

# TOUR de FRANCE

Spain – Bilbao Start & Pyrenees (2023)



**"San Juan de Gaztelugatxe"**

[Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain]

# SIERRA

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## Tour de France – Basque Country Bilbao to French Pyrenees!



The 2023 edition of the Tour de France begins with a novel start in the heart of Basque Country (Spain). Bilbao, Vitoria-Gasteiz and San Sebastian will host the first three stages of Le Tour 2023. There are no major mountains to initially contend with, however, the Jaizkibel climb hugging the coastal cliffs just east of San Sebastian will be one to savour!

The TDF race organizers have been very kind as the race stays close to the Spanish/French border for Stages 4-6. A short transfer over to France and there will be the chance to showcase famous TDF destinations such as Pau, Cauterets and Laruns. This means that the second half of this cycling tour includes a number of household mythical climbs: Col d'Aubisque, Col d'Aspin, Col du Tourmalet and Cauterets-Cambasque. All of these climbs have shaped the history of the Tour de France and are iconic, epic and bucket list worthy!

The 2023 TDF Cycling Tour presented herein mixes the best of both worlds with an escape into both Spain and France. This will be the perfect trip for road cyclists looking forward to the excitement which always surrounds the first week of Le Tour!

**VIVE LE TOUR!**

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel from the heart of Spanish Basque Country to the French Pyrenees
- Test yourself on the most famous TDF cols including Col d'Aubisque, Col d'Aspin and Col du Tourmalet!
- Enjoy breathtaking views on the Jaizkibel climb (used in the San Sebastian Classic pro-race)
- Enjoy a small group dinner with legendary Tour de France commentator Phil Liggett
- Ride and watch critical kilometres from the first week of the 2023 TDF!
- Watch the official team presentation live in Bilbao
- Immerse yourself with multiple night stays in vibrant Bilbao and San Sebastian
- Relax for 3 nights in the one cycling base in the midi-Pyrenees
- Taste-test the best of both worlds as you delve into Spanish and French culinary culture!

## ITINERARY

### **DAY ONE – Thursday 29 June 2023 – Bilbao Collect (Spain)**

We will meet you all at Bilbao Airport at around 12:00 noon. Bilbao is the capital of Spain's Basque Country and with its trendy pintxo bars (tapas in Basque language) and famous museums such as the Guggenheim, there is always plenty to see and do.

Today it is all about getting ready for the coming days so there will be a meet and greet in the afternoon and a bike fitting at the hotel. We will then depart on foot as a group for a walking tour of Bilbao's Old Town followed by watching the Tour de France Team Presentation live!

**Meals:** Dinner included

**Destinations:** Bilbao

**Today's Ride:** Bike fitting

**Accommodation:** Hotel Mercure (Bilbao, Spain)

## DAY TWO – Fri 30 June 2023 – Bilbao Ride & Guggenheim Museum

Following breakfast we will depart the hotel by bike to ride sections of tomorrow's TDF Stage 1 route. This will be a great chance to get familiar with your bike and roll out the legs. In the afternoon there will be more bike time with a city bike tour and Guggenheim Museum visit. To cap off a fantastic day tonight we are lucky enough to enjoy the company of Phil Liggett as our special guest for dinner.

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Guggenheim Museum

**Today's Ride:** 30-40km & City Bike Tour

**Accommodation:** Hotel Mercure (Bilbao, Spain)



## DAY THREE – Saturday 1 July 2023 – Bilbao – TDF Stage 1 (Spain)

Today the 2023 Tour de France will commence with the stage starting and finishing in Bilbao. There are some beautiful coastal roads immediately to the north of Bilbao to enjoy so why not join us on a morning ride covering approximately 70km and 1000m of climbing. You will be back in time to watch the stage finish in Bilbao. This will be a lot of fun as the Basque love cycling and also know how to enjoy themselves! This evening we will join our local guide for a unique walking Bilbao Pintxos tour.

**Meals:** Breakfast & Evening Pintxo Tour included

**Destinations:** San Juan de Gaztelugatxe

**Today's Ride:** 70km ride / 1000m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Hotel Mercure (Bilbao, Spain)

## DAY FOUR – Sunday 2 July 2023 – TDF Stage 2 (Spain)

We depart Bilbao early by coach and head to Tolosa (1.5hr drive). The riding group will quickly prepare and head off by bike to ride the final section of today's Stage 2 which will take us through Irun and the final climb of the day before we descend into San Sebastian. The final climb just happens to be the Jaizkibel classic (8km at 5.5% average gradient)!

Non-riders will have a chance to explore the town of Tolosa before being transferred by coach to San Sebastian. Once we arrive in San Sebastian we will all watch the finish of Stage 2 live!

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Tolosa

**Today's Ride:** 80km / 1300m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Hotel Mercure Igueldo (San Sebastian, Spain)

## DAY FIVE – Monday 3 July 2023 – TDF Stage 3 – Basque Coastline

More live viewing of the 2023 Tour de France awaits you. We depart the hotel by bike to ride today's TDF stage in the reverse direction. Along the way we will see local towns set up for the race which will come through later in the day. We will stop at the coastal town of Zarautz to watch the race pass through. Once the riders and support vehicles have passed we hop back on the bikes and make our way back to San Sebastian via an inland route.

On arrival back at the hotel there'll be time to refresh before our San Sebastian Pintxos tour. The old town is always a favourite amongst our guests who travel with us to Spain. The walk around La Concha beach is not too bad either!

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Zarautz

**Today's Ride:** 70km cycling / 1100m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Hotel Mercure Igueldo (San Sebastian, Spain)

## DAY SIX – Tuesday 4 July 2023 – Transfer to Lourdes (France)

Today we leave San Sebastian, and we will make our way to Lourdes where we will stay in the heart of the French Pyrenees for the next 3 nights. This transfer from Spain to France takes about 2.5 hours so we will get to Lourdes before lunch. To make the most of the fantastic cycling on offer in the Pyrenees we will take a rest from Le Tour today. Once in Lourdes what we will do is check into the hotel and then offer an afternoon guided bike ride in the local area. In two days, the professionals will finish atop Cauterets-Cambasque (Stage 6) and this 75km out and back ride is exceptional. The first 20km follow the valley floor on a designated bike lane before the 16km climb (average 5.4% grade) up to Cambasque-Cauterets.

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Cauterets

**Today's Ride:** 75km / 950m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Gallia (Lourdes, Midi-Pyrenees, France)



## DAY SEVEN – Wednesday 5 July 2023 – TDF Stage 5 - France

We will depart from the hotel where our route will take us to the base of the Col du Soulor. From here you will tackle the classic Soulor / Aubisque double. We then ride the magical balcony road that joins both of these epic Tour de France climbs before descending down into Laruns to see the Stage 5 finish live!

The first mountain stage will begin in Pau before heading out to the Pyrenees. The stage covers 165km and the riders will take on two mountains before the finish in Laruns. Tadej Pogacar has previously dominated stages starting in Pau, but will this year see a new winner, or will he take glory once more?

Following the stage finish and podium celebrations there will be a 1hr drive back to our Lourdes base. Dinner tonight will be full of Col d'Aubisque superlatives!

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Col d'Aubisque

**Today's Ride:** 80km / 1500m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Gallia (Lourdes, Midi-Pyrenees, France)

## DAY EIGHT – Thursday 6 July 2023 – TDF Stage 6 - France

For most we will have saved the best for last! Today you will ride up the world famous Col du Tourmalet to a viewing spot near the summit. Here we will join the local passionate crowds to watch the excitement unfold as the riders come past.

These are the stages that cycling fans around the world look forward to as the peloton takes on the gruelling, relentless ascents. Up in the mountains the teams will be put to the test in a bid for glory. Rolling out of Tarbes the riders will cover 145km, starting with the Col d'Aspin followed by the Col du Tourmalet and finishing up at Cauterets-Cambasque (where we finished a couple of days ago). It's going to be an exciting stage and the challenge for the group will be one to remember and savour.

**Meals:** Breakfast & Dinner included

**Destinations:** Col du Tourmalet

**Today's Ride:** 100km cycling / 2000m elevation gain

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Gallia (Lourdes, Midi-Pyrenees, France)



# SIERRA

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TOUR DE FRANCE 29 JUNE – 7 JULY 2023



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## DAY NINE – Friday 7 July 2023 – Goodbyes

Following breakfast the guides will be available to transfer you to Toulouse Blagnac Airport by 12:00 noon. From here we will say our goodbyes before you continue on your own adventures.

**Meals:** Breakfast included

## TRIP DETAILS

**REGION:** BASQUE COUNTRY & PYRENEES

**PRICE:** From 3150 € p.p.

**TOUR DATES:** 29 JUNE - 7 JULY 2023

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:** *On request*

**DURATION:** 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

**OPTIONAL EXTRAS:**

Road Bike Hire (105/Ultegra): *On request*

**HOTELS:** Bilbao (x3), San Sebastian (x2), Lourdes (x3); 3/4 Star Hotels

### INCLUDED

Van transport (incl. arrival / departure)  
8 nights accommodation (twin share)  
8 breakfasts  
8 dinners (drinks to be paid separately)  
7 guided cycling stages with van and mechanic  
Food & drinks during cycling stages  
Pintxo Tours (Bilbao & San Sebastian)  
Meeting with the legendary Phil Liggett  
Guggenheim Museum visit

### NOT INCLUDED

Airfares & Train Tickets  
Pre or post Tour Accommodation  
Drinks at Dinner