

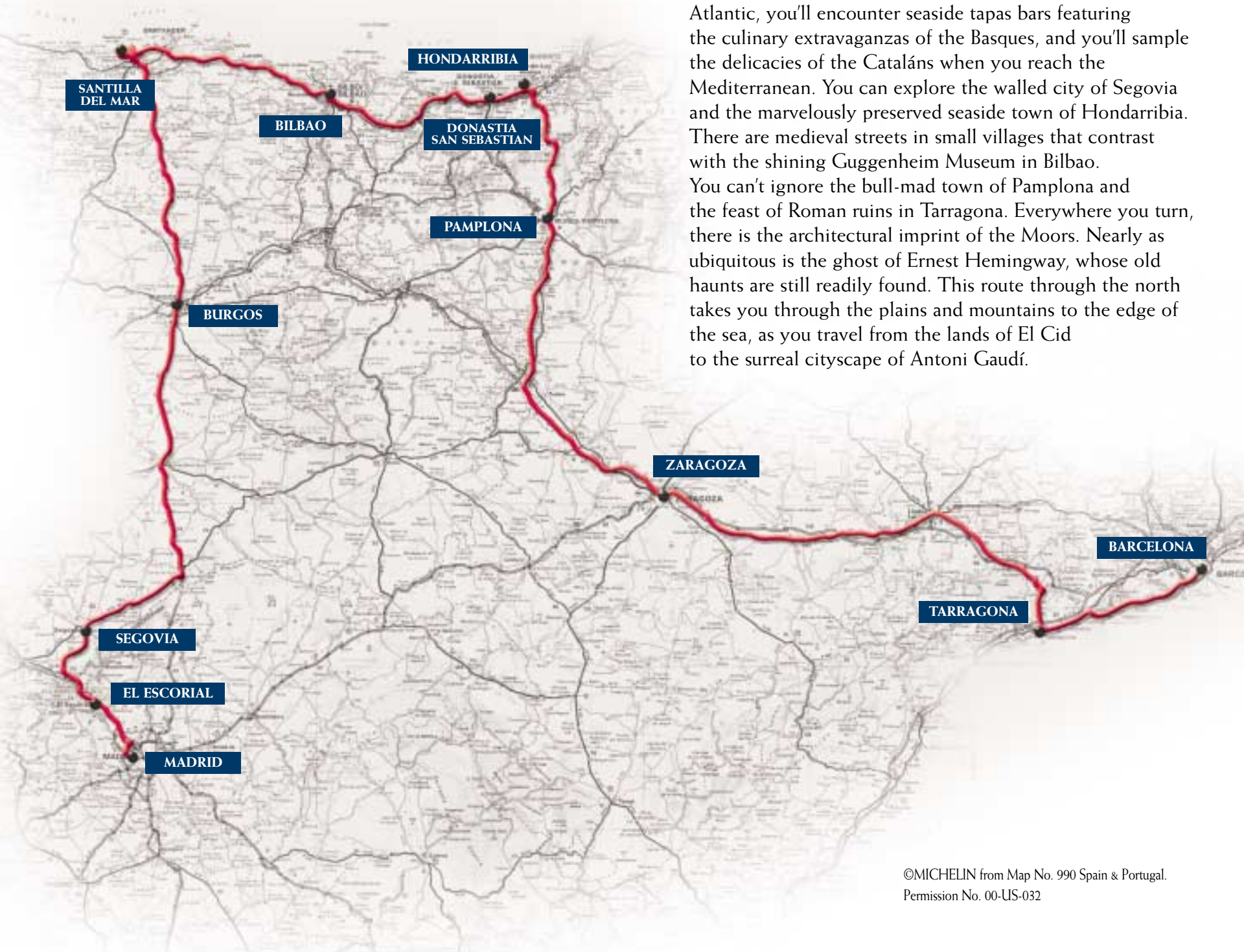
AVIS *Personally Yours*[®]



Madrid to Barcelona



MADRID TO BARCELONA



TO TRAVEL THROUGH THIS COUNTRYSIDE is to sample the cornucopia of Spanish culture. When you go north from Madrid, you can drive a broad arc and take in the lands of Castile, Navarra and Aragón to get to Barcelona. Along the Atlantic, you'll encounter seaside tapas bars featuring the culinary extravaganzas of the Basques, and you'll sample the delicacies of the Cataláns when you reach the Mediterranean. You can explore the walled city of Segovia and the marvelously preserved seaside town of Hondarribia. There are medieval streets in small villages that contrast with the shining Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. You can't ignore the bull-mad town of Pamplona and the feast of Roman ruins in Tarragona. Everywhere you turn, there is the architectural imprint of the Moors. Nearly as ubiquitous is the ghost of Ernest Hemingway, whose old haunts are still readily found. This route through the north takes you through the plains and mountains to the edge of the sea, as you travel from the lands of El Cid to the surreal cityscape of Antoni Gaudí.

MADRID TO BARCELONA

(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of **Michelin Map #990 Spain & Portugal** in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps, call 1-800-223-0987.

MADRID—Fly into Madrid's Barajas Airport. Before heading north to begin your exploration, you may want to linger in Spain's vibrant capital for a few days and do some energetic sightseeing at the city's museums and sample its restaurants and shops.

34 miles
SAN LORENZO DE EL ESCORIAL—The palace and monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial was once a privileged escape for Spanish royalty but nowadays, ordinary madrileños come to escape the bustle of Madrid. Tucked against a wall of mountains, the Sierra de Guadarrama, the 16th-century structures were built on the orders of Felipe II. Today, the monarchs of Spain lie peacefully at the Panteón de los Reyes. Visit the monastery, which houses such treasures as Benvenuto Cellini's statue of Christ, and then go on to the Museo de Arquitectura, which details how El Escorial was built.

34 miles
SEGOVIA—Dramatically situated on a ridge top and elevated above the surrounding plain, Segovia is surrounded by crenellated stone walls and home to a Roman aqueduct that rises ten stories. So striking is Segovia's appearance that it's been likened to a ship, with the city's Alcázar, or fortified palace, at the bow and its Cathedral towers at the stern. To get a sense of the city, take a drive around the Ruta Panorámica. Originally dubbed Sogobriga by its Celtic settlers, Segovia became a Roman settlement by 80 B.C. The Moors followed, and after that it became the royal capital. The Alcázar has a medieval appearance, but since a fire damaged the interior in 1862, what remains inside is a 19th-century fantasy. The city's original cathedral was burned during a protest in the 16th century, so the current structure is alleged to be the last of the great Gothic cathedrals in Spain, with marvelous architectural lines and heavily decorated chapels.

131 miles
BURGOS—Burgos is the home of El Cid, one Rodrigo Díaz, a mercenary soldier and Spain's legendary fighter, whose body lies buried in the city's Cathedral. That building may be Spain's most impressive ecclesiastical structure, begun in the 13th century and completed several centuries later. The intricate spires on the exterior are glorious indeed, but inside is a riot of carving, statuary, gilt and inlays.

94 miles
SANTILLANA DEL MAR—It's been called the prettiest village in Spain, and it lies a couple of miles from the Bay of Biscay. Dominated by the Romanesque Colegiata de Santa Julia, the heart of the city along Calle del Cantón



is comprised of wonderfully preserved mansions that date from the 15th to 17th centuries. Declared a national monument in 1889, Santillana is also the closest town to the famed caves of Altamira. Alas, admission to see those wall paintings that depict bison and boar and other wild beasts has been severely restricted since 1977. A handful of visitors are allowed in, and to be among them, it's best to contact the Centro de Investigación de Altamira a year in advance.

78 miles
BILBAO—Founded in 1300, Bilbao became a thriving metropolis during the Industrial Revolution. But after World War II, the postwar recession turned it into a decaying backwater. A few years ago, Bilbao was suddenly on the map again, thanks to American architect Frank Gehry's remarkable new Guggenheim Museum. The titanium clad sculpture-as-museum towers over Bilbao's old docks. Now the city has become an arts mecca and is booming. Stroll through the Casco Viejo (the old quarter), where you'll find Spain's largest indoor market, Mercado de la Ribera, at one end and the Teatro Arriaga, modeled after the Paris Opéra, at the other. The cobblestone quarter is car-free and full of life thanks to many shops and cafés and bars in the Las Siete Calle, the heart of the area. Dedicate some time to sampling pintxos, the Basque version of tapas, which are laid out on bar counters throughout the town. And collectors may well find treasures at the Plaza Nueva flea market on Sundays.

74 miles
DONASTIA-SAN SEBASTIAN—This Belle-Époque seaside resort, a place that's indisputably Basque but has attracted French vacationers for years, forms a half moon around the lovely Bahía de la Concha, surrounded by the green hills of Guipúzcoa. It's a city where the walks, bridges and parks will take you back a century or more. La Concha beach, a beautiful strand, is bookmarked by Monte Igeldo and Monte Urgull. You can walk to the top of the latter, which is topped by a statue of Christ. Sites like the Catedral del Buen Pastor and the Museo de San Telmo are merely pleasant diversions in this city devoted to eating. You can best accomplish this in the Parte Vieje or old town, which may well have the densest concentration of bars and nightlife in all of Spain. It's also where you'll hear the sounds of Euskara, the Basque language.

16 miles
HONDARRIBIA—Close to Donostia but centuries removed is Hondarribia, which lies near the border with France. The nicely preserved old town founded by the Romans can still be entered through its ancient gate, the Puerta de Santa María. You can stroll past mansions and arrive at the Plaza de Armas, where you'll find the imposing Palacio de Carlos V, which is now a parador. Brightly painted wood-beam houses and intricately carved balconies are hallmarks of the town's architecture. From the beach, you can look across to the French port of Hendaye.



66 miles

PAMPLONA—

Pamplona is worth visiting even if you're not a fleet-footed visitor attracted by the running of the bulls, or encierro. It occurs during the nine-day festival officially known as Los Sanfermines. Founded by the Roman general Pompey, and later controlled by the Moors and Charlemagne, Pamplona evolved into a university town, a place of broad boulevards and grand parks. Ernest Hemingway was a staunch fan and set his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, here in 1926. In fact, there's a statue of Papa outside the bullring. By all means explore the narrow streets of the Navarría, the old Basque quarter, as well as the Judaría, the Jewish quarter. Take an evening stroll with the families of Pamplona in the porticoed square known as the Plaza del Castillo. And lovers of greenery should make a point of seeing La Ciudedela, a park that surrounds a 16th-century fortress, as well as La Taconera, which houses a botanical garden.

106 miles

ZARAGOZA—Founded as a Roman city, Zaragoza became an important Islamic center for more than 400 years. Eventually, it became the capital of the kingdom of Aragón. Today, Spain's fifth-largest city rewards you with wonderful examples of Mudéjar architecture, the height of Moorish-Gothic design. Easily the most impressive structure in town is the Aljafería, a fortress and palace that has successfully served the kings of Aragón and later of Spain. The central courtyard, with its horseshoe arches, is perhaps the finest example of Moorish architecture in northern Spain. In the center of Zaragoza you'll find the Plaza del Pilar, an open-air square where the city meets. Visit the Museo Camón Aznar, housed in a 16th-century Renaissance palace, which has engravings by Goya. And pause at the Basílica del Pilar, which has minaret-like towers and is situated on the north bank of the River Ebro. Goya frescoes, pilgrims thronging the Santa Capilla chapel inside and two mysteriously unexploded Spanish Civil War bombs are reasons for visiting.

164 miles

TARRAGONA—The capital of Rome's western empire and the birthplace of Pontius Pilate, the Mediterranean port of Tarragona still has a wealth of Roman remains. Foremost among them are the Anfiteatre or Roman amphitheater, which dates from the 2nd century A.D. It overlooks the sea and was the site of gladiator battles. Have a look at the Circ-Pretori, the remains of a Roman circus where chariot races were held, and a praetorium, or governor's residence. Remnants of a forum can also be seen in Tarragona. Beyond the Romans, take an early evening stroll along the Passeig de les Palmeres, seaside gardens that draw locals. The Plaça de la Font has a lively assortment of cafés and restaurants, as does the Plaça del Rei. But consider heading for Serrallo, the fishermen's quarter, where lunchtime at restaurants like Ca'l Martí is a feast for seafood fanciers.

68 miles

BARCELONA—One of most stylish cities in Europe, Barcelona more than justifies days of exploring. Start in Las Ramblas, the liveliest street in Spain, a place of flower sellers, performance artists, tourists and touts. Continue on to the seafront, to Barceloneta, the former fishermen's village that has been renovated. Go on to Ribera, one of the most fashionable areas of the city, and home to the Picasso Museum, along with Renaissance and Gothic palaces. The Example lies outside the old city and is the site of many architectural wonders from the Modernist movement, including Antoni Gaudí. Barcelona is a kaleidoscope of sites, starting with Gaudí masterpieces like the Sagrada Família cathedral and his Casa Milà apartment block. The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya has a wide-ranging collection of Catalán masterpieces. The Fundació Joan Miró shows the work of native son Miró while the Museu Marítim, housed in the former royal shipyards, has model ships, maps and replicas. Beyond the sites, you can spend some pesetas at El Corte Inglés, the city's largest department store. Go people-watching at sunset in

Parc de la Ciutadella. Check out Frank Gehry's golden fish sculpture at the Vila Olímpica, built to house the athletes during the 1992 Olympics. Or simply spend the evening dropping into tapas bars like La Tramoia or Cal Pep.

HOTELS

The Hotel Carlton is a grand dame with a columned lobby and Art Deco atrium. It once served as Basque Republican headquarters, and the sumptuous breakfast alone is worth staying for. 2 Plaza Federico Moyúa, Bilbao. Tel: 94 416 2200 Fax: 94 416 4628

The Hotel Claris is in a neo-classical building but has a post-modern interior. An eclectic mix of antiques and a great location near Playa de Catalunya make it desirable. Pau Claris 150, Barcelona. Tel: 93 487 6262 Fax: 93 215 7970 From the USA: 800 525 4800

La Perla, one of Hemingway's favorite haunts, is an aging charmer. But nostalgia buffs may enjoy the hotel's faded elegance. Not to mention its location in the heart of town. Plaza del Castillo, Pamplona. Tel: 948 227 706

The Gran Hotel, opened in 1929 by Alfonso XIII, was home to the current King of Spain when he was a student at Zaragoza's military academy. A Belle Époque beauty that is not only truly grand but also a national monument. Calle Joaquín Costa 5, Zaragoza. Tel: 976 221 190 Fax: 976 236 713

The Hotel del Cid is located in the Cathedral square. Parts of the structure date to the 15th century. Plaza de Santa Maria, 8, Burgos. Tel: 947 208 715 Fax: 947 269 460

The Parador de Hondarribia is located in a 10th-century fortress in the heart of the walled village. It has been tastefully modernized inside with 20th-century

comforts while still retaining its medieval character. Plaza de Armas 14, Hondarribia. Tel: 943 645 500 Fax: 943 642 153

RESTAURANT

El Bulli, which looks down at a beautiful cove, is worth the two-hour pilgrimage from Barcelona that every serious gourmand makes. Here at what is possibly the most creative kitchen in Europe, three-star Michelin chef Ferrán Adrià serves such surreal combinations as duck tongues with a ravioli of pears and litchis, a Parmesan ice cream sandwich and sardines in a raspberry foam. This is food that Catalán painter Salvador Dalí would have adored. Cala Montjoi, Rosas. Tel: 34 972 150 457 Fax: 34 972 150 717



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