

Wessex Continental Travel



2024

Essential Information

We are pleased to present our programme for Autumn 2024

We look forward to our 50th year of arranging travel for our discerning clientele. As we've always done, our aim is to arrange relaxing, value-for-money holidays with nice company, interesting excursions, good food and accommodation and above all, with no-hassle. As simple as that!

ABOUT US

We have been operating holidays since 1974 and we are totally independent, don't belong to any associations or have any connection with any other company or organisation.

THE COACHES

Our tours will be in modern vehicles fitted with reclining seats, toilet and drinks machines. The coaches have seat belts and most are air conditioned. The coach travels all the way (unless otherwise stated). We operate a non smoking policy on board the coach.

SEAT ALLOCATION

This is made at the time of booking. We will try and satisfy specific requests but ordinarily you will be seated in order of acceptance of booking from front to rear. We never place anyone in the back seats unless they have requested them or without notifying you that they are all that remain.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Sadly we have no control over this and usually we subsidise the rate charged to us. If you pay the single supplement you will always have a room to yourself and where applicable, a cabin to yourself. You will never be required to share.

TOUR ESCORT

On some tours we will have a Tour Escort but increasing costs have caused us to limit this aspect these days.

Their prime function is to ensure that the trip runs smoothly, they are not employed as local historical experts.

PAYMENT

We take a deposit of £50 per person for tours of at least 5 days' duration and £20 for short breaks. The balance is normally requested a month before departure.

THE SAILING TO SANTANDER

Our crossings to Spain are based on sailings on the flagship cruise-ferry "Pont Aven" and a 2-berth cabin with shower and WC is provided. On board this excellent 40,000 tonne vessel are many facilities to enhance your journey – swimming pool, live music, live cabaret, fine dining, self-service restaurant, coffee shop, two cinemas showing the latest films, shops, piano bar and sun deck.

Alternative cabin options:

A 4-berth cabin for exclusive use of 2 persons costs an extra £100 per cabin, return. If you'd like an outside 4-berth cabin it can be arranged for an extra £60 per cabin return (i.e. a total of £160 return). There are NO 2-bedded cabins on the ship i.e. cabins with 2 ground berths. If you need ground berths you have to request a 4-berth cabin for 2 persons and pay the supplement shown above. All Single Supplements include sole use of a 2-berth cabin. There are NO 2-berth outside cabins available. We cannot obtain Club Class, De Luxe or Commodore Class cabins.

THE HOTELS AND CATERING

All rooms will have private facilities i.e. toilet and bath/shower. Generally, buffet breakfast is always provided and on tours with half board, dinner is also provided usually with wine included. The wine is not unlimited and usually follows the convention of a quarter bottle of wine per person. You can purchase more if you wish.

On the vast majority of coach holidays dinner is normally a set meal for the group but dietary variations can usually be accommodated within reason. You should note that in countries bordered by the Atlantic, fish is commonly served. We limit any fish dinners to a maximum of two per tour.

Other dinners reflect the country in which we travel and we ensure that no bizarre local tastes (snails, razor shells etc etc) are served.

THE EXCURSIONS

All the excursions described in the brochure are completely free of charge.

BOARDING THE SHIPS

We have no control whatsoever of this process. We are obliged to follow the instructions of the ferry company. Usually passengers have to walk on and off the ships but sometimes this is changed without prior notice. If you have walking difficulties you must notify us at the time of booking and we will be able to ensure that you go on board in the coach.

Classic Tours

In addition to our regular programme of breaks we are planning a series of retro holidays this year in which we are delving back into the archives to select a few of our best trips from bygone years.

We dropped these holidays in recent years because the progress of cheap flights from Provincial airports made them appear expensive in comparison. However, the cheap flights rarely turned out to be so cheap when adding the extra costs involved and were certainly a lot more inconvenient than just stepping on a coach near your home or driving to the port of departure where there is easy parking.

We feel that coach holidays will come back into their own in 2023 for various reasons and one of the main reasons is no-hassle! Another point to consider is that we have never told our hotel partners what to charge. We have always accepted their price with no argument whatsoever. We use 3* and 4* hotels offering room with private facilities; breakfast and dinner with wine though on Wine Tours we take lunch rather than dinner on the estate or at a nearby restaurant.

Above all, we have strived to bring value for money. Doing holidays at the lowest cost inevitably means cutting corners which is never in the passengers' interest. Our job is to do the work, yours to enjoy and relax and we will go all out to maintain that ethos.

Short Breaks

Our nearest Continental neighbours are just 120 miles across the Channel, closer than travelling to Wales if you live in the South West but you will need a passport! For a complete change of scene and an interesting break, French-style, come with us to Brittany for a relaxing travel experience, some good food and new sights. Nothing too complicated there!

Wildlife Tours

Our modest programme of tours is based solely in Northern Spain. A Minicruise from Plymouth to Santander starts and ends the tour with an interesting variety of locations in Green Spain in between. Good company, nice hotels and good food are guaranteed!

Wine Tours

We've been running Wine Tours for over 40 years to France, Spain and Portugal. Mostly they are for private organisations such as firms, associations, wine societies but we have also had a public programme each year. Our aim is to provide an interesting holiday with friendly company and featuring an appreciation of wine, mental and physical! Importantly, it gives you the opportunity to bring back plenty of "samples", a feature denied to air travellers!

Apart from the wine, we know that fine cuisine is an essential part of a wine tour and without making a song and dance about it we incorporate this aspect within all the tours.

Private Groups

Over the years we have arranged tours for many diverse groups to various destinations. From Firms' Groups, Football Clubs, Bridge Clubs, Farmers' Groups, Marathon Runners, Golfers, Military Groups, Social Groups - you name it, we've probably done it!

Contact us if you have a group wishing to go away for a few days.

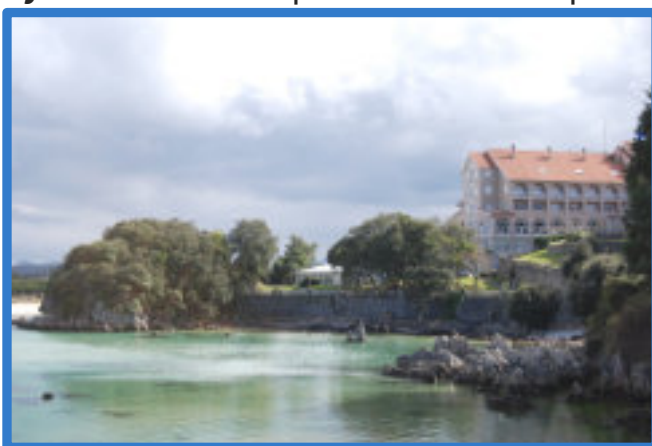
Cantabria Beach Break 7 days Spain

Cantabria is one of the four Provinces that make up “Green Spain” and our destination is the small resort of Isla about 25 miles east of Santander. This outstandingly scenic and unspoilt Province boasts golden beaches interspersed by rocky crags and behind the coastline is a land of meadows and rolling hills which ascend to the Picos de Europa mountains. Fishing, dairy farming and tourism are the main staples of the local economy.

Our hotel, the 4 Olimpo, sits on a small cliff overlooking the bay, has pleasant gardens, a small outdoor swimming pool and tennis courts. Good food, and plenty of it, is a feature of this friendly hotel*

We sail from Plymouth at 1545 on **Wednesday** and a cabin is provided. The ship has many diversions to keep you occupied such as live entertainment, swimming pool, cinema amongst others and fine dining or self-service restaurants.

Arriving in Santander on **Thursday** at 1315 we leave town and travel eastwards about 25 miles to Isla and the Hotel Olimpo. The hotel faces a large sandy beach and there is a small outdoor swimming pool at the hotel. There is also a tennis court and gardens leading down to the beach. We stay for four nights with breakfast and dinner with wine included.



After check in you'll have plenty of time to explore this pleasant coastal village. Relax around the garden area, stroll to the town centre or just sit back and have a glass of something on the terrace overlooking the ocean.

Friday - Today we're travelling eastwards to the charming fishing port and popular resort of Castro Urdiales. We spend the morning here. We'll leave in the mid afternoon and return to Isla for some free time before dinner.

Saturday _This morning we head off for the foothills of the Picos de Europa mountain range. Our drive takes us along the Pas Valley to Reinosa, a small town at the entrance to the ski slopes. After a short sightseeing stop we now drive along the side of the Ebro Dam to the Escudo Pass where we begin a stunning descent down the Besaya Valley. We'll pause at the pleasant spa village of Puente Viesgo for sightseeing and refreshment. We recommend a little walk along the river bank. Then it's back to Isla and the hotel. Dinner is at 2030.

On **Sunday** morning we drive to the port and resort of Santoña for a stroll along the

Cantabria Beach Break 7 days Spain

promenade and some sightseeing. We'll return to the hotel for lunch and a free afternoon.

On **Monday** morning we drive to Santander stopping at the Hypermarket en route to pick up essential supplies. Then it's time for sightseeing in Santander before we board the "Pont Aven" for the sailing to England at 1830.

We arrive in Plymouth at 1530 on **Tuesday** and after disembarkation the coach returns to the original pick up points.

Departure Dates:

July 3rd £595 - Sept 18th £565

(The cost includes: all travel by executive coach; ferry crossing with cabin; four nights half-board at the 4* hotel; excursions; Tour Guide.)
Single supplement- £175 : 4-berth cabin(for two) £100 : 4-berth outside Cabin (for two) £160 - NB These prices are for the cabin, not per person : (There are no 2-berth outside cabins).

Pick up points : Bath-Bristol-Taunton-Exeter-Newton Abbot-Plymouth.



Asturias Beach Break, Spain 6 days

Asturias is one of the four Provinces that make up “Green Spain” and our destination is secluded beach about 60 miles west of Santander. This outstandingly scenic and unspoilt Province boasts golden beaches interspersed by rocky crags and behind the coastline is a land of meadows and rolling hills which ascend to the Picos de Europa mountains. Fishing, dairy farming and tourism are the main staples of the local economy.

Our hotel, the 4* Mirador de la Franca, overlooks the bay, and apart from two nearby campsites is the only building. Good food, and plenty of it, is a feature of this friendly hotel. On this visit we are joined by our Wildlife group.



We sail from Plymouth at 1745 on **Sunday** and a cabin is provided. The ship has many diversions to keep you occupied such as live entertainment, swimming pool, cinema amongst others and fine dining or self-service restaurants.

Arriving in Santander on **Monday** at 1530 we leave town and travel westwards and check in at the hotel where we stay for three nights with breakfast and dinner with wine included.

Tuesday - Today we're heading into the Picos de Europa mountain range with a drive along the stunning Hermida Gorge. This comes out in the fertile Liebana Valley and we continue through the little town of Potes and thence to the end of the road at Fuente Dé. Here there is an almost vertical cable ride to the plateau for anyone interested. We linger awhile then drive back to spend the rest of the day in Potes. We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Wednesday A free day to enjoy the beach and the hotel's surroundings.

On **Thursday** morning we drive to Santander stopping at the Hypermarket en route to pick up essential supplies. Then it's a little time for sightseeing in Santander before we board the “Pont Aven” for the sailing to England at 1600.

We arrive in Plymouth at 1100 on **Friday** morning.

Asturias Beach Break, Spain 6 days

Departure Date:

May 26th 2024 £625

(The cost includes: all travel by executive coach; ferry crossing with cabin; three nights half-board at the 4* hotel; excursions; Tour Guide.)

Single supplement- £135

Pick up point Plymouth Ferryport



Southern Brittany 7 Days

Our nearest neighbours are closer to us than Bristol directly across the Channel. We've been visiting this charming Province ever since Brittany Ferries started operations on January 1st 1974 and it has never once lost its appeal. An air of calmness, tranquillity and timelessness pervades the atmosphere and makes for a very relaxing and laid-back holiday. We've been staying the Hotel de l'Océan in the southern port and resort and port of Concarneau for most of those years and have enjoyed good food and a welcoming atmosphere ever since. Over the years, the hotel has modernised and has a covered swimming pool and jacuzzi and gym for your added pleasure.

We sail to France on **Friday** at 1330 on the flagship "Pont Aven". On arrival in Roscoff we drive southwards and check into the hotel for 5 nights with breakfast and dinner with wine each day.



On **Saturday** we'll drive to Quimper where it is market day. This is an opportunity to enjoy the sounds, aromas and atmosphere of a French street market. In the afternoon we will make the short drive inland to visit the pleasant seaside town of Bénodet before returning to the hotel.

Our **Sunday** morning will be free to explore Concarneau and in the afternoon we'll drive to Pont Aven, the famous artists' town made famous by Gauguin amongst others.

On **Monday** we drive northwards to Audierne for a brief sightseeing stop and then onwards to Brittany's most westerly point, Pointe du Raz. In the afternoon we travel via Douarnenez to the medieval Locronan before returning to the hotel.

On **Tuesday** We'll make our longest excursion to the interesting city of Vannes renowned for its intrepid sailing fraternity before returning to the hotel.

On **Wednesday** is entirely free of travel and offers you the opportunity to do your own thing. Relax around Concarneau and its Ville Enclos, take a boat trip, work on your tan on the beach in front of the hotel-it's your choice!

We leave the hotel on **Thursday** and drive to Roscoff to relax, sightsee and take refreshment before we catch the 1500 ferry to Plymouth. This arrives at 2010 and the coach then returns to the original pick up points.

Southern Brittany 7 Days

Departure date

August 30th 2024

£910

Single supplement £185

Pick up points: Exeter-Newton Abbot- Torquay-Paignton-Ivybridge-Plymouth



Northern Brittany 7 Days

This is what we would consider to be the ideal foreign coach holiday-no night travel, not much driving, near at hand and interesting leisurely excursions.

*Brittany's coastline extends for 1250 km and its northern sector stretches from Roscoff to St Malo. Like its southern counterpart, it has golden sandy beaches with rocky outcrops and stunning scenery. Our chosen base is the small resort of Tréguier, not too far away from Roscoff and very popular with the sailing fraternity. The 4+ **Hotel Aigue Marine** located on the river bank and has an excellent reputation for its Michelin-starred cuisine and there's a covered outdoor swimming pool to claim your attention.*

We sail to France on **Friday** at 1330 on the flagship "Pont Aven". On arrival in Roscoff we drive the relatively short distance to Tréguier and check in for 5 nights with breakfast and dinner with wine each day.

On **Saturday** we'll drive back to Morlaix where it is market day. This is an opportunity to enjoy the sounds, aromas and atmosphere of a French street market.

In the afternoon we will make the short drive inland to visit the pleasant lakeside village of Huelgoat before returning to the hotel.

Our **Sunday** morning will be free to explore Tréguier and in the afternoon we'll drive to Perros Guirec on the "Pink Granite Coast" for a stroll by the sea.

On **Monday** we will make the short drive to Lannion where the French Satellite Tracking and Telecommunications Research centre is located. We return to Tréguier for a free afternoon.

Tuesday We'll make our longest excursion today to the major town of the Côte d'Armor, St Brieuc. You'll have plenty of time to sightsee and shop here and in the early afternoon we will leave and drive to the coastal resort of Binic for some sea airs before returning to the hotel.

On **Wednesday** we have set this day aside to enjoy a unique train ride on the Vapeur Trieux. This is an excursions from Paimpol to the lovely village of Trieux alongside the river by old fashioned steam train. En route, the train stops in the woods to have a glass of cider and a crepe accompanies by Breton folk musicians. At Trieux, you'll have time to wander into the village and then sightsee and take refreshment. In the afternoon, the coach will pick you up and return to the hotel.



Northern Brittany 7 Days

NB This service ceased when the Covid pandemic arrived and hasn't run since. We are informed that it will resume in 2024 but until we receive confirmation of this we can't guarantee it will happen and if not we will arrange an alternative excursion.

We leave the hotel on **Thursday** and drive to Roscoff to relax, sightsee and take refreshment before we catch the 1500 ferry to Plymouth. This arrives at 2010 and the coach then returns to the original pick up points.

Departure date

June 28th 2024

£875

Single Supplement £175

Pick up points: Salisbury- Exeter-Newton Abbot- Torquay-Paignton-Ivybridge-Plymouth



Costa Verde Portugal 10 days

In our opinion this is the perfect coach holiday combining as it does, a mini cruise, a trip through the mountains, a stay by a beach, interesting excursions, excellent hotels and the opportunity to see parts of Europe that few British travellers visit especially this very fertile and lush region of Portugal. The 4 hotel sits on the long, sandy beach and is an ideal base for the holiday. There are large grounds in which there are a swimming pool, tennis courts, mini golf, superb football pitch, paddling pool and inside the hotel are pool tables, table-tennis, tenpin bowling, bar, poolside restaurant and fitness centre. The comfortable bedrooms are air-conditioned and most have a balcony. The dining room overlooks the beach and each evening the main event is the spectacular disappearance of the sun over the horizon. Dinner is a buffet and offers a choice of menu and there is some form of entertainment most nights including a Folklore Show every Tuesday. The Staff are extremely courteous and helpful and, all in all, the hotel runs a most professional operation designed to give their guests the ideal holiday experience – we can't recommend it enough and we go there ourselves! The hotel has lifts.*

We leave Plymouth at 1545 on **Wednesday** and cross the Channel to Spain arriving in Santander around 1315 on the second day. After disembarkation we then drive across northern Spain and into Portugal to spend our first night at Chaves in the mountain region of Tras os Montes at the Hotel Aquae Flaviae with a superb Brazilian Buffet for dinner.

On Friday we resume our journey southwards with a short stop at pretty Amarante before continuing to the coast and our 4* resort hotel at Ofir where we stay for the next five nights.

On Saturday we travel inland to Braga which has more churches than any other town in Portugal. After sightseeing we continue to outskirts to visit the famous basilica of Bom Jesus and then return to the hotel.

On Sunday we plan a completely free day to relax and enjoy the facilities of the hotel. We recommend a stroll along the beach to nearby Apulia at lunch time to have an interesting lunch with the locals at one of the intriguing restaurants which back on to the beach.

On Monday we travel southwards to the main city, Porto. Here we will visit a Port Lodge on the river then have time for sightseeing and shopping. The "Ribeira" is in the Old Quarter and is a fascinating mix of old cobbled streets and quays along which are scores of restaurants and bars serving the freshest of local produce. The cruise ships which traverse the Douro start from here as do the harbour sightseeing boats.

On Tuesday morning we make a short drive to the port and resort of Viana do Castelo where it is market day and usually a Folklore Group will be performing in the main



Costa Verde Portugal 10 days

square. In the afternoon we drive inland to the old Roman town of Ponte da Lima situated on the river of that name.

We leave the hotel on **Wednesday** and drive southwards and then across central Portugal to the Spanish border at Vilarformosa. We stop at the lovely little town of Ciudad Rodrigo for sightseeing and refreshment. We then continue to the outskirts of Palencia where we spend the night at the Hotel La Centro Europa.

Next day, **Thursday**, we resume our drive to Santander where we catch the 1600 sailing to England. Enjoying the cruise we reach Plymouth at 1100 on Friday and then return to the original pick up points.

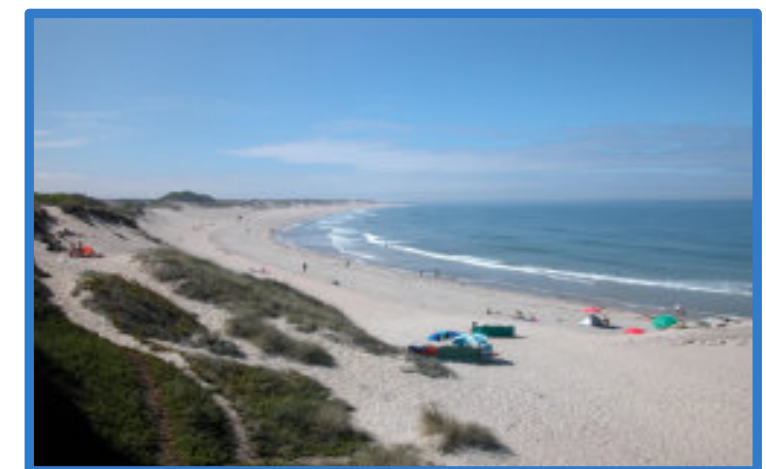
Departure date

May 22nd £925 ; September 11th £975
Guaranteed sea view £35 per room

Cost includes: travel by air-conditioned coach with WC; ferry crossing with 2-berth cabin; seven nights' 4* hotel accommodation with buffet breakfast and dinner with wine; all excursions as described; Tour Escort or local Guide.

Single supplement (room & cabin) £210

Pick up points : Exeter – Newton Abbot – Plymouth



Sancerre Beaujolais Wine Tour 9 Days

This year we are combining two popular destinations for our French visit, both of which have proved extremely popular in the past. Based first in Sancerre and then on to Macon we'll cover a great deal of ground and enjoy fine wines and typical French cuisine at its best.

We set off from Portsmouth on **Saturday** with an overnight crossing to St Malo. A cabin is provided.

On **Sunday** we drive southwards to Sancerre travelling through the Loire Valley to make the drive as interesting as possible. We will make a stop at Ackerman in Saumur for a visit and lunch on the premises. We check into the Hotel Panoramic for two nights with dinner included this evening.

On **Monday** we travel the short distance to Crezancy to visit Gemiere and taste their product. Back to Sancerre for some free time and lunch in the village then in the afternoon we drive to Domain Langlois in Pouigny. Return to the hotel for dinner.

We leave Sancerre on **Tuesday** to have a tasting at upmarket Michel Redde. From here we now travel southwards and thus to Macon and the Hotel Mercure on the river where we check in for five nights. We have dinner at Restaurant Poisson d'Or this evening.

On **Wednesday** we'll drive to Julienas and our first visit and tasting will be at Chateau Julienas. We'll then have lunch at Restaurant Chez Rose in the town and in the afternoon we resume our drive to Fleurie to visit and taste at Domaine Bourbonnierre.

This morning, **Thursday**, we travel to Chateau Jacques in the Moulin au Vent region where we'll have a tasting and then a Vignerons lunch. From here we return to Macon for sightseeing.

On **Friday** morning our tasting is at Chateau Chasselas. We have lunch at Restaurant Rouge & Blanc at Romanèche Thorins and finally we spend the rest of the afternoon at the wine village Hameau du Boeuf.

We depart Macon on **Saturday** morning and start our journey northwards. We stop at Beaune where there is a Saturday market and then we'll have lunch in Nuits St Georges. In the afternoon we resume our northwards journey to Quistreham. We catch the 2200 ferry to England and a cabin is provided.

We reach Portsmouth on **Sunday** the ungodly hour of 0645 and the coach then returns to the original pick up points.

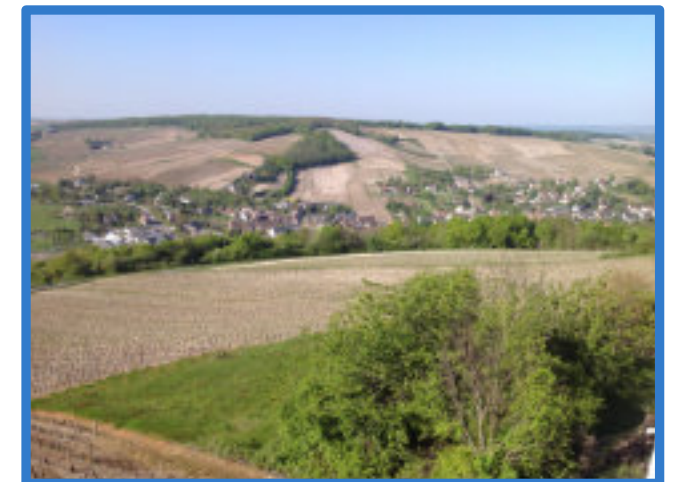
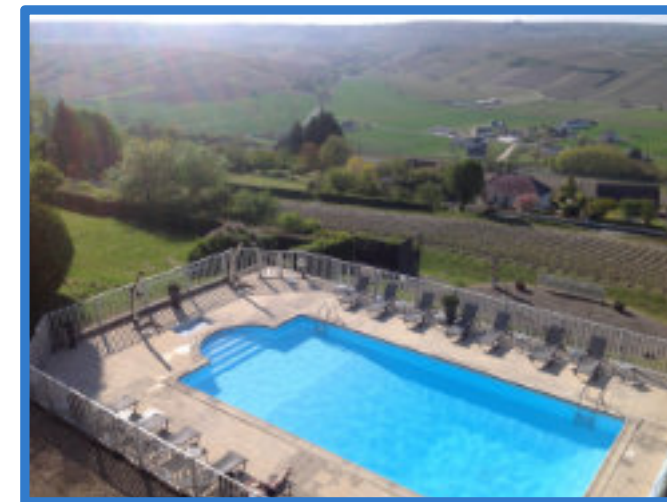
Sancerre Beaujolais Wine Tour 9 Days

(The cost includes- all travel by executive coach; ferry crossings with cabin; six nights hotel accommodation; all visits as described; dinners and lunches as described; Tour Escort)

Departure date **June 15th**

Cost **£1575** **Single supplement** **£260**

Pick up points: Plymouth-Newton Abbot-Exeter-Bristol-Salisbury-Portsmouth



Rioja Wine Tour

We are returning to La Rioja for our final wine tour of the year which has always been a popular destination for both ourselves and our supporters. A perfect welcome, good food and wine awaits, as ever, and we'd recommend early booking to avoid disappointment.

We sail from Plymouth on **Sunday** at 1745 and after you've settled in and sniffed the sea airs we'll have dinner together in the La Flora restaurant.

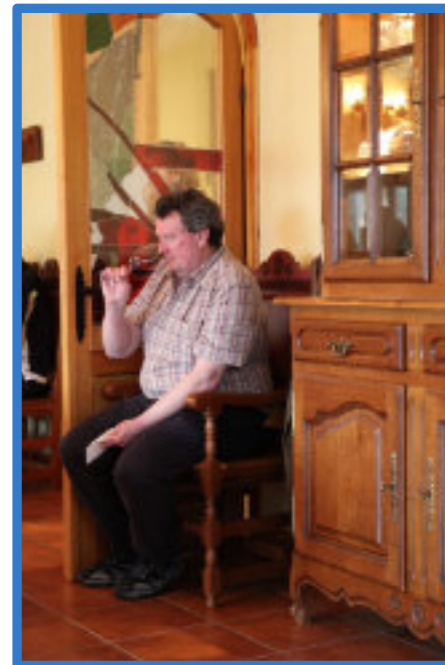
On **Monday** breakfast in La Flora is arranged and afterwards continue enjoying the sea cruise as we pass through the Bay of Biscay to Santander where we arrive at 1530. Following disembarkation we set off southwards for Logroño and anticipate arriving around 1800. After checking into the central Hotel Marques de Vallejo where we stay for 7 nights we will have dinner at a local restaurant.

Tuesday today we go east to Rioja Oriental (formerly Rioja Baja) where at 1000 we will first visit Vina Herminia for a tour and tasting (with snacks!!) and then on to Fincas de Azabache where we will have a tour and tasting followed by lunch. Another free evening to enjoy the tapas bars of Calle Laurel. Programme 1000 Visit to countryside. Sample wine with chorizo, salami and regional cheeses 1130 Visit Viña Hermina winery and tasting 1230 Fincas de Azerbache, wine tasting then lunch.

Wednesday - our first visit today is to the important wine village of San Vincente de la Sonsierra to visit Bodegas Classica Hacienda Lopez de Haro situated between the mountains and the River Ebro. From here we drive to Bodegas Baigorri in the Rioja Alavesa at Samaniego, this astonishing very modern winery sits like a glass box on top of a hill but descends into the ground through seven stories with each floor open at the centre, we will be able to see the whole wine making process from one floor. We will have a classic Riojan lunch accompanied by four of their highly rated wines. Return to hotel for a free evening.

Thursday our first visit today is to Bodega Eguren Ugarte recommended as one of the best vienyards in the World! After tasting we will have lunch on the estate before we resume our travels, this time to Cenicero and Marques de Caceres. Return to hotel for a free evening.

Friday We drive northwards this morning to Haro, generally referred to as the Home of Rioja and our first visit is to Bodegas Bilbainas in the town centre. For lunch we



Rioja Wine Tour

cross to the other side of the main road to Casalarreina and La Vieja Bodega, which is not a bodega but a restaurant where we'll have lunch. In the afternoon we visit Bodega Muga, one of the oldest and most traditional wineries with their own cooperage.

Saturday This morning we will walk to Bodegas Franco Españolas, another old establishment, over the bridge near the hotel. A feature here will be a comparison of Rioja and Ribera wines. The afternoon is free for individual sightseeing and shopping. Dinner at a local restaurant.

Sunday A leisurely day with a sightseeing trip to the capital of the Basque region, Vitoria, recently voted as one of the most desirable towns in Spain in which to live. Its main feature is two cathedrals. Return to the hotel for dinner at a local restaurant.

Monday We leave Logroño this morning and set off for the coast. We will stop in Haro en route to visit Bodegas Ramon Bilbao before continuing to the coast. Our final leg of the tour is to Santander where we catch the 1830 sailing to England. We'll have dinner together in La Flora restaurant this evening.

Tuesday Once again it's breakfast in La Flora then continue enjoying the cruise. The sea airs will tickle your appetite so we'll have lunch together for the final time before we arrive at Plymouth at 1530 and then the coach will return to the original pick up points.

Departure date

September 22nd £1825

What's included: travel by executive coach; ferry crossings with a 2-berth cabin; 7 nights accommodation at 3* hotel with breakfast; all visits as described; meals as described at sea and inland; Tour Escort

Pick up Points: Billingshurst - Salisbury - Exeter - Newton Abbot - Plymouth



Wildlife Asturias Spain

Join the group at Millbay Docks Plymouth where the Brittany Ferries' flagship "Pont Aven" sails at 1745 to Spain. Our British Guide, Paul Burley, will meet you here and escort you on to the ship and will arrange for an orientation chat.

During the crossing to Santander he will be in attendance to assist in the observations through the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, one of the World's most important locations of ocean wildlife.

We reach Spain at 1315 and met the waiting Spanish coach at the port and then we'll drive westwards into Asturias where our rural hotel, [Hotel El Tilo](#), is located in Panes on the River Deva. We check in for three nights with breakfast and dinner with wine. Before dinner, our local Spanish Guide, Javier Gil Vaquero, will come to have a chat about the programme he has devised.

On **Tuesday** we set off along the scenic Hermida Gorge to Potes, a small mountain town. Here the non-Wildlifers in the group will be dropped off as the coach continues to the end of the road at Fuente Dé. Here you'll take the cable car to the plateau in the Picos de Europa National Park at 1800m above sea level and one of the most ideal places to observe alpine birds such as Alpine Accentor, Snowfinch, Wallcreeper, Red-billed Chough, Yellow-billed Chough and many more. You'll possibly see the Cantabrian Chamois and some raptors such as Griffon Vulture, Egyptian Vulture and sometimes Bearded Vulture.



We leave here in the mid-afternoon and drive back to Potes for a little sightseeing and refreshment before returning to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

On **Wednesday** we meet with the local coach and drive through Panes and the stunning Cares Gorge to the Covadonga Lakes and the feeding centre where scavengers birds gather. In a typical day you'll expect to see Griffon Vultures, Lammergeaiers of different ages, Egyptian Vultures, Golden Eagles and Kites. We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

We depart the hotel on **Thursday** and travel back to Santander by way of the Oyambre National Park, another local attraction for bird watchers.

At Santander we board the ferry for the 1600 sailing to England. Paul now takes over the guiding responsibilities for this leg of the tour.

The ship reaches Plymouth at 1100 on **Friday**.

Wildlife Asturias Spain

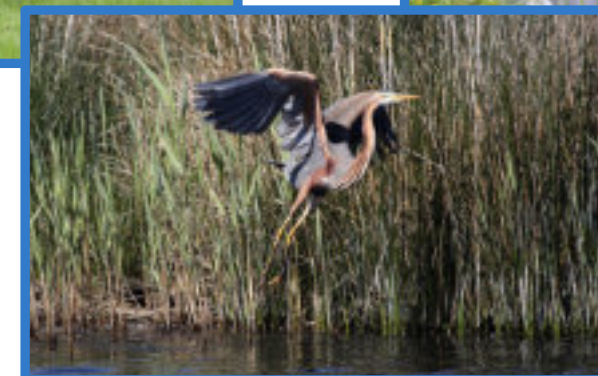
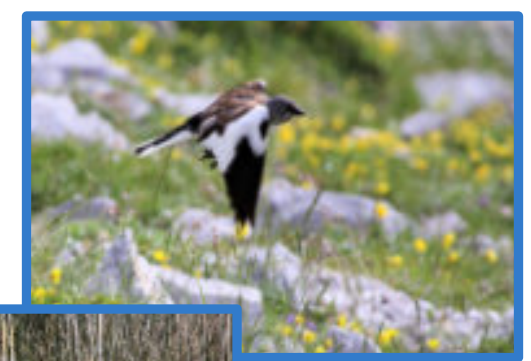
Departure date

September 1st £655

Coach travel in Spain; ferry crossings with a 2-berth cabin; three nights' 4* hotel accommodation with breakfast and dinner with wine; two Guides, British and Spanish to lead the tour, a cable car ride.

Single Supplement £135

Pick up Point Plymouth Ferryport



Montana Palentina Wildlife

We sail from Plymouth on the **Sunday** 1745 crossing to Santander.

En route to Spain we hope to see Dolphins, Beaked whales and Fin whales as the Bay of Biscay has the deserved reputation as being one of the best places to observe cetaceans. We will also be looking for Pelagic birds that can sometimes surprise us at this time of the year.

We reach Spain at 1530 on **Monday** and the local coach will now take the group to Cervera de Pisuerga and the Hotel Peñalabra for three nights. Our local Spanish Guide, Fernando Jubete one of Spain's top experts, will join us for a talk about the days ahead. We'll have a stroll around the area before dinner in a nearby restaurant.



On **Tuesday** morning we will visit the Las Loras county for a walk through the Paramo de los Franceses, a limestone plateau of great geological interest and superb for bird and butterfly watching. Numerous species of butterflies will be observed such as Apollo, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Black-veined White, Twin Spot Fritillary, Turquoise Blue as well as birds such as Egyptian Vulture, Eurasian Griffon Vulture, Tawny Pipit, Montagu's Harrier etc.

After a bar lunch in Cervera we visit San Felices de Castilleria where we'll stroll through an area of Canabrian landscape past oak groves and pastures. The target birds for the day are Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Golden Oriol, Red-backed Shrike, Common Redstart, Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian Nuthatch etc. We visit a grassland of great interest for butterflies that could result in the observation of 40 species including such as Marsh Fritillary, bog fritillary, Chestnut Heath, Pearly Heath, de Prunners Ringlet, Mallow Skipper, Dingy Skipper etc.

On **Wednesday** morning we will visit San Felices de Castilleria where we'll stroll through an area of Canabrian landscape past oak groves and pastures. The target birds for the day are Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Golden Oriol, Red-backed Shrike, Common Redstart, Short-toed Treecreeper, Eurasian Nuthatch etc. We visit a grassland of great interest for butterflies that could result in the observation of 40 species including such as Marsh Fritillary, Bog fritillary, Chestnut Heath, Pearly Heath, de Prunners Ringlet, Mallow Skipper, Dingy Skipper, etc.

The lunch will take place at Venta Pepín, a typical mountain restaurant. Then we will visit the viewpoint of Piedrasluengas, where we will walk through a beech forest where birds such as Short-toed Snake Eagle, Black Woodpecker, Eurasian Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Common Firecrest, Eurasian Nuthatch and many more forest birds.

Please note that changes to the planned itinerary may occur dependent on weather and any other unforeseen circumstances.

Montana Palentina Wildlife

We leave the hotel after breakfast on **Thursday** and travel to Santander where there will be a little time to relax before the sailing at 1600. During the crossing, Paul will be on hand to assist with the observation for cetaceans and birds as we sail through the Bay of Biscay and across the English Channel on the last day of our holiday.

We arrive in Plymouth at 1100 on **Friday**.

Departure:

June 9th 2024 £685

Cost include: Ferry crossing with cabin; all coach travel in Spain; three nights' 3* hotel accommodation; guided visits in Spain by English-speaking Spanish expert Guide; ocean guidance by expert English Guide

Single Supplement £160

Pick up Points : Plymouth Ferryport (parking available)



Castile Steppes/ Nava Wildlife

Our wildlife programmes offer some of the best wildlife watching from the open ocean to the great extensions of the Northern Plateau of Spain, renowned for its birding diversity and the opportunity to experience the splendour of the ocean. The sea element offers both cetaceans and Pelagic birds and details of sightings within the programmes will be provided within each of our 6-day holidays. In Spain our local Guide, Fernando Jubete, one of Spain's top Wildlife Guides will take over. He will make your visit a memorable experience as you join him in observing some of the best wildlife in these incredibly spectacular places. Nice hotels and good food and wine will enhance your visit!

On Sunday - Meet at the Plymouth Ferryport where we catch the 1745 sailing to Spain. A 2-berth cabin is provided and upgrades are available as detailed in Essential Information. Our Guide, Paul Burley, will meet you in the Terminal Building at Plymouth Ferryport.

We will be setting off from Plymouth and crossing the English Channel towards the Ushant on the north western tip of France. We will be hoping to see Great skua, Manx shearwater, Kittiwake, Gannets and more. We will also be looking for Common dolphins, Bottlenose dolphins, Harbour porpoise and Minke whale as these animals are frequently seen in these waters throughout the year.

The next **morning** we are in the Bay of Biscay where we resume looking for pelagic seabirds and the various whale and dolphin species that makes the Bay of Biscay one of the best places to observe cetaceans in Europe. We will be hoping to see the big whales, Beaked whales and a variety of dolphin species along with the many surprises that Biscay has to offer. On arrival in Santander at 1530 we drive southwards to Almudia to check into the 5* Hotel La Posada La Casa del Abad. Here Fernando will join you for a talk about the days to come. The hotel has a swimming pool to cool you down after a hard day's observation!

Tierra de Campos and La Nava wetland.

We leave the hotel after breakfast on the **second day** and drive to the county of Tierra de Campos where we explore the cereal pseudo-steppe for the observation of steppebirds. We will visit a lek (a place where birds gather during the mating season) of great bustards with more than 300 specimens. Other steppe birds will be observed such as calandra lark, greater short-toed lark, crested lark, Montagu's harrier or lesser kestrel. At lunch time we visit a bar in Fuentes de Nava. In the afternoon we travel to La Nava wetland. In this shallow lake we can expect to see birds such as the marsh harrier, purple heron, white stork, black-winged stilt, penduline tit, Savi's warbler, bluethroat, etc. As this is a migratory season, we can expect to see a good number of waders and gulls. We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight **El Cerrato**. On the third day we leave the hotel after breakfast and travel to the county of El Cerrato. First we visit to the village of Baltanás to follow a path through an area of gypsiferous slopes and a valley with pasture-quejigal. At lunch time we will take refreshment in a Baltanás bar. Our afternoon exploration starts from the village of Antigüedad, where our stroll will take place through an area of Mediterranean woodland with Spanish juniper, holm oak and Portuguese oak. Target bird species for the day: booted eagle, black kite, Spanish imperial eagle, European bee-

Castile Steppes/ Nava Wildlife

eater, Eurasian hoopoe, Iberian magpie, western black-eared whetear, the kla's lark, spectacled warbler, western subalpine warbler, tawny pipit, Spanish sparrow, ortolan bunting, etc. Species of butterflies targeted for the day: swallowtail, Spanish festoon, Cleopatra, western dappled white, clouded yellow, orange tip, green hairstreak, Provence hairstreak, etc. We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight

On **Thursday** we return to Santander to catch the 1830 sailing and we will once more be crossing through the Bay of Biscay to look for sea birds and cetaceans.

On **Friday** morning we will be crossing the English channel to repeat our search for birds and cetaceans. We reach Plymouth at 1530.

Departure date

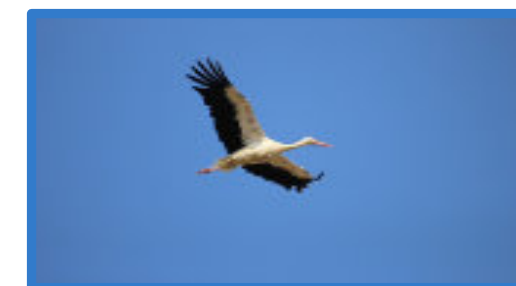
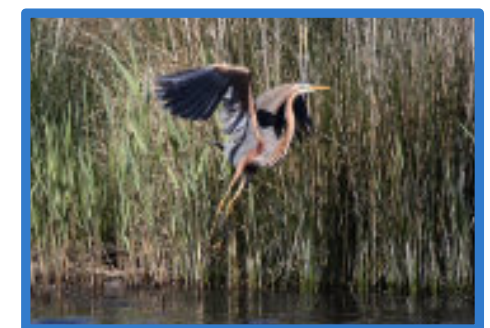
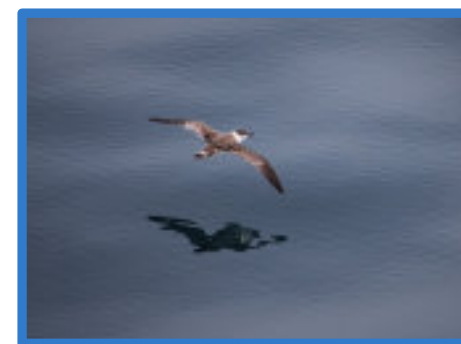
October 6th 2024

£675

Includes: Ferry crossings with cabin; coach transport in Spain; three nights 4* hotel accommodation with breakfast and dinner; Spanish and English Guides.

Single Supplement : £160

Pick up point : Plymouth Ferryport



Castile el Cerrato Wildlife

Our wildlife programmes offer some of the best wildlife watching from the open ocean to the mountain tops in the best birding areas of Northern Spain, renowned for its birding diversity and the opportunity to experience the splendour of the ocean. These a element offers both cetaceans and Pelagic birds and details of sightings within the programmes will be provided within each of our 6-day holidays. In Spain our local Guide, Fernando Jubete, one of Spain's top Wildlife Guides will take over. He will make your visit a memorable experience as you join him in observing some of the best wildlife in these incredibly spectacular places.

On Sunday - Meet at the Plymouth Ferryport where we catch the 1745 sailing to Spain. A 2-berth cabin is provided and upgrades are available as detailed in Essential Information. Our Guide, Paul Burley, will meet you in the Terminal Building at Plymouth Ferryport. We will be setting off from Plymouth and crossing the English Channel towards the Ushant on the north western tip of France. We will be hoping to see Great skua, Manx shearwater, Kittiwake, Gannets and more. We will also be looking for Common dolphins, Bottlenose dolphins, Harbour porpoise and Minke whale as these animals are frequently seen in these waters throughout the year.

The next **morning** we are in the Bay of Biscay where we resume looking for pelagic seabirds and the various whale and dolphin species that makes the Bay of Biscay one of the best places to observe cetaceans in Europe. We will be hoping to see the big whales, Beaked whales and a variety of dolphin species along with the many surprises that Biscay has to offer. On arrival in Santander at 1530 we drive southwards to Almudia where we check into our 5* Hotel La Posada La Casa del Abad for three nights on buffet breakfast and dinner with wine. Here Fernando will join you for a talk about the days to come. The hotel has a swimming pool to cool you down after a hard day's observation!

18:00 – 19:00. Visit to the hotel before dinner and explanation of the itineraries and species to be observed over the next two days.

Day 2. Villamediana.

Departure from the hotel to Villamediana.

After breakfast we will travel to the town of Villamediana, where we will enjoy a walk through an area that alternates agricultural crops with Mediterranean forest and where rabbits abound, so one of the objectives of the day will be the observation of the imperial eagle. Target bird species for the day: booted eagle, black kite, Spanish imperial eagle, European bee-eater, Eurasian hoopoe, Iberian magpie, western black-eared whetear, the kla's lark, spectacled warbler, western subalpine warbler, tawny pipit, Spanish sparrow, calandra lark, crested lark, Montagu's harrier, etc.

Target butterfly's species for the day: swallowtail, Spanish festoon, Cleopatra, western dappled white, clouded yellow, orange tip, green hairstreak, Provence hairstreak, etc.

Day 3. Becerril del Carpio.

Castile el Cerrato Wildlife

Departure from the hotel to Becerril del Carpio

The aim of this day will be the observation of rock birds, so we will go to the town of Becerril del Carpio to visit an area with limestone cliffs where species such as griffon vultures, golden eagles and peregrine falcons nest. In the afternoon, on the way back to the hotel, we will make a brief stop at the Important Bird Area of the Camino de Santiago to observe some steppe birds, such as the Great Bustard.

Lunchtime Picnic in a bar in Becerril del Carpio. Target bird species for the day: Egyptian vulture, short-toed snake eagle, eurasian crag martin, cirl bunting, rock bunting, red-rumped swallow, Iberian chiffchaff, cetti's warbler, etc.

Target butterfly's species for the day: western dappled white, spring ringlet, Berger's clouded yellow, etc.

We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

On **Thursday**, after more exploration in the area we return to Santander to catch the 1600 sailing and we will once more be crossing through the Bay of Biscay to look for sea birds and cetaceans. On Friday morning we will be crossing the English channel to repeat our search for birds and cetaceans.

We reach Plymouth at 1100.

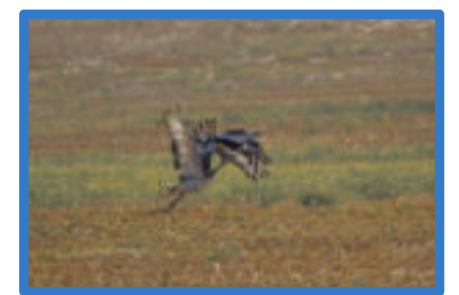
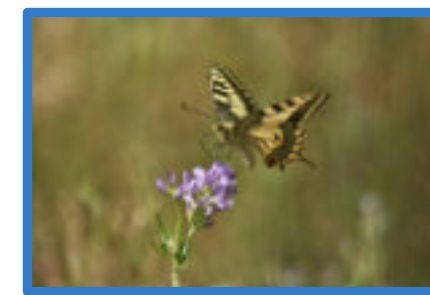
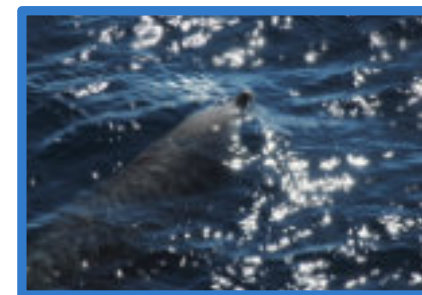
Departure Date

May 12th 2024 £645

Includes: Ferry crossing with cabin; coach transport in Spain; three nights half-board accommodation in 4* hotel; Spanish and English Guides

Single Supplement £160

Pick up Point : Plymouth Ferryport



Ocean Wildlife Cruiser 3 days

This is our version of the Spanish Minicruise which we ran on behalf of Brittany Ferries for 11 years. We've renamed it to avoid any confusion with any similar programme the ferry company operates. This version is intended to appeal to Wildlife enthusiasts who would like to observe what's going on at sea and enjoy a relaxing cruise.

The trip will be hosted by marine-life expert Paul Burley whose lifetime experiences on the ocean will guide you throughout the crossing.

The ship has many amenities to keep you occupied during the crossings such as live entertainment, cinema, swimming pool to name a few. But no doubt this is a secondary attraction to the main event!

We leave Plymouth on a Sunday at 1645 and a 2-berth cabin is provided. We arrive at 1500 on Monday . The return sailing leaves at 1800 and reaches Plymouth at 1045 on Tuesday .

Crossing the Bay of Biscay in **May** offers many sightings of Dolphins and whales, it is at this time when we often see good numbers of dolphins and also some of the whale species that are regularly seen in the bay. These include the incredible Cuvier's beaked whale, Fin whales and the chance of many more species such as Pilot whales, Sperm whales, Sowerby's beaked whale and more.

September in the Bay of Biscay is simply the best time to see Cetaceans and birds. A crossing will offer a great opportunity to witness the migration of both the birds and the great whales. Shearwaters, Skuas, and Petrels are a thrill for Birders and Fin whales, Cuviers beaked whales, Pilot whales, Stripped dolphins and many more are some of the spectacular wildlife often seen. A visit to the Bay of Biscay at this time is an absolute must for all wildlife enthusiasts.

We can't always guarantee that you'll have the same cabin on the return crossing (but usually it happens) so we advise that you travel light to avoid lugging a suitcase around the town!

Your ticket will be given to you on the day of departure by our Representative at the Port.

Departure dates

May 5th -

MAY 2-berth cabin: £210 (1 person) ; £155 (each of 2 persons) / 4-berth cabin for 2 persons : £255 (each person)

September 15th

September 29th

Ocean Wildlife Cruiser 3 days

Meet at Millbay Docks, Plymouth.



Spain with the Panama Jazz Band

Cantabria is one of the four Provinces that make up “Green Spain” and our destination is the small resort of Isla about 25 miles east of Santander. This scenic Province boasts golden beaches interspersed by rocky crags and behind the coastline is a land of meadows and rolling hills which ascend to the Picos de Europa mountains. Fishing, dairy farming and tourism are the main staples of the local economy.

Our hotel, the 4 Olimpo, sits on a small cliff overlooking the bay, has pleasant gardens, a small outdoor swimming pool and tennis courts. Good food, and plenty of it, is a feature of this friendly hotel. As we are fond of telling folks who complain about the quantity of food on offer - you don't have to eat it all!!*

We had a superb visit here with the Storyville Strutters in early April and we have had another excellent visit to Asturias with the Panama Jazz Band. It was supposed to be their final tour abroad but they, and so many clients, have requested an Autumn visit to Spain that we'd be churlish to refuse. Accordingly, we now invite you to join us in Cantabria this October when, historically, the weather has always been benign.

We sail from Plymouth on Sunday and a cabin is provided. The ship has many diversions to keep you occupied such as live entertainment, swimming pool, cinema amongst others and fine dining or self-service restaurants.

Arriving in Santander on Monday we leave town and travel eastwards about 25 miles to Isla and the Hotel Olimpo. The hotel faces a large sandy beach and there is a small outdoor swimming pool at the hotel. There is also a tennis court and gardens leading down to the beach. We stay for three nights with breakfast and dinner with wine included. The Band plays after dinner for listening and dancing.

After check in you'll have plenty of time to explore this pleasant coastal village. Relax around the garden area, stroll to the town centre or just sit back and have a glass of something on the terrace overlooking the ocean.

Tuesday - Today we're travelling eastwards to the charming fishing port and popular resort of Castro Urdiales. We spend the morning here. In the afternoon we stop en route to Isla at the resort and fishing port of Santoña before arriving at the hotel. Dinner is at 2030 followed by the Band.

Wednesday - This morning we head off for the foothills of the Picos de Europa mountain range. Our drive takes us along the Pas Valley to Reinosa, a small town at the entrance to the ski slopes. After a short sightseeing stop we now drive along the side of the Ebro Dam to the Escudo Pass where we begin a stunning descent down the Besaya Valley. We'll pause at the pleasant spa village of Puente Viesgo for sightseeing and refreshment. We recommend a little walk along the river bank. Then it's back to Isla and the hotel. Dinner is at 2030 followed by the Band.

On Thursday morning we drive to Santander stopping at the Hypermarket en route to

Spain with the Panama Jazz Band

pick up essential supplies. Then it's a little time for sightseeing in Santander before we board the “Pont Aven” for the sailing to England at 1545.

We arrive in Plymouth at 1045 on **Friday** morning and after disembarkation the coach returns to the original pick up points.

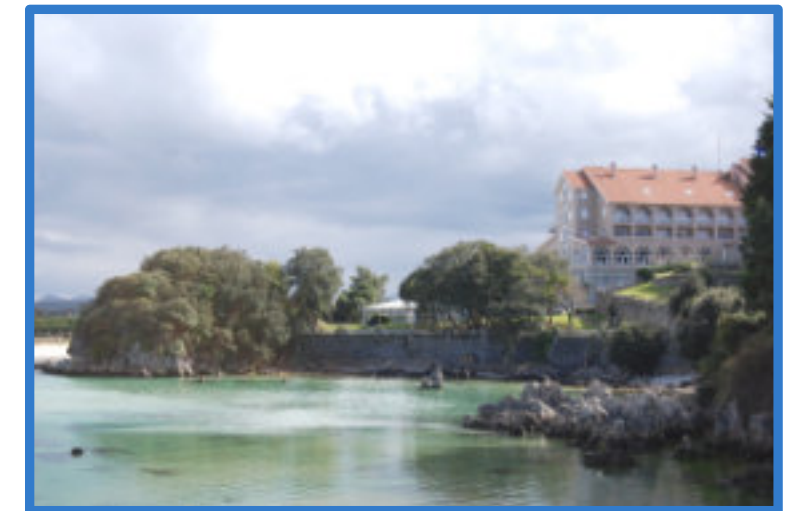
Departure date

May 12th 2024 £625

Cost include: all travel by executive coach; ferry crossing with cabin; three nights half-board at the 4* hotel; excursions; Tour Guide. Entertainment by the Band on three nights.

Single Supplement £135

Pick up Points: Bath-Bristol-Taunton-Exeter-Newton Abbot-Plymouth.



Spain with the Storyville Stutters Jazz Band

THE STORYVILLE STRUTTERS was formed in 2010 to play authentic, unspoiled early New Orleans jazz. These Outstanding exponents perform of the wonderful music of early 1900s Storyville. Their brilliant renditions of that classic repertoire are infectious and irresistibly foot-tapping. The celebrated line-up comprises: Ceri Williams, trumpet ; Andy Leggett, clarinet ; Terry Williams, trombone ; Oggi Hogg, banjo ; Keith Tolley, double bass and Paul Archibald, drums. The band's stunning singer Sinead McCabe is passionate about recalling the early 1900s songs of Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Mahalia Jackson etc. The Storyville Strutters have appeared at many jazz clubs and festivals throughout the U.K., generating smiles of happiness wherever they go, and now look forward to returning to Spain's lovely Olimpo Hotel.

We sail from Plymouth on Sunday and a cabin is provided. The ship has many diversions to keep you occupied such as live entertainment, swimming pool, cinema amongst others and fine dining or self-service restaurants.

Arriving in Santander on **Monday** we leave town and travel eastwards about 25 miles to Isla and the Hotel Olimpo . The hotel faces a large sandy beach and there is a small outdoor swimming pool at the hotel. There is also a tennis court and gardens leading down to the beach. We stay for three nights with breakfast and dinner with wine included. The Band plays after dinner for listening and dancing.



After check in you'll have plenty of time to explore this pleasant coastal village. Relax around the garden area, stroll to the town centre or just sit back and have a glass of something on the terrace overlooking the ocean.

Tuesday - Today we're travelling eastwards to the charming fishing port and popular resort of Castro Urdiales. We spend the morning here. In the afternoon we stop en route to Isla at the resort and fishing port of Santoña before arriving at the hotel. Dinner is at 2030 followed by the Band.

Wednesday _This morning we head off for the foothills of the Picos de Europa mountain range. Our drive takes us along the Pas Valley to Reinosa, a small town at the entrance to the ski slopes. After a short sightseeing stop we now drive along the side of the Ebro Dam to the Escudo Pass where we begin a stunning descent down the Besaya Valley. We'll pause at the pleasant spa village of Puente Viesgo for sightseeing and refreshment. We recommend a little walk along the river bank. Then it's back to Isla and the hotel. Dinner is at 2030 followed by the Band.

On **Thursday** morning we drive to Santander stopping at the Hypermarket en route to pick

Spain with the Storyville Stutters Jazz Band

up essential supplies . Then it's a little time for sightseeing in Santander before we board the "Pont Aven" for the sailing to England at 1545.

We arrive in Plymouth at 1045 on **Friday** morning and after disembarkation the coach returns to the original pick up points.

Departure date

March 24th 2024 £650

Cost include: all travel by executive coach; ferry crossing with cabin; three nights half-board at the 4* hotel; excursions; Tour Guide. Entertainment by the Band on three nights.

Single Supplement: £135



Wessex Continental Booking Form

Your Non refundable deposit of £50 per person should accompany this form or £20 deposit for weekend trips.

Tour Title No of Days Departure date

From 2013 it will be necessary to supply us with more detailed personal information to gain entry to France and Spain. We will need to know your full name; date of birth and nationality in order to pass this on to the Border authorities in each country. We regret this intrusion and despair at the extra work entailed but we have no choice i n the matters.

Mr/Mrs/Miss First name Surname DOB Nationality Type of Room JoiningPoint

Special Requests:

Please note the request cannot be guaranteed but will be forwarded to the Hotels etc concerned. (i.e. Cabin Upgrade; Dietary constraints)

Address to which all correspondence and travel documents will be sent:
Address:

Post code:

REMITTANCE ENCLOSED

Deposit / Full amount _____ @ £ _____ TOTAL=

On behalf of the above named persons I confirm that I have read the booking terms & conditions detailed in the current brochure. (**Please print name**)

Signed:

Telephone No: Emergency No:

Signature _____

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Signature _____

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Signature _____

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Signature _____

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Signature _____



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