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11 DAY SPAIN & PORTUGAL LUXURY CRUISE - LISBON TO LISBON

Is there a better time of year to visit the wineries and lush vineyards of the Atlantic coast? From Lisbon, sail to the sweet ports of the Douro Valley before reaching the green hills and coastal glories of southwestern France and northern Spain. Spend an overnight in Bordeaux's vineyards, then delve into Bilbao's stunning architecture, and enjoy the beaches and plump seafood of Santander and Gijon. Savor it all, as the Silver Spirit slowly loops back to Lisbon's kaleidoscopic slopes.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Lisbon, Portugal

A glorious mosaic of beauty, freedom, and authenticity, Portugal's capital is a stirring artwork of a city. Known for the seven hills it spreads across, and its stirring fado music, Lisbon is a pastel-colored blend of houses and beautiful tile artworks - and this creative city strikes a perfect harmony between natural and manmade beauty. Stroll along Alfama's steep, cobbled

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streets as you explore one of the city's oldest neighborhoods - where each house and door could be its own photograph. Look for the decorative tiles, with the distinctive blues and whites of Azulejo ceramics, and visit the dedicated museum to learn more. Afterward, wind up to Sao Jorge Castle, where views out across Lisbon's red rooftops unravel. Just one of many majestic viewpoints, you can also seek out Miradouro da Graça for perhaps Lisbon's finest panorama, with the copper-colored suspension bridge stretching over sparkling water beyond the sea of buildings. The elegant Tower of Belem rises in the Tagus estuary and is a historic defender of these shores. The grand, carved cloisters of Jeronimos Monastery spread out close by, and there's another UNESCO-recognized location close by at Sintra, where a colorful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelized custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

Day 2 Oporto (Leixões), Portugal

Steep, stacked banks of evocative buildings and cobbled streets perch scenically over the River Duoro, in this authentic, atmospheric Portuguese city. Famed for its wine and bright azulejo tiles - which turn streets into art galleries - Oporto is a charming taste of the real Portugal. Wander the uneven paths of the country's second-largest city, which are soaked with history, tradition and eye-catching details. Start in the gorgeous, historic Ribeira neighbourhood at the River Douro, and walk up through tiny alleys and narrow streets lined with restaurants and cafes. Catch your breath with a coffee, and be sure to try the famous

pastel de nata pastry as a sweet accompaniment. Enjoy views of the colourful city from the skeletal Ponte de Dom Luis I bridge. Its design might ring a bell - the structure was created by a student of Gustav Eiffel, and has a similar aesthetic to his famous tower creation. Porto Cathedral sits on a rise of steps, towering above the city and offering spectacular views down. The cloisters are a highlight - with beautiful mosaics of the renowned blue and white tiles gleaming. If you're hungry, the indulgent Francesinha sandwich will fill you up for days. A Portuguese take on French toast - it's packed full of ham and slathered in cheese, egg and sauce. Or settle in for a feast on some of Portugal's ubiquitous salted cod, Bacalhau. The climate nurtures the revered vineyards, which surround the city, helping to produce harvests of perfect grapes. Head out to landscapes coated in vineyards from the Douro Valley to try some of the finest local wines.

Day 3 Vigo (Galicia), Spain

Located in in Galicia, in the northwest of Spain on the Portuguese border, Vigo is perhaps the country's most underrated destination. Considered by many as 'just' an industrial fishing port (meaning the seafood rarely travels further than a mile to your plate), Vigo seduces everyone with its cuisine, landscape, and warm Spanish welcomes. Like many of Galicia's coastal towns, life in Vigo has been dictated by the ocean. The city dates back to Roman times and Romanesque architecture such as the churches of Santa Maria de Castrelos, Santiago de Bembrive, San Salvador de Coruxo can be found all over the city. From the 16th-18th centuries, it became alive with commercial trade and buccaneers looking for sunken treasure. The town still enjoys its status as having sunken treasure in its waters, and debates about who would own this if ever

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discovered periodically color local conversations. The old town and fishermen's quarter are worth exploring, although unfortunately with the port's rapid expansion in the 20th century, many of the original fishermen's houses were demolished. However, remnants of the city's Medieval past are still visible and a trip along the Spanish-Portuguese border will reward you with the beautiful walled Medieval city of Tui and the Velansa Fortress. The 13th-century fortress offers a splendid view of the fortified Cathedral of Tui on the opposite side of the River Miño. Mount Castro, a castle fortress actually in the city, commands a magnificent view of Vigo and the bay.

Day 4 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind, and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale-watching, catching up on your reading, or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shoreside.

Days 5 - 6 Bordeaux, France

The name alone conjures images of sun-ripened grapes, splashes of refined flavor, and the joy of clinking glasses. Bordeaux is synonymous with quality and prestige, and the promise of endless opportunities to sample the city's famous, full-bodied red wines makes a visit to this elegant French port city one to truly savor. Sprinkled with scenic, turret-adorned mansion castles, which stand above soil softened by the Atlantic and the winding flow of the Garonne River, the vineyards of Bordeaux consistently produce revered wines, enjoyed right across the globe. Explore France's largest wine region, walking through vineyards where dusty clumps of grapes hang, before descending into cellars to see the painstaking processes that

make this region a global wine center. The acclaimed, sensory experience of Cite du Vin wine museum lets you put your own nose to the test, learning more about the craft involved in producing world-class vintages. Bordeaux itself is an intoxicating blend of old and new - a fact perfectly illustrated by the Water Mirror. This living art installation has reinvigorated one of the city's most important historical sites, and it feels as though you're walking on water, as you step through the cooling mist of Place De La Bourse. The moisture generates a glorious, mirrored composition of the 300-year-old elegant palatial architecture in front of you. Water also flows freely from the magnificent Monument aux Girondins statue, where horses rear up to extol the values of the Girondin revolutionaries. Marche des Quais - the city's lively fish market - is the spot to try this wine capital's freshest lemon-drizzled oysters and juicy prawns.

Day 7 Santander, Spain

Northern Spain might not have the same allure as the Mediterranean end of the country, yet as every traveler knows, often the best places are those that are the least known. Enter Santander. With heritage hailing from the prehistoric, Roman, and Middle Ages, suffice to say that Santander's roots stretch very far back. As one of Spain's more important ports during the New World trading era, Santander enjoyed great wealth during the Middle Ages. King Alfonso 13th (1886-1941) made the city his summer residence, bringing about a further economic boom and laying the foundations for modern Santander: a popular summer resort that enjoys one of the most beautiful bays in Spain, a fantastic art and cultural hub (don't miss the Centro Botin) and a great lust for la vida. Tragically, a two-day fire in 1941 destroyed much of the city, including almost all the medieval heritage. Thus, Santander is today a city of two faces.

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One: an elegant seaside resort with at least six urban beaches, fabulous restaurants and all the fun in the sun you can muster. The other: a city with 15,000-year-old prehistoric roots that are visible in the cave paintings at Altamira or Puente Viesgo. If traveling the 30-minutes to see the real things seems too far, make sure you head to the fabulous Prehistory and Archaeology Museum of Cantabria, for extensive displays that take you on an interactive journey through time. Alternatively, make like a local and head to El Sardinero beach for a boho beach vibe that rivals Barcelona.

Day 8 Bilbao, Spain

Whether it's the flow of its boundary-pushing architecture, delights of its finger food tapas, or sweeps of gorgeous shoreline nearby, Bilbao is a city that places a premium on aesthetics. The relentless drive to all things beautiful may be a reaction to the city's industrial past, but it has led this Basque city to emerge as a new beacon of artistry. American architect Frank Gehry's masterpiece of flowing metal is the shining standout here, a perfect harmony of smooth titanium and glass, and a thrilling piece in itself. Inside the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, world-class exhibitions are exhibited in the bright, expansive interior - which practically begs you to explore more. The city has a gorgeous historical presence too. Casco Viejo - the medieval area - is its historic core, and home to the original seven streets and cathedral, dating back to the 14th century. Tall banks of colored buildings rise on either side as you walk, dwarfed by a tide of pretty facades, overflowing flower boxes, and intricate rail balconies. Plaza Nueva is Bilbao's neoclassical square, with a procession of arches all around you. Morning flea markets regularly overtake it, offering opportunities to pick through piles of coins, dusty books, and rusted antiques on the hunt for

bargains, in this most elegant setting. The titanic Mercado de la Ribera market looms tall by the river. Explore to eat your way through an endless pile of Basque pintxos - the local take on tapas. Cocktail sticks will quickly stack up as you gorge on plump olives, organic cheeses, and feather thin slices of curled hams while orbiting Europe's largest covered market. Described as a perfect blend of beauty and function by UNESCO, the Vizcaya Bridge is an unusual but spectacular piece of industrial architecture. The world's oldest, gigantic transporter crane is still in use today, swinging cars and passengers from one side of the gaping Nervion River's mouth to the other.

Day 9 Gijon, Spain

Think of the north coast of Spain and one does not immediately think of surfing and cider. But, as you approach this pretty Asturian city that is what you'll be greeted with. Gijon might not offer the sophistication of Barcelona or Bilbao, but what it lacks in world-famous museums is more than made up for by its unique cultural identity, warm, welcoming charm, and miles and miles of nature. Part of 'Green Spain, weather in Gijon is a bit more of an issue here than in other parts of the country. As with most places that benefit from lush, verdant nature, it can (and does) rain here, so be prepared and don't let that tamper the joy of the exquisite, untouched coastline that stretches from Portugal to France. Gijon dates from Roman times, and the city hosts some superb Roman baths ruins. Some parts of the old city were destroyed in the Spanish Civil War, but from there grew a more streamline city, which seems to have remained lost in the time when it was built. You don't come to Gijon expecting bright lights and big cities, you come because that is what you are trying to get away from. The city is the self-proclaimed capital of Cider, tradition being to pour the (still, not sparkling)

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drink from a great height. Gijon's cider houses, called sidrerias, are found all over the city but the best ones (or the ones with the best view) are on the edge of the Cimavilla (old town), where you can enjoy the show of the waiter pouring your drink, while listening to the rumbling of the Atlantic Ocean crashing below.

Day 10 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind, and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale-watching, catching up on your reading, or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shoreside.

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and there's another UNESCO-recognized location close by at Sintra, where a colorful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelized custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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