



## Gastronomic Navarra

Spain's kitchen garden

**26 September–4 October 2026**

**(MM 183)**

**£4,920 • 9 days**

**Speaker: Gijs van Hensbergen**

Small, special and delightfully lesser-visited, the region of Navarra is the source of some of Spain's finest produce.

Rustic lunches in hilltop villages, Michelin-starred meals at the finest restaurants, and visits to olive oil and wine producers.

Notable is the abundance and celebration of the region's vegetables, highly prized across the country.

Special arrangements include access to a private dining club in Pamplona, and the kitchen garden of one of Navarra's top chefs.

The region is as rich architecturally with outstanding Romanesque and Gothic. We balance the food with town walks and visits.

Beautiful scenery throughout, from the arid lunar landscapes of the Bardenas desert to the forested foothills of the Pyrenees.



Pyrenean landscape, wood engraving c. 1890

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Zaragoza.** Fly at c. 9.15am (Iberia) from London Heathrow to Madrid. Continue by coach to Zaragoza (c. 3 ½ hours), arriving in time for dinner. First of two nights in Zaragoza.

**Day 2: Zaragoza.** Capital of neighbouring Aragón, Zaragoza lies just 50 km from the border with Navarra. From here, trade, information and people flowed along the Ebro valley into Navarra during the Middle Ages. Roman, Arab and Christian monuments offer a snapshot of Spanish history and the various civilisations that settled here. Lunch includes recipes inspired by Juan Altamiras, a Aragonese friar and the '18th-century Ferran Adrià'. His recipe book from 1745 revolutionised Spanish gastronomy, with ideas so ahead of their time that they are not out of place today. A group of Aragonese chefs continues to pay homage to his original recipes on their own menus.

**Day 3: Tudela, Pamplona.** Drive north along the Ebro valley into Navarra. Visit an organic olive oil farm; Navarra is Spain's most northerly olive oil growing region, with a production that is smaller than its southern rivals but of exceptional quality. The floodplains around

Tudela produce the finest vegetables in all of Spain, which are celebrated above all else in Navarrese cuisine, and renowned across the country. Chef Luis Salcedo leads a visit of his vegetable garden, before we taste his exquisite produce for lunch at his restaurant, Remigio. Continue north to Pamplona for the first of six nights. Evening walk via some of the city's bustling *pintxos* bars, which rival anything in San Sebastián.

**Day 4: Pamplona.** A morning spent exploring the Navarrese capital, and walking the streets of the famous San Fermín bull-running route. Pamplona cathedral has a cloister which constitutes perhaps the finest achievement of High Gothic architecture in Spain, while the Museum of Navarra, housed within a medieval hospital, has an eclectic collection of archaeological finds and artworks. Lunch is at Europa (1 Michelin star), perhaps the most classic restaurant in all of Navarra, which has held a Michelin star since 1993.

**Day 5: San Martín de Unx, Ujué, Olite.** Today we visit several of the spectacularly-sited hilltop villages and medieval towns to the south of Pamplona. First to Máximo Abete, a family run winery that has revitalised the abandoned vineyards on the slopes around their hometown of San Martín de Unx. Rustic lunch at a humble restaurant-cum-bakery in Ujué, with sweeping views over the surrounding hills and valleys. Afternoon visit to Olite, where the royal palace served as the seat of the Kings of Navarra until its conquest by Castile in the 16th century.

**Day 6: Otazu, Estella, Eunate.** Just outside Pamplona, Otazu is a winery that combines striking architecture, an impressive contemporary art collection, and wines of superb quality, holding the prestigious *pago* classification. Continue to the medieval riverside town of Estella for some free time. Return to Pamplona via Eunate, where a mysterious round chapel with encircling arcade rises from the midst of a cornfield. For dinner we have privileged access to one of Pamplona's historic gastronomic societies, as guests of the club's president.

## Gastronomic Navarra continued

**Day 7: Roncesvalles, Selva de Irati.** Scenic drive north into the foothills of the Pyrenees. The mountain pass above Roncesvalles offers views across the border into France, and is the traditional starting point of the Camino de Santiago. The Selva de Irati is the second largest fir and beech forest in Europe. The spectacular landscapes here are home to a rich variety of species including deer, wild boar, vultures and golden eagles. On a gentle walk through the forest we observe the myriad varieties of mushrooms that grow on the mossy forest floor, before tasting them for lunch at a nearby *casa rural*.

**Day 8: Urdániz.** Perched on a hillside overlooking Pamplona, the Jorge Oteiza Museum houses a collection of works by the renowned 20th-century sculptor. Continue for a final lunch at El Molino de Urdániz, the only restaurant in Navarra to hold two Michelin stars (plus a Michelin green star). Chef David Yárnoz is at the forefront of Navarrese culinary creativity and innovation, while also showcasing local produce and traditions.

**Day 9.** Drive to Bilbao (c. 2 hours) for an afternoon flight to London Heathrow (Vueling), arriving at c. 2.45pm.

## Lecturer

**Gijs van Hensbergen.** Art historian and author specialising in Spain and the USA. His books include *Gaudí*, *In the Kitchens of Castile*, *Guernica* and most recently, *La Sagrada Familia*, and he has published in the *Burlington Magazine* and *Wall Street Journal*. He read languages at Utrecht University and Art History at the Courtauld, and undertook postgraduate studies in American art of the 1960s. He has worked in England, the USA and Spain as exhibitions organiser, TV researcher and critic and is a Fellow of the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies at the LSE.

## Practicalities

**Price. Two sharing:** £4,920 or £4,750 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £5,640 or £5,470 without flights.

**Included:** air travel on Iberia & Vueling flights (Airbus 320); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, six lunches and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; all wine and food tastings; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation.** **Hotel Catalonia el Pilar, Zaragoza** (cataloniahotels.com): modern 4-star hotel in an attractive turn-of-the-century building in the historic centre. **Gran Hotel La Perla, Pamplona** (granhotellaperla.com): historic 5-star hotel on Pamplona's main square. *Single occupancy rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** Evening meals tend to begin at 9.00pm and some late nights are inevitable, though most of the main meals are at lunch time. There is a fair amount of walking in city centres where vehicle access is restricted. Much of the area covered is hilly, and some visits require walking and standing around on steep and uneven terrain. There is a country walk lasting up to 2 hours over hilly but gentle terrain on day 7. A good level of fitness is essential; you will be on your feet for lengthy stretches of time. Some days involve a lot of driving – average distance by coach per day: 75 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.