

### Haute cuisine in Spain

#### Accommodation

- 2 nights in Madrid
- 2 nights in Seville
- 2 nights in San Sebastian
- 1 nights in Barcelona



#### Haute cuisine

*Cuisine as an artistic creation to delight the senses - this is the way gastronomy is seen in Spain. A range of five-star culinary attractions offering a world of tastes, presentation, aroma, textures, colour... Dishes by chefs such as Adrià, Arzak, Berasategui, Ruscalleda, Santamaría, Subijana and Roca have placed Spain at the forefront of international haute cuisine. The new Spanish chefs are artists in the kitchen, as is proved by their great international renown.*

*The work of these new culinary artists is distinguished by its originality and innovation, and combines traditional Mediterranean cuisine with new creative ideas. There are many restaurants in Spain which have been distinguished for their outstanding quality and creativity. Throughout the country there are around 150 Michelin-starred establishments. For lovers of gastronomy and restaurant owners in many European countries, the Michelin Guide is a Bible, a document which is the hallmark of gastronomic perfection, and which can transform the finest chefs into truly galactic artists. It is the best selling and most prestigious guides of its kind, and its judgment is rarely called into question by those foreigners who come in search of the finest Spanish nouvelle cuisine. In order to appear in the pages of this prestigious guide, an immaculate kitchen is an essential, although by no means sufficient, characteristic. The quality of the service is another factor taken into account, from waiters to maîtres and sommeliers, all of whom work together in order to offer the customer in-depth advice and unbeatable service.*

*With these qualities in mind, Spain has several establishments offering a veritable delight for the senses.*



### *Detailed Program*

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Arrival transfer, Madrid airport.

Transfer to the hotel and check-in procedures.

Dinner at restaurant Zalacaín.

- Address: Calle Álvarez de Baena, 4, Madrid. Located in the upper part of the city.



- Zalacaín is a long established restaurant which, 30 years after being founded by Jesús de Oyarbide continues to be a reference point of the capital's gastronomic scene. Although originally based around the cuisine of Navarra, the manager José Jiménez Blas defines its cooking as "creative and international". As with many of the previously mentioned establishments, the menu in Zalacaín changes with the seasons, incorporating mushrooms, game, seafood and certain fish and vegetables according to the time of year. In addition, the regular menu offers dishes such as the Little Don Pío Jar (quail eggs, smoked salmon and Beluga caviar), or the monkfish ragoût, red shrimp and peas with aroma of sherry.



#### **Tasting menu sample**

\*\*\*

hot appetizers

green tomatoes cold creamy soup with salmon

yolk of egg truffled with fresh goose-liver, wild mushrooms and purée of peas

grilled prawns over candied onion, tomato and black olives with truffles vinaigrette

steamed sea-bass with seafood vinaigrette and crunchy of marrow squash

cheese board

our desserts menu

almond roof-tile and mignardises

coffee and infusions

\*\*\*

Drinks not included. Keep in mind that this menu might change according to season.

Accommodation in Madrid.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Day

Buffet breakfast.

### **Madrid city Tour with royal Palace visit**

Madrid is located in the heart of Spain, in the geographical centre of the country. A lot can be said about Madrid, because in this city, everything goes. It is modern yet traditional, majestic yet popular, lively yet peaceful. More than anything else it is a haven of culture. Madrid is one of the world capitals for art. Its museums, headed by the Prado, and its rich, diverse heritage and monuments, make it a unique cultural destination not to be missed. Explore Madrid's attractions on a sightseeing tour by coach. This tour is the perfect introduction to Madrid's famous sights from the Gran Vía and Castellana, to famous squares including Plazas de España, Puerta del Sol and Puerta de Alcalá. Few European royal residences conserve decorative elements like those of the Royal Palace in Madrid. Its majestic rooms are home to major artistic treasures and continue to bear witness to historic events. Magnificent and grand, the official residence of Spain's monarchs is located in the heart of the capital, in a privileged setting with extraordinary views of the Madrid Mountains. "For eternity" is the inscription on the first stone laid in construction of the Spanish Royal Palace in 1738. Despite the fact that today's Royal Family does not actually live there, it is used for numerous important ceremonies and events. The content of the palace is no less valuable: besides beautiful decorative elements such as tapestries, porcelain and crystal chandeliers, it is also home to a select collection of paintings, with major works by Caravaggio, Juan de Flandes, Velázquez and Goya, string instruments made by Stradivarius for the Spanish sovereign, and exhibits from the Royal Armoury, one of the most highly prized in its genre. Explore its patios, corridors, rooms and gardens and feel like a real king or queen. The main entrance is in the grandiose Plaza de Armas Square. From here you can appreciate the elegance and majesty of the building's main façade.



### **Afternoon for exclusive shopping.**

As in all the world's top capital cities, in Madrid you'll find a whole paradise of exclusive collections, luxury labels and sophisticated accessories which are guaranteed to make a day's shopping an unforgettable event. The "Golden Mile" in the Salamanca district is home to the smartest shops and the most exquisite service, as well as the address of the flagship stores of prestigious designers such as Amaya Arzuaga, Hannibal Laguna and Elena Benarroch, among others. You'll also find two of the city's most exclusive shopping centres: the Jardín de Serrano and the ABC Serrano. Chanel, Dior, Loewe, Prada, Hermès, Jimmy Choo, Manolo Blahnik, Tiffany's, Cartier... Distinction and glamour are the hallmarks of the establishments to be found in the streets of Serrano, Velázquez, Goya, Ortega y Gasset and Jorge Juan. No detail has been overlooked... and you'll enjoy impeccable personal attention and service. It will be simply the most perfect day's shopping.



#### Dinner at Restaurant Santceloni.

- Address: Paseo de la Castellana 57, Madrid. Located in one of the main avenues of the city.



- This restaurant has three Michelin restaurants. Its cuisine is the best interpretation of each region of Spain. It opened its doors in Madrid in 2001, and obtained its first Michelin star after only nine months (the second was conferred in the 2005 edition). Under the guidance of Santi Santamaria, owner of the Racó de Can Fabes in Sant Celoni, and the first Catalan to obtain the coveted three stars from the Michelin guide; Santceloni has stuck to its guiding principles from the very beginning: a cuisine based around the best the market has to offer, with a respect for the finest ingredients. For the maitre, Abel Valverde, the highly coveted star represents "an important recognition given the prestige of the guide, which puts us in an excellent category, both at a national and international level". He goes on, "we have fought to really stand out, we fight for what we believe in and this is a reward for our efforts". Prizes and awards notwithstanding, the Santceloni kitchen, headed by chef Óscar Velasco, offers the very best of each culinary culture our country is home to. The seasons also play a role: truffles, mushrooms and seafood vary according to the time of year in order to offer each client the finest products. The restaurant has two sampling menus, the Gastronomic Menu and the Grand Menu. Although the it does not have any specialities as such, a number of dishes are suitable for the most demanding of paletes alone. These include the white veal hocks with potato purée, the red mullet with fried eggs, migas (a typical Spanish dish based on bread, pork and olive oil among other products) with paprika oil, the wonderful cheeses and the "Petrossian Alverta Imperial" caviar with razor-shells and green beans.



Tasting menu sample

\*\*\*

amuse bouches  
maccheroni salad stuffed with salt cod and peppers  
pork dewlap(sous vide, roast aubergine and potato & leek soup)  
cuttlefish(smoked with wine shoots and roast tomato & paprika oil)  
fresh fish(with glazed carrots and mustard yoghurt with red wine)  
roe deer loin(confit endives)  
cheese  
quince tartare(roast with black, pink and Jamaican pepper cream)  
cottage cheese ice cream(nuts, brandy and honey)  
petit fours

\*\*\*

Drinks not included. Keep in mind that this menu might change according to season.

Accommodation in Madrid.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Day

Buffet breakfast.

Morning at leisure.

Lunch in old Madrid at **El Mercado de San Miguel**.

Recently the old San Miguel Marketplace opened its doors again. It is located near Plaza Mayor.

In 1909 the current San Miguel Market was built following the style of the markets in Paris with big glass and iron buildings. It covers an area of 1200 m2 and has two floors. In the last year of the XXth century the activity of the market decreased and in 2003 the building was bought by a group, El Gastronomo de San Miguel, and the restructuring began. The whole structure of the building has been revised piece by piece and the building itself redesigned in order to maintain the historic aspects and also fulfill the needs of today. Each stand has been designed individually taking into account its use. The market wants to be a center of gastronomy. There are 33 stands in hands of professionals that not only sell their products, but also offer their advise to clients. There is a flower shop, a fishmonger, a butcher, a bakery among many other stands offering all kinds of food and also kitchen utensils and even a bookstore.



Departure transfer Madrid train station.

AVE fast train ride to Seville in the afternoon.

Arrival transfer Seville train station.

Flamenco dinner.

Flamenco is a style of music and dance which is considered part of the culture of Spain, although it is actually native to only one region: Andalusia. Andalusian, Gypsy, Sephardic, Moorish and

Byzantine influences have been detected in flamenco, often claimed to have coalesced around the time of the Reconquista in the 15th century. The origins of the term are unclear; the word *flamenco* itself was not recorded until the 18th century. Flamenco is the music of the Andalusian gypsies and played in their social community. Andalusian people who grew up around gypsies were also accepted as "flamencos".



#### Menu sample

\*\*\*

home appetizers

loin of codfish in tomato sauce and piquillo peppers

galician veal sirloin in green pepper

special dessert

xerez, red or white wine, mineral water

cava glass

\*\*\*

Accommodation in Seville.

#### 4th Day

Buffet breakfast.

#### **Sevilla city tour: Cathedral, Giralda tower and Santa Cruz neighbourhood**

Seville is the artistic, cultural, and financial capital of southern Spain. It is the capital of the autonomous community of Andalusia and of the province of Seville. It is situated on the plain of the River Guadalquivir. Seville's Cathedral has the UNESCO World Heritage designation, and is Europe's largest Gothic building. Its size meant that building it was a real challenge that took 106 years to complete. You will be immediately amazed by its monumental character, both inside and out. Afterwards we will climb to the top of la Giralda, the Moorish tower from the old Mosque on whose site the Cathedral was built. The Barrio de Santa Cruz is a neighborhood near the center of Seville, Andalusia, Spain. It is one of the best-known neighborhoods of that city and among the most visited by tourists, with its whitewashed houses, mansions, family palaces, and humble flowered patios. The Barrio de Santa Cruz is a labyrinth of narrow streets and alleys dating back to the old judería. These narrow streets provide protection from the oppressive sun of the Sevillian summer. Scattered through the neighborhood are several plazas or squares. Among these are the aforementioned Plaza de Santa Cruz, the Plaza de los Venerables, the Plaza de las Cruces, the Plaza de Doña Elvira, and the Plaza de los Refinadores.



**Afternoon at leisure.**

Accommodation in Seville.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Day

Buffet breakfast.

**We depart for the airport to San Sebastian, La Cote Basque.**

**Flight Sevilla-San Sebastián.**

**Arrival transfer San Sebastian airport.**

This city, also known as Donostia, lies along a white sandy bay between the Urgull and Igeldo hills. Fishermen's houses, a smart suburb and modern districts make it one of the most attractive cities on the Cantabrian coast. The Museum of San Telmo, the Peine de los Vientos (Comb of the Winds) and the Kursaal are examples of how the city brings together modern and traditional features. The town centre streets of San Sebastián unfold overlooking La Concha Bay. Monte Igeldo marks one end of it - a wonderful vantage point for enjoying views over the city. At its feet is Torrepea Point, where the "Peine de los Vientos" a sculpture by the famous Basque artist Eduardo Chillida, is installed. Here Ondarreta beach begins, framed by a garden area and by the Pico del Loro. This was the place chosen by Queen Maria Cristina (18<sup>th</sup> C.) to build the Miramar Palace, her summer residence. A lovely promenade with elegant railings and street lamps runs along La Concha Beach, on whose sands is the Perla del Océano Bathing Area, a former royal bathing hut. Still looking at the sea, you arrive at the old Casino, nowadays the City Hall. In this area, between the sea and the River Urumea, is the old town and the way to Monte Urgull, the marina and the fishermen's district. The summit of Urgull is dominated by La Mota Castle and a representation of the Sacred Heart. One path takes you upwards while another skirts the hill and takes you along the breakwater. In the oldest part of San Sebastián, the churches of San Vicente and Santa María del Coro await you, the former Gothic and the latter Renaissance-Baroque. An old Dominican convent is nowadays the San Telmo Museum, whose archaeological and ethnographic collections, together with its paintings, are worth a leisurely visit. These busy streets lead you to the porticoed Plaza de la Constitución. Among its many balconies - numbered and painted white, betraying its origin as a bullring - stands the old Neoclassical City Hall, converted into the Municipal Library. Also, San Sebastian Cathedral, el Buen Pastor, built in Neogothic style. Once again on the bank there are aristocratic houses from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading to the María Cristina bridge, the most monumental of those crossing the river. Four lamps by the sculptor Mariano Benlliure light the way to the railway station, designed by Eiffel. On this side of the river are the modern districts of Eguía and Gros. On Gros Beach is the modern Kursaal structure, designed by the architect Rafael Moneo.



#### Dinner at Arzak restaurant.

- ✓ Address: Avenida Alcalde Elósegui 273, San Sebastián.



- ✓ Juan Mari Arzak serves dishes to amaze and amuse the senses. His family have occupied the same site in San Sebastian since 1897, and it remains a family affair with his talented daughter Elena at his side now. Together they offer a modern interpretation of classic Basque cuisine, including such delights as Lobster with white olive oil and smoked white tuna with figs and pine nuts.



#### Tasting menu sample

\*\*\*

kabraoka pudding with fried noodles  
araitxi crunchy  
tempera black pudding  
ball of mushrooms and corn dust  
roasted apples in foie oil  
slices of nuts and artichokes  
potato, blue lobster  
egg in earthquake  
suntanned fish  
hake fish in breadcrumbs  
honey in water with fluids  
chocolate and crystal colours

\*\*\*

Drinks not included. Keep in mind that this menu might change according to season.

Accommodation in San Sebastián.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Day

Buffet breakfast.

### **Rioja wine tour**

Spain produces a wide variety of wines of the highest quality with unique and distinctive flavours which vary from region to region. La Rioja is one of our most internationally renowned wine-producing areas. La Rioja, in the north of Spain, is synonymous with wine. This is where our most internationally recognised wines are produced. These exquisite wines are the product of centuries of tradition; they enjoy great renown and will captivate all those who taste them. Because wine in La Rioja is not just a drink. It embraces a whole culture, deeply rooted in this land of vines and wine cellars. The loving care taken in the production of the wine and the quality of the grapes has made Rioja wine a treasure demanded by the finest palates in the world. La Rioja produces an average of 250 million litres a year, of which 85 % corresponds to red wine, and the rest to white and rosé. Different types of wines, but all have as a common denominator their outstanding quality. A trip through the region will be enough to convince you how far the region's existence is bound up in the wine culture. To discover this world of aromas, colours, nuances and sensations is an experience not to be missed. And La Rioja is the ideal place to set off on this journey into the world of wine.



**Dinner at Zuberoa restaurant.**

- ✓ Address: Aradener Bidea, Barrio Iturriotz, Oiartzun.



- ✓ The restaurant stands in the oldest farmhouse in the valley (nearly 600 years old). The large dining rooms are in the former stables, while the private dining rooms are in what used to be the bedrooms. The decor is elegant and discreet, and the service exquisite. At Zuberoa Restaurant, Hilario Arbelaiz offers a flavour-some, imaginative cuisine with strong contrasts, using the finest local products. Hilario sets out to woo diners with his exquisite creamy dishes and his cuisine might be considered to mark the highest level of gastronomic craftsmanship.



### Tasting menu sample

\*\*\*

royal of seafruits in vegetable flavour  
roasted lobster, ginger gelée and ravioli of coral  
roasted shellfish, citric vinaigrette and caramelized endive  
special egg, potato, ham and truffle  
creamy rice with txipirions  
baked fish in vinaigrette and curry carrot  
confit of suckling pig, potato purée and compote of fruit with essence  
fruits in jelly of red wine in mint and lemon ice cream  
crystal of pineapple, vanilla and rose

\*\*\*

Drinks not included. Keep in mind that this menu might change according to season.

Accommodation in San Sebastián.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Day

Buffet breakfast.

**Flight San Sebastián-Barcelona.**

### Arrival transfer & Barcelona city tour

Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, is a cosmopolitan Mediterranean city that incorporates in its urban street pattern Roman remains, medieval districts and the most beautiful examples of Modernism and 20th century avant-garde art. Not for nothing were the emblematic buildings of Catalan architects Antoni Gaudí and Luis Domènech i Montaner declared to be World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Of Roman origin, Barcelona's long history and economic dynamism have provided it with an impressive cultural heritage, shown in the conservation of its rich historic and artistic heritage and in the encouragement of the newest artistic trends. Its long cultural agenda will lead the visitor through museums, exhibitions, outdoor sculptures... and an extensive calendar of music, theatre, and dance.



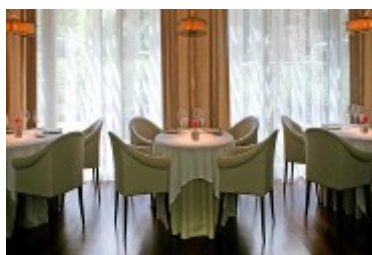
Join Carmen for a long walk in the Main Street.

Dinner at Abac restaurant.

- ✓ Address: Avenida Tibidabo 1, Barcelona.



- ✓ The restaurant awarded with 1\* Michelin, can seat up to 56 diners. Located in the newly constructed pavilion in direct contact with the garden, the interior and the exterior are found through large windows. Chef Jordi Cruz, his brilliant career took him to get a Michelin star at his restaurant L'Angle (Sant Fruitós Bages) a few months after opening. Previously, he became the youngest Spanish Chef awarded with a star of the prestigious French guide at the restaurant L'Estany Clar (Cercs - Berga). In 2006 he won the first edition of Chef of the Year and currently, he acts as vice president of the jury for the event. He has also published the book "Logic of Kitchen" and he is currently preparing his second book Dining without departing from the kitchen that is what suits him best in their day to day. His cuisine is defined as evolutionary and restless, based on the product and meets both, creativity and tradition.



#### Tasting menu sample

\*\*\*

mojito

our melon with iberian ham

sphere of Thai curry with sea urchins

candied tomatoes, peppers´ water with olive oil, smoked sardine, crunchy bread in anchovies  
with basil

infusion of fig leaves with foie gras and sweet and salty crunchy crumbs

false iberian yolk with iberians, potato parmentier, truffle oil and rocket lettuce

roast scallop with caviar, artichokes, celery turnip, olive oil and soya textures with orange  
rice, farm chicken, srt felicien cheese and nuts, rocket lettuce flowers and egg yolk cooked  
with candied garlic

wild sea bass with salsifies, concentrate porcini water, little tomatoes, roots purée and  
Kumquart skin

baby goat shoulder in two cooking with mushrooms toffee, garlic with vanilla and spicy apple  
over crunchy biscuits, yoghurt snow, flowers nectar and violets

belgian ale: chocolate, coffee butter, toffee, cocoa bean and black olives

\*\*\*

Drinks not included. Keep in mind that this menu might change according to season.

Accommodation in Barcelona.

8th Day

Buffet breakfast.

**Departure transfer, Barcelona airport & flight back home.**

End of our services.

***Package includes***

- ❖ 2 nights of accommodation and buffet breakfast, 5\* hotel in Madrid.
- ❖ 2 nights of accommodation and buffet breakfast, 5\* hotel in Seville.
- ❖ 2 nights of accommodation and buffet breakfast, 5\* hotel in San Sebastián.
- ❖ 1 night of accommodation and buffet breakfast, 5\* hotel in Barcelona.
- ❖ deluxe bus with air-conditioning for the following services: arrival transfer Madrid, dinner transfer Zalacain, Madrid tour with royal palace, service at disposal 3 horas Serrano street for shopping, dinner transfer Santceloni, transfer to Mercado de San Miguel + departure transfer, arrival transfer Seville, departure transfer Seville, arrival transfer San Sebastián, Arkak dinner transfer, wine tour excursion full day, Zuberoa dinner transfer, departure transfer San Sebastián, arrival transfer Barcelona + city tour, Abac dinner transfer, departure transfer Barcelona.
- ❖ English-speaking local guides for the following services: arrival transfer Madrid, Madrid tour + royal palace 4 hours, arrival transfer Seville, dinner escort 3 hours Seville, Seville walking tour, arrival transfer San Sebastián, wine tour full day excursion, arrival transfer Barcelona + city tour.
- ❖ Train ticket in first class, AVE fast train Madrid-Seville.
- ❖ Entrance tickets: Royal palace, Flamenco show, Seville cathedral, winery visit.
- ❖ Dinner at the following restaurants: Santceloni, Zalacain, San Miguel market(lunch), Flamenco dinner show, Zuberoa, Arkaz and Abac.
- ❖ Local taxes.

Flights Seville-San Sebastián and San Sebastián-Barcelona, not included in this quotation. To be negotiated with international flights to Spain.

Improving Travel SL, CICMA 2350  
Cif: B- 86467537  
C/Juan de la Cierva nº 19, 3ºC  
Arganda del Rey, Madrid, CP 28500

Tel/Fax: 0034 91 87 00 582  
info@improvingtravel.com  
www.improvingtravel.com