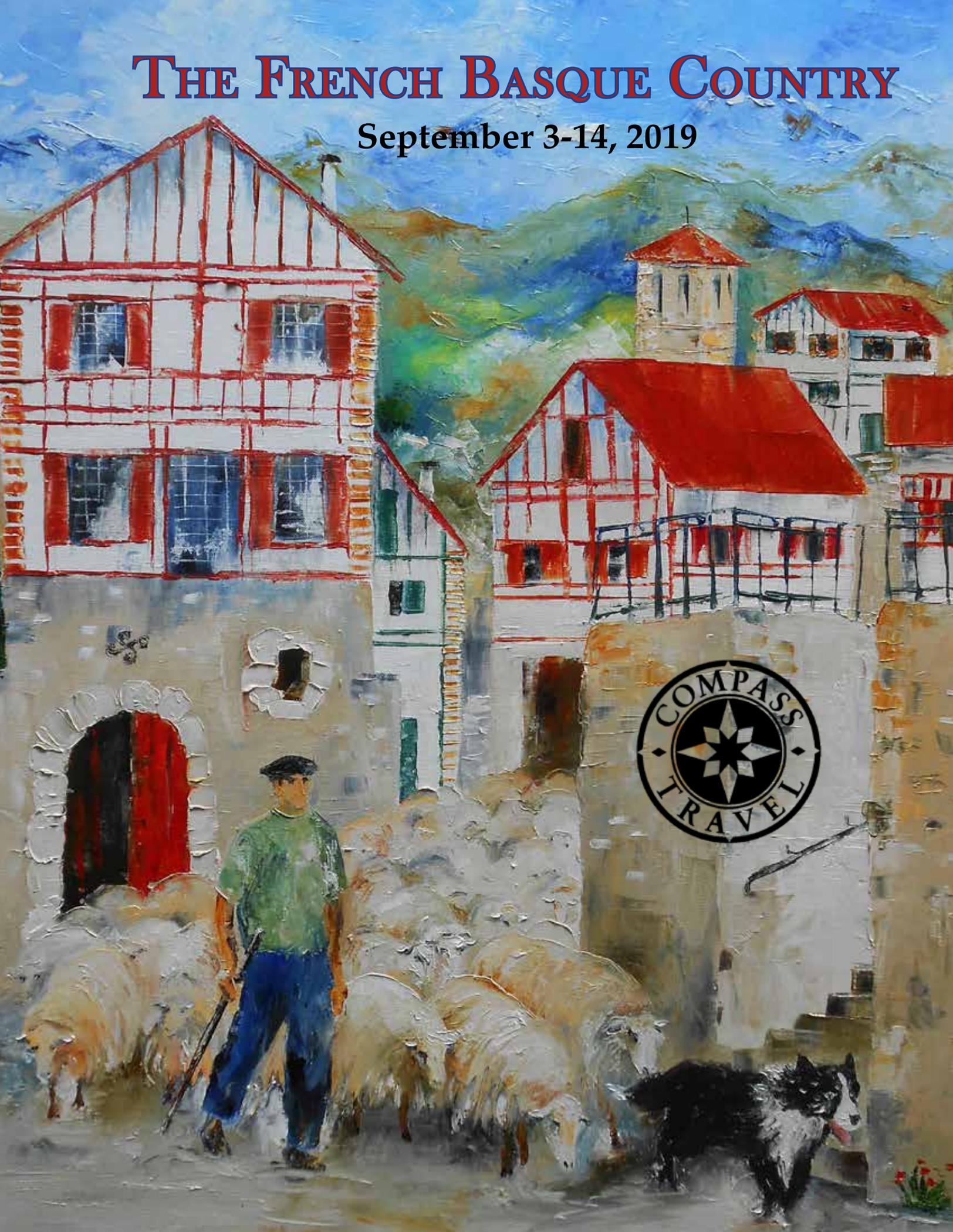


THE FRENCH BASQUE COUNTRY

September 3-14, 2019





Dear Compass Traveler,

The Basque Country is one of the most celebrated regions of France. Located across the border of Spain, on the Bay of Biscay, this area enchants visitors with its glorious vistas, superb cuisine, warm hospitality, and colorful ambiance. An aura of saintly spirituality melds with the ghosts of buccaneers to create an atmosphere that has something for everyone. We hope you will join us on this highly anticipated tour.

Holly and Luigi

ITINERARY

Tuesday, September 3

Our trip begins this afternoon with a private transfer from New London, New Hampshire to Boston’s Logan Airport for our overnight trip to France.

Wednesday, September 4

Our professional guide meets us in Biarritz and we transfer to the village of Saint Jean Pied de Port (translated to “foot of the pass” referring to the famous Roncevaux Pass where Charlemagne was defeated by the Basques). Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner in our hotel’s gourmet restaurant.

Overnight: Saint Jean Pied de Port–Hotel les Pyrenees (D)

Thursday, September 5

This morning we enjoy a walking tour of Saint Jean Pied de Port, including the local farmer’s market. Next we travel to Mauleon, home of the canvas shoe, the espadrille. The Donquichosse workshop here makes espadrilles in the purest and oldest tradition, preserving and celebrating their original product, which is entirely sewn by hand.

Overnight: Saint Jean Pied de Port–Hotel les Pyrenees (B,L)

Friday, September 6

Today we visit a family-owned small farmhouse cheese producer in the Iraty Valley. Cheese is made using old-world methods with raw, unpasteurized milk and is uncooked and pressed, and aged for



between 80 to 120 days. Afterward, you are free to join us on a two-hour walk of the Camino de Santiago, or “Way of Saint James,” a segment of the road to Santiago de Compostela

and the shrine of the apostle James. This World Heritage Site is popular with hiking and cycling enthusiasts as well as pilgrims on a spiritual journey.

Overnight: Saint Jean Pied de Port–Hotel les Pyrenees (B,L)

Saturday, September 7

Our destination this morning is a sagardotegi, or traditional Basque cider house, for a tour and tasting. The afternoon is ours to enjoy at leisure.

Overnight: Saint Jean Pied de Port–Hotel les Pyrenees (B,L)

Sunday, September 8

Today we make our way to the enchanting town of Saint Jean de Luz. On the way we visit La Cave D’Irouleguy, producers of fine wines since 1952. With dramatic mountains as a backdrop, Saint Etienne de Baigorri boasts a beautiful, serene setting in the Valley of the Aldudes. After lunch, we arrive at our home for the next six nights, the Grand Hôtel Thalasso & Spa. Recently restored to its original grandeur, this Art Deco-inspired hotel



with its breathtaking ocean views offers elegant luxury and timeless charm.

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B,L)

Monday, September 9

This morning we enjoy a walking tour of Saint Jean de Luz situated on the French Atlantic Coast. Steeped in history (Louis XIV wed his bride Maria Theresa of Spain here), this corsair (or pirate) town offers a cornucopia of sensual experiences including a sheltered harbor, lovely expanse of beach with grassy promenade, a quaint town square, many outdoor cafes and a plethora of local artists. Afterwards we're treated to a seafood lunch across the river in the picturesque town of Ciboure.

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B,L)

Tuesday, September 10

The morning market in Saint Jean de Luz is a must to discover the regional produce—fruits, vegetables, flowers, meat, and fresh fish will be waiting as we shop for our picnic lunch. Our next adventure finds us on an authentic cog railway built in 1924. From the top of its 905 metres, the sacred mountain of La Rhune provides an amazing panorama of the Pyrenees across the Basque coast bordering the Atlantic Ocean from San Sebastian to Biarritz and on to the beaches of Les Landes.

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B)

Wednesday, September 11

Today we cross the border into Spain to spend the day visiting San Sebastian on the Bay of Biscay. Considered to be the gastronomic capital of the Basque Country, this resort town is home to some of the finest cuisine in the world. We



enjoy lunch here to taste the city's best pintxos (tapas) and Txakoli, an effervescent white wine!

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B,L)

Thursday, September 12

Located in the little green valley of Sare, Le Musée du Gâteau Basque (the Basque Cake Museum) is our sweet destination today. After visiting the museum, the pastry chef demonstrates the flavors and perfumes of the Basque cake. After our gourmet lunch plate of regional specialties, we enjoy strolling the endearing village of Sare.

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B,L)

Friday, September 13

Today we discover the Espelette

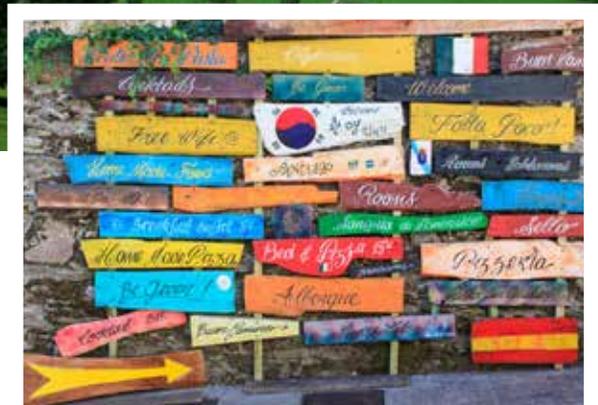
pimento pepper as Ramuntxo and his family invite us to gain an up close and personal insight into this highly coveted spice—a circuit that takes

us into a field that displays the different stages of production—from the seed to the ground spice. This afternoon we visit Arnaga, Edmond Rostand's magnificent chateau-home and gardens. Now a national monument, it is also a museum dedicated to this much-celebrated author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Tonight, we gather for our farewell dinner.

Overnight: Saint Jean de Luz–Grand Hotel Thalasso & Spa (B,D)

Saturday, September 14

We reluctantly bid "Agur" to the French Basque Country and transfer to the Biarritz Airport for our flight to Boston. Our private motorcoach transfers us back to New London. (B)



INCLUDED FEATURES:

- Escorted by Holly Walker and Luigi Minoletti
- Private motorcoach from New London, NH to Logan Airport and return
- Accommodations for 10 nights in first class and deluxe hotels
- Meals: 10 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 2 dinners (noted in itinerary as B, L, and D)
- Sightseeing as outlined in the day-to-day itinerary
- Portorage of one suitcase per person at hotels

For more information, please contact:

Compass Travel
603-526-9600
holly@compasstravel.net
www.compasstravel.net



PO Box 1675 • 116 Newport Road
New London, NH 03257

TOUR PRICE

\$5,895 per person

Based on double occupancy
(Single supplement available upon request)

~ Airfare Not Included ~

Tour Limited to 20 Participants

Compass Travel reserves the right to change the itinerary as deemed necessary. Due to the flux of the Euro, Compass Travel reserves the right to adjust the price of the tour.

Cover image: Basque Country by Axelle Bosler