




Cultural Landscapes of Northern Spain: from the Basque Country to Galicia 2027

1 SEP – 19 SEP 2027

Code: 22727

Tour Leaders **Dr Christopher A. Tuttle, Anneli Bojstad**

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

Explore Northern Spain's UNESCO listed Palaeolithic cave art, Romanesque monuments along the Way of St James, Fine Art Collections & the dramatic landscapes of Navarrese Pyrenees and Picos de Europa.

Overview

Archaeologist and historian, [Dr Christopher A. Tuttle](#) and author and art curator, [Anneli Bojstad](#), introduce the diverse cultural landscapes of Northern Spain.

- Explore some of the world's finest Upper Palaeolithic Art (35,000 to 11,000 BCE) in the caves of El Pendo and Tito Bustillo; we also view the facsimile of Altamira.
- Tour UNESCO World Heritage-listed Atapuerca: one of the richest and most important group of archaeo-palaeontological sites in the world, containing fossil remains of the earliest humans discovered in Europe dating from over one million years ago.
- Journey through the Navarrese Pyrenees to enjoy the autumn colour of the Irati Beech-Fir Forest; view Spain's largest colony of griffon vultures at the Foz de Arbayún; and admire the dramatic Picos de Europa with its lofty peaks, jagged pinnacles and glacial lakes.
- Enjoy a walk atop the 3rd-century Roman walls of Lugo – the finest remaining in Western Europe; and view the fine 4th-century floor mosaics of Villa Romana de la Olmeda.
- View the great Pre-Romanesque art and architecture of Oviedo and the Kingdom of the Asturias.
- Journey sections of the *Camino Francés* from Puente la Reina to Santiago de Compostela, the reputed burial-place of the apostle James, and the terminus of the Way of St James. Visit great pilgrim churches as well as a myriad other, smaller monuments including shrines, hermitages and monasteries, pilgrim towns and their hospices and inns, bridges, pilgrim crosses and museums.
- In Bilbao and Oviedo view fine art collections with works by famed Spanish artists including Murillo, Zurbarán, El Greco and Goya.
- Explore some of the best Basque avant-garde art and architecture at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Arantzazu; tour the flamboyant Capricho de Gaudí in Comillas; and study Gehry's extraordinary titanium-clad Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.
- Explore some of the 'most beautiful villages of Spain' including the mountain village of Ochagavía, the medieval hilltop town of Ujué, the half-timbered village of Covarrubias, and the coastal fishing village of Cudillero.
- In Villanueva de Pría visit a private residence, where the owners will host us for lunch and give us a tour of their magnificent gardens. We also enjoy lunch in a private palace in Elorrio.
- Journey through the UNESCO listed Rioja Alavesa Vine and Wine Cultural Landscape; enjoy wine tasting at Bodega Ysios designed by Santiago Calatrava.
- Enjoy the diverse gastronomy of Northern Spain including: *pintxos* in the Basque Country; Asturian bean stew, Galicia's excellent seafood, and Navarra's renowned fresh, high-quality ingredients.
- Limited to 18 participants

Overnight Bilbao (1 night) • San Sebastián (2 nights) • Pamplona (3 nights) • Burgos (3 nights) • Santillana del Mar (3 nights) • Oviedo (3 nights) • León (2 nights) • Santiago de Compostela (2 nights)

Leaders



Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

ASA Academic and Outreach Coordinator Archaeologist on the Hellenistic and Roman periods of the Middle East and North Africa. Former Associate Director at ACOR in Jordan and former Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. Current cultural heritage consultant for projects in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Chile, and Mongolia. He has led ASA tours in Syria, Jordan, Sicily, Greece and Turkey.

Christopher A. Tuttle is an archaeologist whose research focuses on the Hellenistic and Roman periods in the Middle East. His specialisation is the ancient kingdom of the Nabataeans and their capital city of Petra, where his fieldwork has been centred for nearly 20 years. He holds a BA in Classical and Medieval Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and a PhD from the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World at Brown University. Chris lived and worked full time in the Middle East for nearly 15 years, first in Jerusalem and then in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Initially interested in ancient mystery cults from the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods and heretical movements in Medieval Europe, Christopher shifted his area of research to the Middle East to explore the period of transition between the end of the independent Hellenistic kingdoms and the rise of Roman hegemony in Syria and the Levantine region.

His doctoral work focused on the Nabataeans at Petra, who were the last independent kingdom in the area to be absorbed by the Romans. Christopher has travelled extensively in the Middle East to explore important archaeological sites from all periods of the region's long history and has worked on a number of excavations and surveys, including in Israel/Palestine, Qumran, Ramat Hanadiv, Khirbet Jiljil, Jerusalem, Tzuba, Sepphoris, Mizpe Ramon, Mampsis, and Sobeita.

In Jordan, he worked briefly with the French at Khirbet es-Samra before focusing on Petra and its hinterlands; his excavation, survey, and conservation projects there include work on some of the major monuments, including the 'Great Temple', Petra Church, 'Upper Market', 'Garden and Pool Complex', the 'Monumental Platform', and the 'Temple of the Winged Lions', where he envisioned and launched the Temple of the Winged Lions Cultural Resource Management Initiative (TWLCRM), an award-winning and innovative grassroots project that pioneered a new model for the involvement and training of local people in the preservation and management of cultural heritage resources that affect their lives. He also co-directed the Brown University Petra Archaeological Project, which conducted the most extensive landscape survey to date in the northern Petra hinterlands, including the area of Beida (also known as 'Little Petra'), with its important remains from earliest prehistory through to the modern day. He has also assisted and advised on many other archaeological and cultural resource management projects throughout the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, as well as in Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, as well as in Egypt and other North African countries.

He is the former field director for the groundwork team surveying around Hegra (Mada'in Saleh), an archaeological site located in the Al Madinah Region of Saudi Arabia, whose remains mainly date from the Nabataean kingdom.

He was the Associate Director of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan from 2006–2014, during which time he directed field projects in Petra and assisted numerous other archaeological missions in the region. During his time based in Amman, he frequently guided archaeology tours of sites in Jordan including ASA's tour to Jordan in 2009 and 2010. He then served for three years as the Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) based in Washington, D.C.

Zoom Lecture: "The Turquoise Coast: Along the Lycian Way Part I: The Lycians", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

https://youtu.be/EgBx8KCyO_Q

Zoom Lecture: "The Turquoise Coast: Along the Lycian Way Part II: Stroll through Lycia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Caria", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://youtu.be/eD-nkpcXmpQ>

Zoom Lecture: "Uncovering the ancient Cycladic Culture: Part I: Early Cycladic periods (3100-2000 BCE)", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gddH61tH5wc>

Zoom Lecture: "Uncovering the ancient Cycladic Culture: Part II: Middle to Late Cycladic periods (2000-1000 BCE)", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://youtu.be/7aEPH9nBGCE>

Zoom Lecture: "The Nabatean Kingdom: Part I: An Historical Overview of Who, Where, When", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhSVSIGMGAY>

Zoom Lecture: "Princes, Pirates and Pilgrims along Turkey's Turquoise Coast", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://youtu.be/ui85SSHA17g>

Zoom Lecture: "Jordan: West Asia's Historical Junction", by Dr Christopher A. Tuttle

<https://youtu.be/GZ10O1hiD6M>



Anneli Bojstad

Author and curator Anneli has lived & worked in Spain for the past 36 years, dividing her time between Madrid and Andalucía. She obtained a BA in Art History (Stockholm University) and a MA in Hispanic Studies (Complutense University, Madrid). Anneli has hosted ASA's tours to Spain since 2008.

Christopher has been fascinated by the ancient world since the age of four, when he saw an exhibition of objects from Pompeii. That led (some time later) to a Ph.D. in Classics, looking at the interaction between religion and philosophy in sixth century BC Greece. Christopher has a particular interest in understanding how people make sense of the world, whether through religion, philosophy, story-telling, art or architecture. He is an Adjunct Lecturer at La Trobe University and has previously lectured in Classics at Melbourne and Monash Universities.

In 2002, Christopher set up the University of Melbourne's popular Classics Summer School and ran it for 15 years. In 2018 he began teaching with the Hellenic Museum Summer School (www.hellenic.org.au/summer-school). Christopher's summer schools provide short courses on ancient Greece and Rome for the general public each January. Participants particularly enjoy his relaxed but enthusiastic and thought-provoking style and the summer school have become an annual fixture for many people.

Christopher has also been involved with some less traditional means of bringing the ancient world alive for modern audiences. He was an academic advisor for the Hellenic Museum's Retrial of Socrates, which featured prominent barristers arguing about Socrates' guilt before a panel of Supreme Court and County Court judges. He worked on the ABC's award-winning website *Winged Sandals*, which brings ancient myths to life for modern children. A highlight of that for Christopher was developing an interactive recreation of the Delphic oracle. He also runs regular Socratic discussion groups, where people use the techniques of the ancient philosopher Socrates to discuss modern issues.

Christopher first joined ASA as a tour lecturer in 2016. His tours include *An Adriatic Journey: from Trieste to Dubrovnik* (2016-2019) and *Cyprus: Civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean* (2023-2024). In 2025 he co-leads ASA new tour *Andalucía: Cultural Landscapes of Southern Spain*.

Combine this tour with

Silver Coast and Golden River: Art, Architecture & Culture of Portugal 2027

24 SEP – 11 OCT 2027



Itinerary

Draft Itinerary currently under preparation

The following itinerary describes a range of sites which we plan to include. **Some** are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & dinners indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Bilbao – 1 night

Day 1: Wednesday 1 September, Arrive Bilbao

- Tour commences at 10am in the foyer of the hotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
- Museo de Bellas Artes
- Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 10am in the foyer of the hotel.

Following a short meeting, we commence our tour of Bilbao with a visit to Gehry's extraordinary titanium-clad Guggenheim Museum, whose design took inspiration from the city's long maritime history.

Nearby we also visit the Museo de Bellas Artes whose fine collection includes works by Murillo, Zurbarán, El Greco, Goya and Van Dyck; contemporary art, featuring works by Gauguin, Francis Bacon and Anthony Caro; and Basque art, with works of the great sculptors Jorge Oteiza and Eduardo Chillida.

This evening, we enjoy a welcome dinner at a restaurant located in city's old quarter, known as the Casco Viejo. (Overnight Bilbao) D

San Sebastián – 2 nights

Day 2: Thursday 2 September, Bilbao – Oñati – Arántzazu – Elorrio – San Sebastián

- Oñati
- The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Arántzazu
- Lunch in a private palace in Elorrio

Today we journey through the Basque countryside to San Sebastián, the capital of the province of Gipuzkoa. We begin with a visit to the medieval town of Oñati, celebrated for its well-preserved historical architecture. Important monuments include the parish church of San Miguel, which is of Gothic-style construction with a Renaissance tower; the 16th-century Bidaurreta Monastery which combines Gothic, Renaissance and Mudéjar elements; and the Renaissance jewel, Sancti Spiritus University.

From Oñati we journey ten kilometres south, to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Arántzazu, a Franciscan church built on the edge of a cliff, deep in the Aikorri Mountains. The original 14th-century church was built on the site, where according to legend, the Virgin Mary showed herself to a shepherd in a hawthorn bush. The current basilica, designed by the famous Spanish architects, Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza and Luis Laorga, in 1951, is considered a masterpiece of Basque avant-garde architecture. The basilica also features work by prominent Basque modern artists including 14 apostles by sculptor, Jorge Oteiza; iron gates by Eduardo Chillida, also a sculptor notable for his abstract works; stained-glass windows by Xabier Álvarez de Eulate, a Franciscan friar and artist; and paintings by Néstor Basterretxea and Lucio Muñoz.

We continue to Elorrio, a heritage-listed town, which sits strategically in the Duranguesado Valley where three historical regions of the Southern Basque Country meet. The town was originally surrounded by a stone wall with six gates, of which two remain today. On top of the Kanpokale Gate are the coat of arms of Castile and León, Aragón and Sicily, indicating that the gate dates before the conquest of Granada. The earliest houses in Elorrio were built of wood. Following a fire in 1480, medieval tower houses were built which were gradually replaced by palaces and grand ancestral houses in the 17th and 18th centuries. These traditional Basque buildings, constructed from ashlar stone, reflect the town's wealthy past, which was boosted by trade with the American colonies and weapon manufacturing in the 16th and 17th centuries. We enjoy lunch in a private palace, hosted by its owners, before continuing our journey to San Sebastián. (Overnight San Sebastián) BL

Day 3: Friday 3 September, San Sebastián

- Orientation walk of Sebastián
- San Telmo Museoa
- Afternoon at leisure

This morning we enjoy an orientation walk of Spain's gastronomic capital which sweeps around one of the finest beaches on the northern coast. A feature of San Sebastián is its stunning Belle Époque architecture which developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the city became the summer residence of the Spanish Royal Family and a popular resort for the European aristocracy.

We also visit the San Telmo Museoa, considered one of the best museums in the Basque country, whose collection explores the region's history and culture. There are also murals by local artist José María Sert with

stylized depictions of key scenes from Basque history.

The remainder of the day is at leisure for you to explore the city's historical architecture and Moneo's arts centre. (Overnight San Sebastián) B

Pamplona – 3 nights

Day 4: Saturday 4 September, San Sebastián – Olite – Ujué – Pamplona

- Palacio Real, Olite
- Lunch in the medieval village of Ujué
- Orientation walk of Pamplona

Today we drive south, past the Aralar Range, into Navarra where we visit a famous royal castle. Olite was the favourite residence of the kings of Navarra in the fifteenth century. This kingdom, which straddled the Pyrenees, adopted French tastes and customs. Charles III of Navarre, who commissioned the castle of Olite in 1406, had been Count of Evreux before inheriting the crown. His French origins are reflected in the layout of the castle, whose spacious interiors – especially galleries and courtyards – are unlike the cramped spaces of massive fortresses of the thirteenth century. This castle marks a transition to the Gothic palaces of the sixteenth century.

From Olite we continue to the spectacularly sited, hilltop village of Ujué which is included in the list of 'the most beautiful villages in Spain'. The medieval village is dominated by the 12th-century fortified church of Santa María de Ujué which is listed as a National Monument. The church is a fine example of Romanesque architecture with Gothic additions. Interred in the church is the heart of Charles II of Navarra.

Following a rustic lunch at a local restaurant and time to explore the village's medieval streets, we drive to the capital of Navarra, Hemingway's city, Pamplona.

In the evening, we take an orientation walk via some of the city's bustling *pintxos* bars, which rival those in San Sebastián. (Overnight Pamplona) BL

Day 5: Sunday 5 September, Pamplona – Puente La Reina – Eunate – Pamplona

- Puente la Reina: Roman Bridge, Iglesia de Santiago & Iglesia del Crucifijo
- Iglesia de Santa Maria de Eunate
- Afternoon at leisure

Santiago de Compostela is located in the extreme north-west of Spain near Iria Flavia, the ancient capital of Galicia. It became arguably the third most important place of pilgrimage in medieval Christendom after the Holy Land and Rome. In the 11th and 12th centuries thousands of pilgrims took the route to Santiago stopping at Saints' shrines along the way. The pilgrim's guide in the *Codex of Callixtus* gives four routes from the north-east, centre and north-west of France. These became two, one passing through the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles and the other at Somport. They converged at Puente la Reina and then a single route, the *Camino Francés* flowed westward through Logroño, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Belorado, Burgos, León, Astorga, Ponferrada, Villafranca and Mellid to Santiago.

This morning we visit a number of interesting pilgrim monuments along the route to Santiago. The town of Puente la Reina preserves almost exactly the form of a pilgrim village with medieval houses flanking the pilgrims' way, which leads to one of the finest pilgrim bridges in Spain (from which the town takes its name).

Many of the buildings in Puente la Reina attest to the presence of the Knight Templar including the convent of the Reparadoras (an old templar hospital) and the Iglesia del Crucifijo. The later features a beautiful Romanesque façade with rich ornamentation. While its original construction is attributed to the Knights Templar, it later passed into the hands of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. It consists of two naves, one Romanesque and the other Gothic. The interior features a large Gothic carving of the Crucifix in the shape of a "Y". Legend has it that German pilgrims donated the carving to the church upon returning from Santiago de Compostela in gratitude for the care they received at the local pilgrim's hospital.

Along the main street also lies the Iglesia de Santiago which was built in the 12th century and later extended in the 15th century. The portico and the chapter room still remain from the original Romanesque church. The interior of the church contains a famous Gothic carving of Santiago "beltza", (meaning black in Basque), named for its dark colour.

We shall then visit Our Lady of Eunate, thought to be one of three surviving funerary churches along the way of St James. An unusual arcade surrounds this centrally planned masterpiece, suggesting that its architect was attempting to copy either the temple or the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Next to the church is a tiny pilgrims' hospice built by the Order of St John, which retains its original function.

The city of Pamplona is renowned throughout the world for the festival of the running of the bulls, is thought to have been founded by Pompey, from whom it is believed to derive its name. It was taken briefly by the Muslims in the eighth century but they were expelled by the Emperor Charlemagne, who dismantled the city's walls. In revenge, the Basques ambushed and massacred the rearguard of his army, giving rise to the great French epic, *The Song of Roland*.

The afternoon is free for you to explore Pamplona at leisure. You may wish to visit Pamplona's Gothic cathedral, which holds Charles III's alabaster tomb (1416). The cathedral's Gothic cloister has particularly fine Gothic tracery and the Diocesan Museum holds a very famous reliquary, that of the Holy Sepulchre, which was given to the cathedral by St Louis (Louis IX of France). The present cathedral took the place of a very important earlier Romanesque building. The capitals from this cathedral were an important development of sculpture in many shrines along the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela. (Overnight Pamplona) B

Day 6: Monday 6 September, Pamplona: Day excursion to the Navarra Pyrenees

- Beech-Fir Forest of Irati: Autumn Forest Trail
- Medieval mountain village of Ochagavía, Salazar Valley
- Foz de Arbayún and Foz de Lumbier

We depart early this morning for a journey through the Navarrese Pyrenees. Our route takes us to the Irati Forest, the second largest Beech-Fir Forest in Europe; the mountain village of Ochagavía; and the Natural Gorges of Arbayún and Lumbier.

In Navarra, autumn is a season of incredible brilliance. We will enjoy an easy walk through the Irati Forest to enjoy the golden, dun, red and ochre leaves which should be at the height of their splendour.

Next, we continue to Ochagavía, considered the most beautiful village in Navarra. The village, set in the Salazar Valley at the confluence of the Anduña and Zatoya rivers, is surrounded by a green landscape of mountains and dense forests. It features cobblestone streets, old houses and a medieval bridge. Of particular interest are the medieval palaces of Urrutia and Iriarte and the Church of San Juan Evangelista.

Following lunch in the village we continue to the viewpoints over the Foz de Arbayún and Foz de Lumbier – two spectacular gorges which are known for their colony of birds of prey. The Foz de Arbayún has the largest colony of griffon vultures in Spain, which can almost always be seen. (Overnight Pamplona) BL

Burgos – 3 nights

Day 7: Tuesday 7 September, Pamplona – Estella – Torres del Río – Laguardia – Burgos

- Estella: Iglesia San Miguel and the Palace of the Kings of Navarra (exteriors)
- Torres del Río: Iglesia del Santo Sepulcro
- Laguardia: Santa María de los Reyes & medieval ramparts
- Wine Tasting at Bodega Ysios

Today we travel west from Pamplona to Burgos, following a popular segment of the *Camino Francés* (The French Way). The route passes through several historic towns, offering a mix of terrain including rolling hills and vineyards of the La Rioja wine region.

At Estella, which probably derives its name (Spanish *estrella*) from the star which indicated Saint James' sepulchre to the hermit Pelaio, we shall see the pilgrim church of San Miguel with portal sculptures which narrate the life of Christ in vivid style, and the facade of the 12th-century Palace of the Kings of Navarra, one of the finest examples of Romanesque civic architecture in Europe.

At Torres del Río there is a second funerary church with an octagonal ground plan. The church was built by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and was probably based on the original in Jerusalem. A vault of the type used by the Muslims in Spain in such monuments as the mosque at Córdoba seems to indicate the hand of Mudéjar builders (Muslims working for the Christians).

Midday we continue our journey through the undulating plains of the wine-growing region of La Rioja-Alavesa to the medieval village of Laguardia. Following lunch at a local restaurant we will view one of Spain's very few painted Gothic portals at Santa María de los Reyes. The door centres on a lovely, lifelike effigy of La Virgen de los Reyes (Virgin of the Kings), sculpted in the 14th century and painted in the 17th century by Ribera. The village is perched on a hillock within a circuit of fortified walls. There will be time at leisure to enjoy a walk along the ramparts.

Just outside Laguardia we enjoy a wine tasting at Bodega Ysios. This modern winery, designed by Santiago Calatrava, features an undulating aluminium roof which mimics the shape of the surrounding mountains.

In the late afternoon we continue our drive to Burgos. Burgos played an important role in the early military campaigns that slowly won back Spain from the Muslims (711-1492). The city is believed to have been founded by Diego Porcelos, who around 884 built a fortress there. Muslim raiders followed rivers like the Arlanzón into the heartlands of their enemies and it was as a check to invasion that Diego's fortress was constructed. The city that developed around it remained subject to the kings of León until 926. Burgos then became the capital of Castile until 1087 when Alfonso VI moved his capital to Toledo. Its fortunes were revived in the 15th century when it was a centre for the export of wool to Flanders. Flemish and German artists in consequence travelled south to Burgos and designed many of its opulent chapels and shrines. (Overnight Burgos) BL

Day 8: Wednesday 8 September, Burgos – Covarrubias – Santo Domingo de Silos – Burgos

- Medieval village of Covarrubias

- Abadia de Santo Domingo De Silos
- Catedral de Burgos
- Real Monasterio de las Huelgas

This morning we travel south to the charming medieval village of Covarrubias, one of the best examples of typical Castilian town planning with arcaded streets and half-timbered houses; and the monastery of S. Domingo de Silos. A monastery existed on this site from Visigothic times but was destroyed by the Arabs and a second building was erected in 919 when the area was wrested from the Emir of Córdoba. It became a great centre of Christian revival under Navarra's St Dominic. The cloister has two storeys with capitals with delicate, mysterious and symbolic plant motifs, suggesting oriental, Byzantine or Persian influences. There is also an early 18th century (1705) pharmacy in the building.

We return to Burgos for lunchtime at leisure and then visit its UNESCO World Heritage-listed Gothic cathedral (begun 1221) to see its splendid portal sculptures, vaults, cloisters, chapels and the coffer of El Cid.

The Real Monasterio de Las Huelgas (Cistercian, 1187) became the pantheon of the kings of Castile. Its architectural style is English and its interior has Muslim decorative motifs of exquisite detail. A treasure of this monastery is a banner captured from the Muslim army at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). It also holds a unique collection of court garb retrieved from the Castilian royal tombs. A number of these are decorated with Muslim motifs and are probably of eastern manufacture. (Overnight Burgos) B

Day 9: Thursday 9 September, Burgos – Atapuerca – Burgos

- UNESCO World Heritage-listed Atapuerca: Sites of Sima del Elefante, Galería and Gran Dolina
- Lunch in Atapuerca
- Experimental Archaeology Centre of Atapuerca (CAREX)
- Museo de la Evolución Humana

This morning we drive to Atapuerca, one of the richest and most important group of archaeo-palaeontological sites in the world. This karst complex contains more than 4kms of caves filled with sediments dating from the Early Pleistocene to the Bronze Age. Currently human fossils have been recovered from six sites, dating as far back as 1.4 million years ago. Our tour includes a visit to three of these sites: Sima del Elefante, Galería and Gran Dolina. Sima del Elefante ("Pit of the Elephant") contains the earliest evidence of humans in western Europe — fragments of a jawbone and teeth date to 1.1–1.2 million years ago. Gran Dolina, which contains human remains dating to about 800,000 years ago, have been ascribed to a new species, *Homo antecessor*, that represent the last common ancestor of Neandertals and modern humans. At Galería, amongst numerous faunal and floral fossils, jaw and skull fragments which belong to *Homo heidelbergensis*, date to between 600,000 and 400,000 years.

Following lunch at a local village restaurant, we take a guided tour of CAREX, an outreach facility which focuses on experimental archaeology, which generates knowledge about the way tools, huts, cloth, pottery and works of art were made and used in the past.

In the late afternoon we visit the Museum of Human Evolution. This is an exceptional museum which displays major finds from the sites of Atapuerca, among which the human remains of *Homo antecessor* and *Homo heidelbergensis* stand out. There is also a stunning display on "Biological Evolution" of human beings, narrating the origin of the theory of evolution through Darwin and the journey of the *Beagle*. (Overnight Burgos) BL

Santillana del Mar – 2 nights

Day 10: Friday 10 September, Burgos – Aguilar de Campoo – Villanueva de Pría – Santillana del Mar

- Aguilar de Campoo
- Lunch and private gardens, Villanueva de Pría
- Renaissance town of Santillana del Mar

This morning we depart Burgos and journey north to the town of Villanueva de Pría located on the rugged coast of Asturias. En route we make a brief stop at Aguilar de Campoo, a small town located on the St James' Northern Way (Ruta del Besaya). The town is dominated by a 12th-century castle, perched on a rock above.

In Villanueva de Pría we visit a private residence where the owners will host us for lunch and give us a tour of their magnificent gardens.

We spend the early evening exploring the beautiful town of Santillana del Mar with its golden stone buildings dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Santillana is a contraction of St Juliana, whose relics were held in a local monastery. The town grew to be an important pilgrimage centre and then, as the capital of a marquisate, was adorned with lovely aristocratic mansions. The town is one of the most intact and least touched in Europe. (Overnight Santillana del Mar) BLD

Day 11: Saturday 11 September, Santillana del Mar – Altamira – Comillas – El Pendo – Santillana Del Mar

- Museo de Altamira: facsimile of Altamira Upper Palaeolithic cave art
- Comillas: Palacio de Sobrellano (exterior) & Capricho de Gaudí
- Cueva El Pendo: UNESCO World Heritage Site

This morning, we visit the Museo de Altamira which contains a remarkable facsimile of the original cave. Approximately 35,000 to 11,000 years ago, during the Ice Age, huge flocks of Bison and other wild animals roamed this region. Ancient hunters depicted these animals with a vivid realism which astounds modern art historians. There are bison depicted asleep, stretching, crouched and galloping, as well as other animals like wild boar and an interesting stocky primitive horse. As the icecap receded, the flocks moved north and the great paintings ceased to be made. Archaeologists cannot say for sure what happened to the Magdalenian period hunters.

The town of Comillas is indebted to the first Marqués de Comillas (1817-83) who commissioned leading Catalan Modernista architects to enliven his hometown. Following time at leisure for lunch we take an architectural walking tour to view the exterior of the Palacio de Sobrellano, designed by Joan Martorell; and the flamboyant, Capricho de Gaudí. The later, one of Gaudí's earliest works (1883-1885), was built for a music-loving aristocrat. It features a tower clad with ceramic bands of alternating sunflowers and green leaves. The interior includes *artesonado* ceilings, stained-glass windows and intricate wrought iron balconies.

In the afternoon we drive to the heart of the Camargo Valley where we visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cueva El Pendo whose paintings date from around 20,000 BCE. The main panel, known as the 'Great Frieze of El Pendo', measures 25 metres in length and features some twenty figures painted in red. There are also numerous animal figures including a cluster of 8 hinds, 12 deer, a goat, a horse and various other symbols, all drawn using the contour technique. (Overnight Santillana del Mar) B

Oviedo – 3 nights

Day 12: Sunday 12 September, Santilana del Mar – Ribadesella – Cudillero – Oviedo

- Paleolithic Rock Art at the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cueva de Tito Bustillo, Ribadesella
- Village of Cudillero & Quinta de los Seglas

We depart early this morning and journey west along the north coast to Ribadesella, where we visit the Cueva de Tito Bustillo, containing one of the world's greatest collections of Upper Paleolithic cave art. We will walk past impressive stalagmites and stalactites to reach the cave's main decorated panel which features painted figures of horses and reindeer using a combination of red, black and rare purple pigment.

After lunch we continue our journey along the coast to Cudillero, a small fishing village, also included in the list of the 'most beautiful villages of Spain'. Conceived as an amphitheatre-shaped village in the 13th century, Cudillero was painted by its fishermen, who used the same colour as their boats to paint the façades of their homes. On the edge of the village lies the Quinta de Selgas. This palace complex was built between 1880 and 1895 by brothers Ezequiel (1828–1909) and Fortunato Selgas (1839–1921), who belonged to a wealthy family in Cudillero. The palace is home to the Fundación Seglas-Fagalde containing an important art collection including works by Goya, El Greco and Rubens, and is surrounded by well-tended French, English and Italian gardens. (Overnight Oviedo) B

Day 13: Monday 13 September, Oviedo – Picos de Europa National Park – Cangas de Onís – Oviedo

- Picos de Europa National Park: Basílica de Covadonga & optional walk around Lago de Enol and Lago de la Ercina
- Roman Bridge, Cangas de Onís:

In 722, just eleven years after an army of Arabs and Berbers crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and defeated the king of the Visigoths at the Battle of Guadalete, Pelayo, founder of the tiny kingdom of the Asturias, won a battle against a Muslim force at Covadonga. Although in reality it was probably a mere skirmish, this defence of the nascent Christian kingdom protected by the great Cantabrian Range has been celebrated ever since as the first important event in the gradual 'reconquest' of Muslim Spain which culminated in Isabella and Ferdinand's taking of Granada (1492).

Today we journey into the awe-inspiring mountain range called the Picos de Europa. The Basilica de Covadonga, which we visit, alongside the cave where pilgrims venerate the statue of La Santina, is a place of worship and pilgrimage for the people of Asturias. It is located in an impressive mountain setting; there will be time to enjoy the magnificent panorama of lofty peaks and huge, jagged pinnacles. There will also be the option to take a one-hour guided walk around two beautiful glacial lakes: Lago de Enol and Lago de la Ercina.

From Covadonga we return to Oviedo via the small town of Cangas de Onís which originally situated on a Roman road and has a distinctive Roman hump-backed bridge. (Overnight Oviedo) BL

Day 14: Tuesday 14 September, Oviedo

- San Miguel de Lillo & Palacio de *Santa María de Naranco*
- San Julián de los Prados
- Catedral de San Salvador & UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cámara Santa
- Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias

We are now in the region which gave birth to Spain's first medieval Christian realm, the Kingdom of the Asturias, founded almost immediately after Muslim armies from north Africa had devastated the Visigothic Kingdom of Iberia. The Asturias is consequently a treasure house of early medieval Spanish architecture which forms a bridge between earlier Visigothic forms and the Romanesque style of the pilgrim route to Santiago.

Today we begin with a visit to two tiny, exceedingly rare Visigothic churches, Santa María de Naranco (842-50), thought to have been the audience hall of the palace of King Ramiro I of the Asturias, and S. Miguel de Lillo, which was originally the palatine chapel. Only these two fine churches remain of the original palace complex. We also visit the church of San Julián de los Prados which is an extremely fine example of Asturian art of the first half of the ninth century.

Oviedo is the ancient capital of the kingdom of the Asturias, the first Christian realm founded after the Muslim invasion. Founded in 757 by Fruela I, it remained the kingdom's capital until the court removed to León (1002). Midday we return to the city centre to visit Oviedo's fine Gothic cathedral and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cámara Santa (Holy Chamber), a pre-Romanesque chapel begun in the 8th century by Alfonso II of Asturias to house important relics. Masterpieces of the collection include the *Cruz de los Angeles* presented to the cathedral by Alfonso II in 808 CE; and the *Cruz de la Victoria*, the emblem of Asturias, donated by Alfonso III in 908 CE.

In the afternoon we visit the Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias, one of Spain's most important provincial art museums. Founded in 1980, the museum is housed in two of the city's finest palaces and a modern wing. The collection includes paintings by the most important Asturian and Spanish artists of the 14th to the 21st century including El Greco, Ribera, Zurbarán, Murillo, Carreño de Miranda, Luis Meléndez, Goya, Sorolla, Evaristo Valle, Nicanor Piñole, Picasso, Miró, Dalí, Luis Fernández, Palazuelo, Tàpies and Barceló. There are also fine works by Spanish-Flemish artists of the 15th and 16th century including Tiziano, Veronese, Rubens, John Philip and Foujita. (Overnight Oviedo) B

León – 2 nights

Day 15: Wednesday 15 September, Oviedo – Pedrosa de la Vega – León

- Villa Romana de La Olmeda, Pedrosa de la Vega

Today we drive south across the dramatic Cantabrian Range onto Spain's great northern *meseta*, following in the footsteps of Don García, who in 914 moved the capital of his kingdom from Oviedo to the former Roman Legionary centre, which consequently took on new life as the court city of León. This was a daring act because the Cantabrian mountains had protected the tiny Asturian kingdom from the great power of the Caliphate of Córdoba.

Before arriving in León we detour east into the fertile plains of Palencia to visit the Roman agrarian villa at Olmeda which contains some of the most beautiful remnants of a Roman villa anywhere on the Iberian Peninsula. Built in several stages from the 1st to the 4th century CE, the villa complex expands around an elite living quarters containing 27 rooms, 12 of which were tiled with mosaic, centred around a patio and peristyle garden. The villa is best known for its 4th-century mosaics, the most important of which are located in the El Oecus (principal salon). These include a depiction of *Achilles discovered by Ulysses in Skyros*; and hunting scenes: hunters on foot and on horseback that pursue various animals from the Iberian fauna and some exotic ones from Africa. There are also thermal baths and three cemeteries, of which only two have been excavated. (Overnight León) BL

Day 16: Thursday 16 September, Leon

- Colegiata de San Isidoro
- Panteon de los Reyes
- Cathedral of Santa Maria de Regia
- San Marcos (subject to opening hours)
- Afternoon at leisure

Of Roman origins, León was the capital of the Kingdom of León from 910 to 1230. It was sacked by the Muslims under Almanzor (al-Mansur) in 988 but was rebuilt and flourished under Alfonso V (999-1027) as a major trading town and a most important stop on the pilgrim route to Santiago. Its fame derived from the possession of the relics of one of Spain's greatest saints, the historian and encyclopaedist Isidore of Seville, brought north from that Islamised city.

We spend the morning in the city, now capital of its province, visiting such monuments as the Colegiata de San Isidoro, the Panteon de los Reyes and the Cathedral of Santa Maria de Regia. San Isidoro was founded in the 11th century to hold the remains of St Isidore. It is a Romanesque/Gothic construction. The Pantheon of the Kings, the burial place of the early kings of León, holds one of Europe's finest cycles of Romanesque vault paintings (1180-90) depicting the Lives of Christ and the Apostles, Signs of the Zodiac and the Labours of the Months. León cathedral's great treasures are its west front, the finest of its kind in Spain, and its stained glass windows, the earliest of which date from the 13th century.

The afternoon is at leisure. (Overnight León) B

Santiago de Compostela – 2 nights

Day 17: Friday 17 September, Leon – Ponferrada – Pedrafita do Cebreiro – Lugo – Santiago

- Castillo de los Templarios (exterior), Ponferrada
- Village of Pedrafita do Cebreiro
- UNESCO World Heritage-listed Roman Walls of Lugo

Today we complete our journey along the pilgrim route. Our first stop is Ponferrada which is dominated by the Castillo de los Templarios. In 1178, Ferdinand II of León donated the city to the Templar order for protecting the pilgrims on the Camino Francés who passed through the region on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The castle, built on the foundations of an earlier fortress, was completed by the Templars in 1282. However, they were only able to enjoy the use of their fortress for about twenty years before the order was disbanded, and its properties confiscated in 1311.

From Ponferrada we climb up across the high mountain passes that lead to the verdant region of Galicia. At the very summit of one pass we stop at the fascinating small town of Pedrafita do Cebreiro, distinguished by its extraordinary cottage-barn, dry stone houses that are of Celtic origin. We then drive across Galicia to Lugo.

Following some time at leisure for lunch, we take the 2.2km circular path running around the top of the World Heritage-listed Roman walls. Dating from the late 3rd and early 4th centuries CE, the walls were built to defend the Roman town of Lucas. Built in the shape of an oblong rectangle, the walls vary in height from 8 to 10 metres and include 85 external towers and 10 gates. They represent the finest example of late Roman fortifications in Western Europe. (Overnight Santiago de Compostela) B

Day 18: Saturday 18 September, Santiago de Compostela

- Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela
- Afternoon at leisure
- Farewell Dinner

The ultimate goal of all pilgrims was what is now the Plaza de España, flanked by stately palaces and the superb Baroque west facade of the great cathedral, one of the most beautiful churches of the Iberian Peninsula. One of the most magnificent buildings facing the Plaza is Santiago de Compostela's Parador, the Hostal dos Reis Católicos.

We shall spend the morning in the cathedral and its subsidiary buildings. The present cathedral (completed 1211) is built upon an earlier shrine of 899. Construction began before 1105 and the choir and transept were completed in 1112. A clock tower was added in 1325, the bell tower and cloister around 1521. The building later gained a baroque facade. The complex with its myriad chapels is a treasure house of sculpture and painting, precious silver work and glass from the Romanesque and Gothic periods.

The afternoon will be at leisure to explore the many churches and palaces of the pilgrim city. (Overnight Santiago de Compostela) BD

Day 19: Sunday 19 September, Tour Ends Santiago de Compostela

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

As Cervantes said, "Neither good nor evil can last for ever...", and our tour must come to an end. Our tour ends in Santiago de Compostela after breakfast. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to the airport. B

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 4-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms include en suite bathroom.

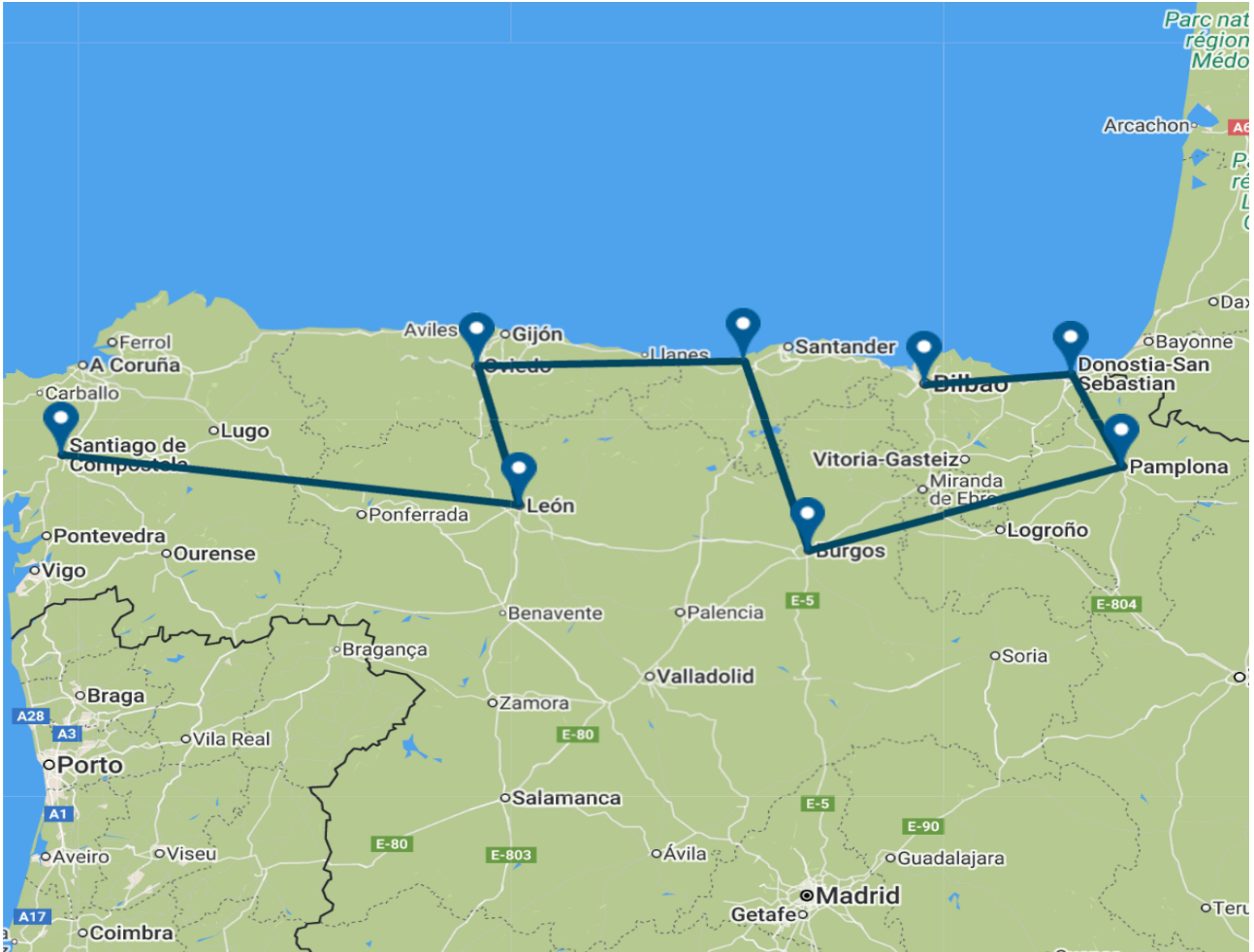
- Bilbao (1 night): details to be confirmed
- San Sebastián (2 nights): details to be confirmed
- Pamplona (3 nights): details to be confirmed
- Burgos (3 nights): details to be confirmed
- Santillana del Mar (3 nights): details to be confirmed
- Oviedo (3 nights): details to be confirmed
- León (2 nights): details to be confirmed
- Santiago de Compostela (2 nights): details to be confirmed

Note: hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double (or twin) room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2026

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 4-star hotels
- Breakfast daily, lunches and evening meals indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour notes
- Light refreshments as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Seville, Córdoba-Australia
- Airport transfers
- Personal spending money
- Luggage in excess of 20 kg (44 lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace to explore towns extensively on foot. Some days include walking tours of at least 5-7kms. Many walks include uneven terrain, cobbled streets and steep ascents/descents.
- keep up with the group at all times.
- negotiate challenging historic monuments, archaeological sites and prehistoric caves which may include poor lighting, low ceilings, steep stairs or uneven terrain.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels.
- cope with tour schedule which is planned around the siesta (midday break):
 - Length of days: Regional museums are often closed between 1 and 4pm; many days therefore include early-morning departures (between 8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (between 5.30-6.30pm).
 - Late meal times: lunch is usually between 1 and 2pm. Evening meals are generally not served until 8-8.30pm.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Booking Conditions

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$800.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$1000.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$800.00 per person applicable for International tours OR AUD\$300.00 per person applicable for Australian tours. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your full deposit is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male Female

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour.

ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities *without assistance or support*:-

- walk & stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

Dated _____



Intention to Travel Payment

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): Cheque Direct Debit (see below) Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

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