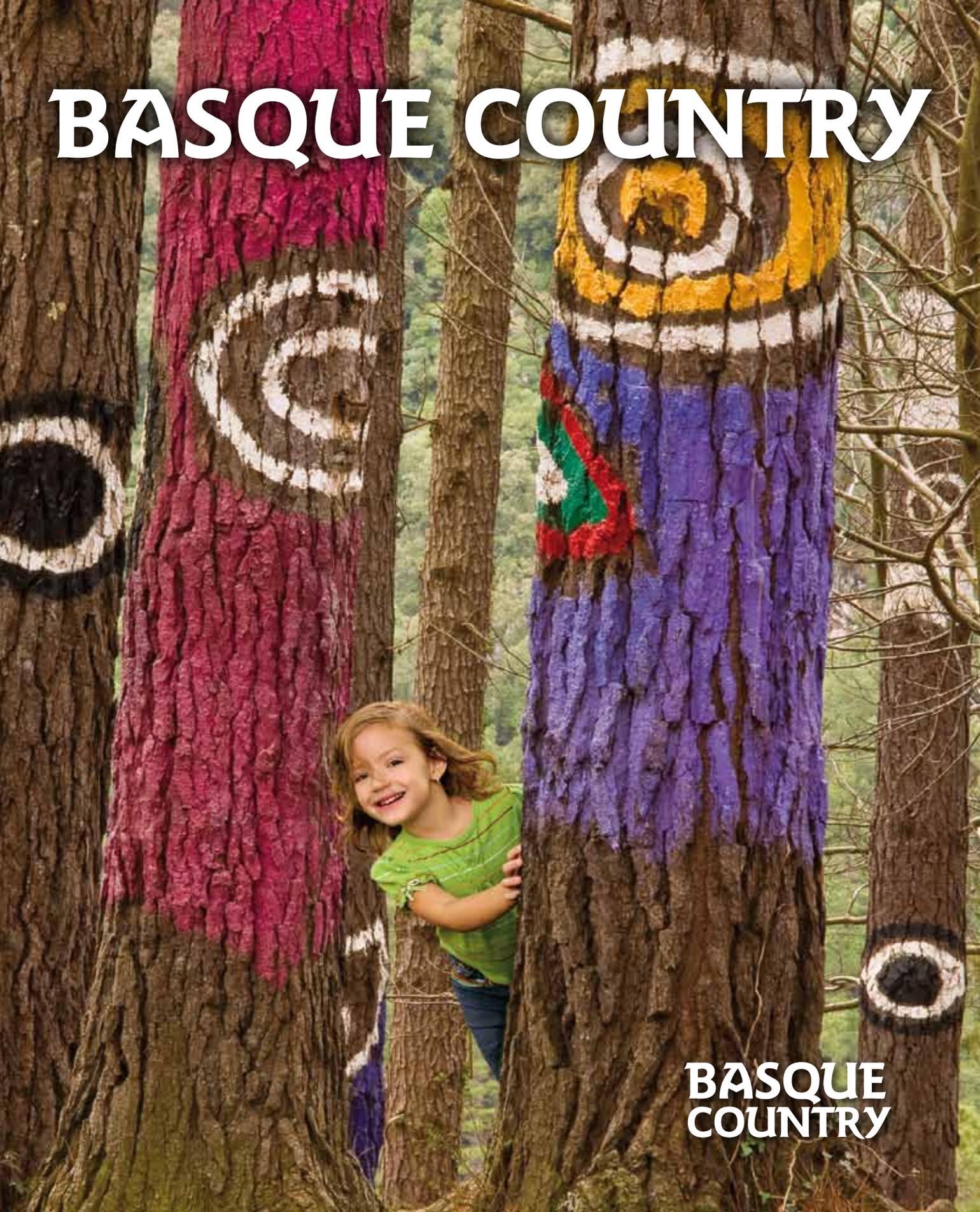


# BASQUE COUNTRY



**BASQUE  
COUNTRY**

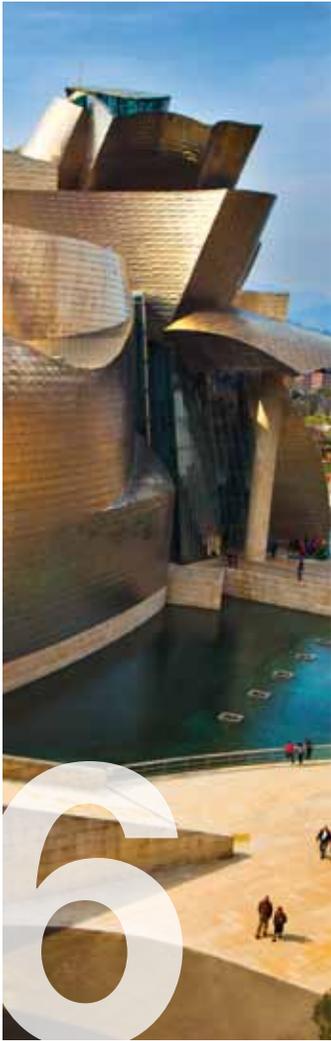


# BASQUE COUNTRY



All of the TOP experiences detailed in this catalogue are subject to change and may be updated. Therefore, we advise you to check the website for the most up to date prices before you book your trip.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



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22

# BASQUE COUNTRY



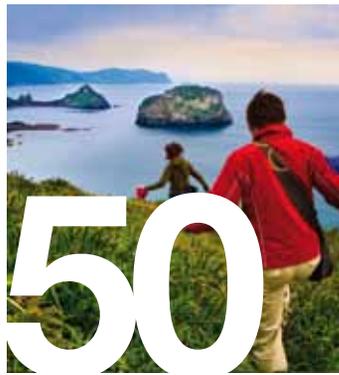
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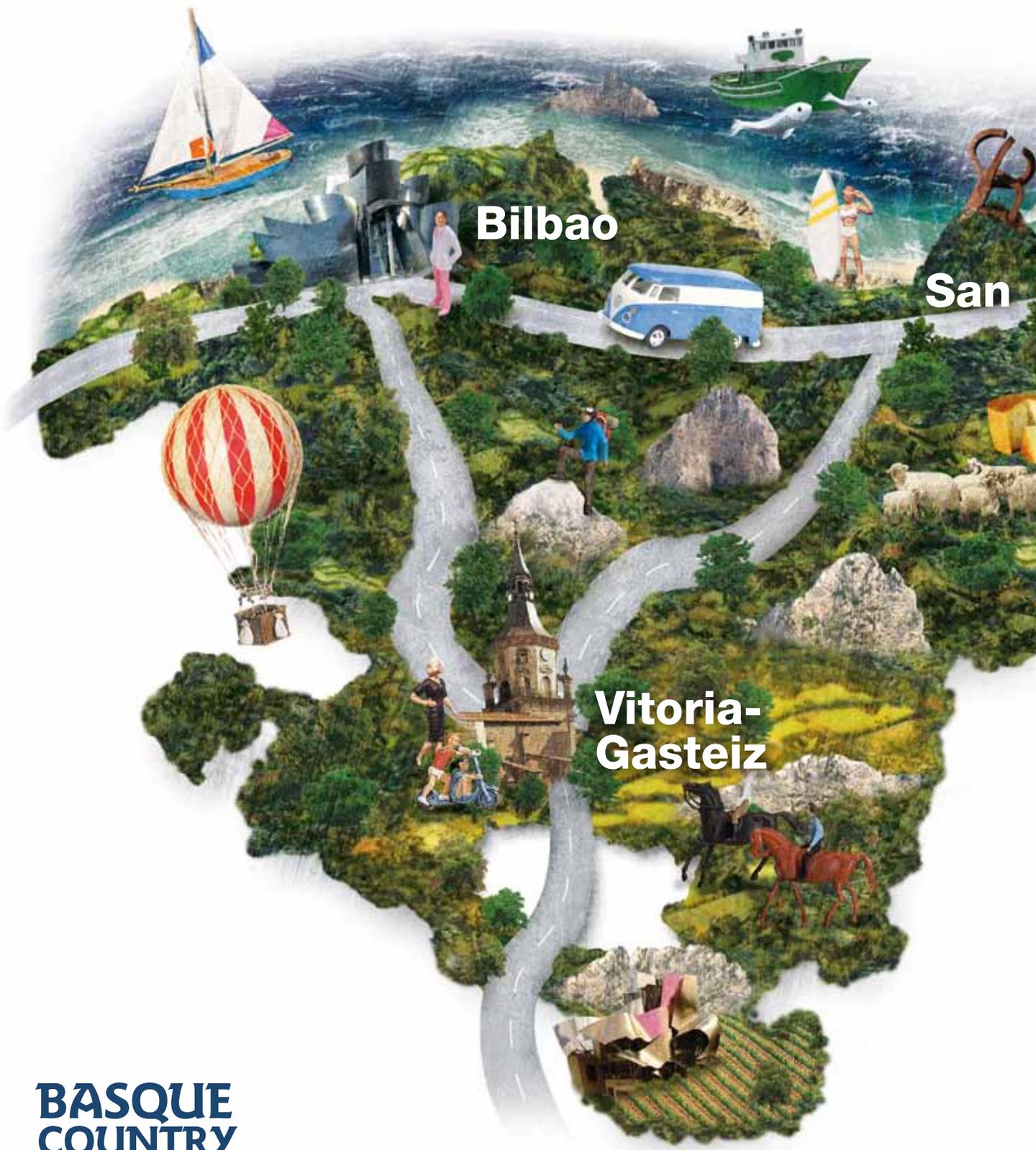
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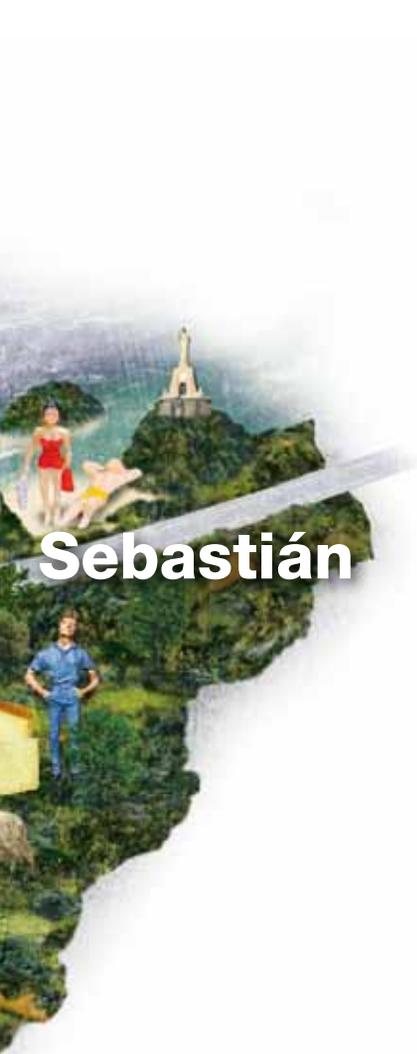


**Bilbao**

**San**

**Vitoria-Gasteiz**

**BASQUE  
COUNTRY**



## Sebastián

# THE BASQUE COUNTRY

a varied and  
*seductive region*

You are about to embark on an adventure with many attractions: a varied landscape, a mild climate, ancient culture, renowned gastronomy... These are the nuances that make the Basque Country a tourist destination you will be delighted to discover.

Two colours will accompany you on your journey through the Basque Country: the green of the mountains and valleys, and the blue of the sea.

You will discover that the Basque people maintain strong links with the natural resources of the land and the sea. The defining features of the Basque character were forged by deeply rooted customs, rich culture and local sports.

To better understand the nature of the Basque people it is important that you immerse yourself in its traditions, exploring the fishing ports and the life of the countryside...

On the coast you will see how the Cantabrian Sea has marked the personality of the neighbouring villages. You will also notice the difference between their inhabitants and the inland people.

If you explore the history of the figures who have marked the personality of these communities, you will discover how their maritime, industrial and agricultural character, always diverse and enterprising, has been bred.

And if you find the coastal and inland villages interesting, you will be fascinated by the three capitals. Bilbao will surprise you with its transformation from an industrial city to an avant garde metropolis, that brings together the world's best architects. San Sebastián, exquisite and unique, will seduce you with its beautiful and stately setting. Vitoria-Gasteiz will show you its rich heritage and why it sets a worldwide benchmark in urban planning.

Eating and drinking well in the Basque Country is a luxury everyone can afford: sample the local and seasonal products in the shape of *pintxos* (local tapas), and enjoy a fine wine from the Rioja Alavesa, a *txakoli* sparkling wine or cider.

Enjoy the chance to experiment with food and observe the way of life in the Basque Country.



# BILBAO

*a city of design*

“

*The leading lights of the new Bilbao are the internationally famous architects who have left their mark on its spectacular buildings*

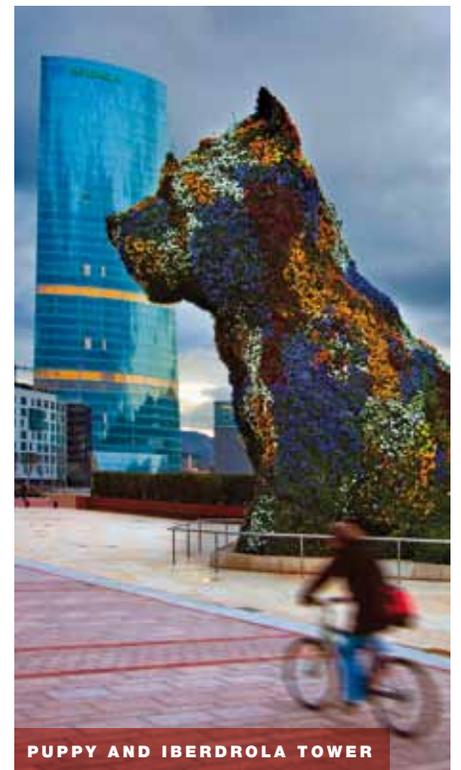
”

If any city is a benchmark for tourists it is unquestionably **Bilbao**. You will be surprised by its conversion from an industrial centre into a model city designed for living. Everything began with the **Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao**. Frank Gehry's stunning architecture and the varied art gallery with its incomparable display of contemporary art will leave you amazed. The international projection

of Bilbao provoked by the “Guggenheim effect” is unquestionable. Opposite the museum is **Puppy**, its mascot, Jeff Koons's floral dog. A snapshot with the faithful watchdog is a must.

But the change goes far beyond a landmark building. The result is a city that has reinvented itself, starting from the metro where Sir Norman Foster masterfully combined architecture and engineering. “**Fosteritos**”, is the name affectionately given to the unique street level metro entrances. You will also be surprised at the creativity of Philippe Stark in **La Alhóndiga**: an old wine warehouse now converted into a multicultural centre.

**Bilbao has opted for design as the basis of its renovation as a city**



PUPPY AND IBERDROLA TOWER



GUGGENHEIM

TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## Guggenheim inside and out

The privilege of discovering unknown corners, seeing how they prepare the exhibitions, exploring the inside and outside of the museum as a fun activity and topping it off with avant garde gourmet cuisine is an experience that goes beyond a mere museum tour.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



LA ALHÓNDIGA

Amongst these signature works you will also find the **Iberdrola Tower**, designed by César Pelli, the tallest building in the Basque Country, and the **Isozaki Towers**. Don't miss the chance to cross the Santiago Calatrava bridge opposite, the "**Zubi Zuri**". He also designed the airport terminal, **La Paloma (The Dove)**, that evokes a bird about to take flight.

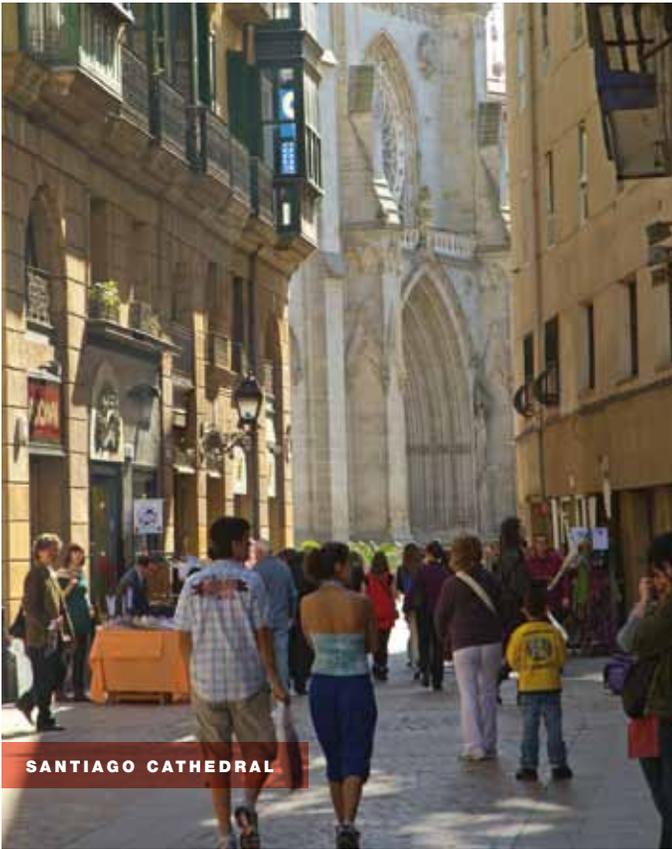
Take a walk around the **Avenida de Abandoibarra**, a lively place where tourists and the people of Bilbao can relax and marvel at the wonderful designs. Take the opportunity to visit the **Bellas Artes Museum** (Fine Arts Museum), which houses works by

El Greco, Sorolla, Gauguin and Zurbarán, amongst many others.

In **El Ensanche** avant garde buildings stand side-by-side those erected by the new bourgeoisie: the modernist **Concordia Station**, the **Palace of the Diputación** (Provincial Chambers) and the beautiful **Café Iruña** in the Gran Vía next to the **Albia Gardens**, and the **Campos Eliseos Theatre** amongst others.

Taking in Abando, the Gran Vía and the Casco Viejo you will enjoy Bilbao's modern shopping facilities with their reputation for elegance and sprinkling of world-famous firms.





SANTIAGO CATHEDRAL

# CASCO VIEJO

“

*If the Guggenheim Bilbao surprised you, get ready for the special charm of the Casco Viejo. You will see how much it is loved by the local people. This is the Bilbao that was born around the Ría Estuary in 1300. Today, the ancient heart of Bilbao is still full of life*

”



PLAZA NUEVA

**t**he Casco Viejo (Old Town) originated in its famous **7 Calles** (Seven Streets): Somera, Artekale, Tendería, Belostikale, Carnicería Vieja, Barrenkale and Barrenkale Barrena. *Trikitear* (having a few wines) in these streets is a must. You will encounter a universe imbued with a special atmosphere: that of the *pintxo* bars.



Day or night, in the Plaza Nueva, Jardines Street or in Santa Maria you will find a multitude of places to try them. If you decide to eat at one of the restaurants in the area you may find a group of diners singing over dessert. This is still a very common custom in these parts.

### The Casco Viejo is full of life at any time, night or day

The commercial tradition of the Casco Viejo of Bilbao is legendary. Variety and quality awaits you in more than 400 shops of all kinds: shops full of the charm of past eras, street markets, a selection of fashion houses with the latest trends, 200 catering establishments... and the “good old” **La Ribera Municipal Market**, as the people of Bilbao would say. Did you know that it is Europe’s largest covered market?



In Bilbao, the devotion of its inhabitants to the **Virgen de Begoña** is the origin of a multitude of celebrations. You can visit her by ascending the 311 steps of the **Calzadas de Mallona**, beginning at the Plaza de Unamuno, or by taking the lift which will leave you nearby. The **La Salve Bridge** or Hail Mary Bridge is so called because it marks the point where sailors setting out to sea offered a “hail Mary” as the Basilica of Begoña disappeared from sight.

The city is called *botxo* (the hole), by the inhabitants because it is located in a valley. If you take the **Artxanda funicular railway** you will get an extraordinary view of the *botxo*, where “greenery meets the skyscrapers.”

You will find the genuine, bustling Bilbao in the medieval area of its Casco Viejo, a National Heritage Site. The gothic **Santiago Cathedral**, so named because it stands right on the Santiago Pilgrimage Coastal Route, the **Plaza Nueva**, the biggest and oldest in Bilbao, the **San Antón Church**, with the ancient ruins forming its foundations, the neo-baroque **Arriaga Theatre**, and the **Arenal Gardens** are all outstanding... It is delightful to stroll around 700 years of uninterrupted culture and growth.

Take time to relax and make the most of the celebrated cafés to hand.

If you are here in the second week of August you will be able to take part in the **Aste Nagusia** (the Great Week), in which **Marjajia** (the Lady of the Celebrations) deploys all her gait.

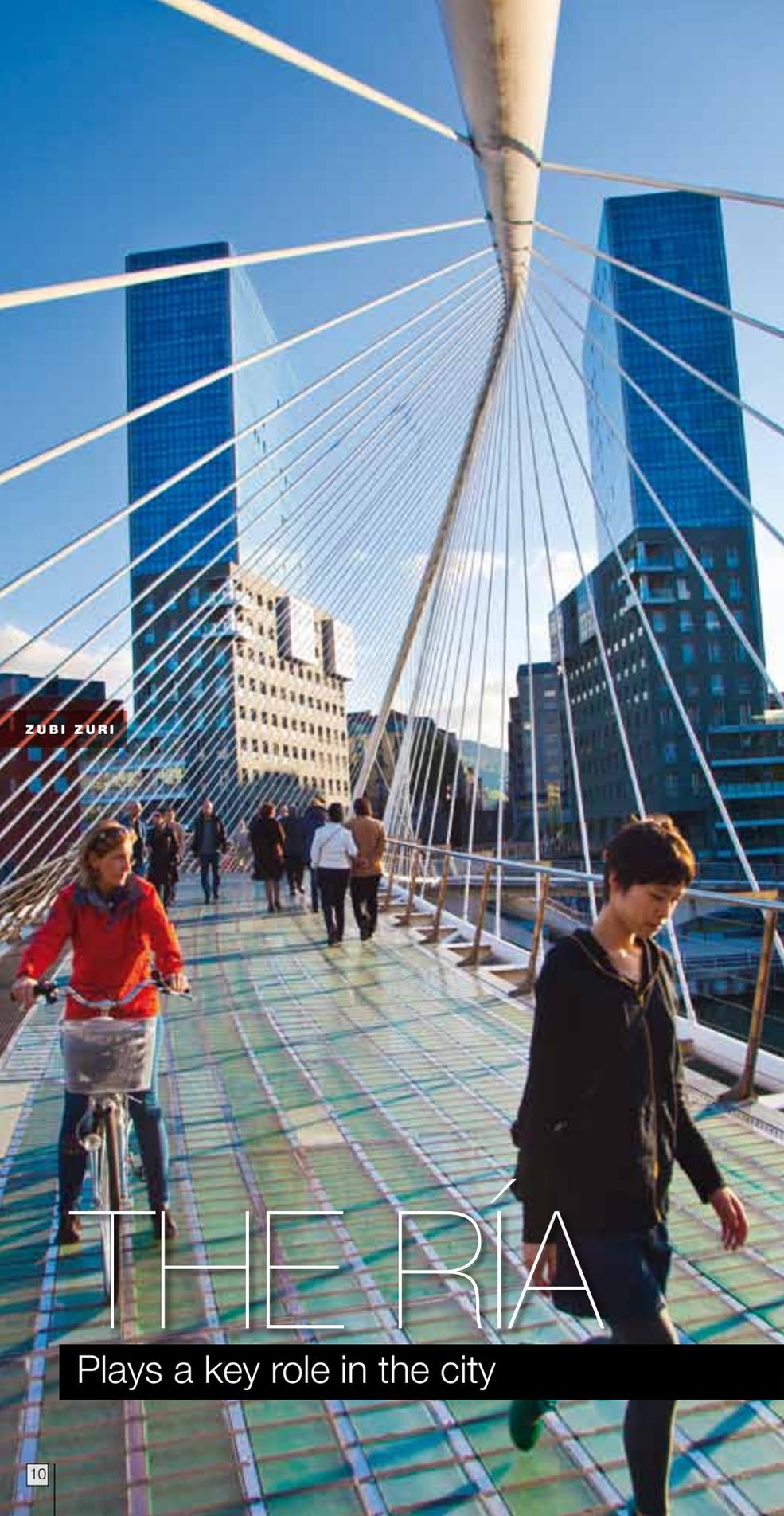
**A  
GREAT  
IDEA!**

## Bilbao at your feet...

Take a guided walk through the 7 Calles and the banks of the Ría and go up to Artxanda...

Bilbao is at your feet.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



ZUBI ZURI

# THE RÍA

Plays a key role in the city

From the town's creation until the present day, the Ría Estuary has played a key role in the development of Bilbao and the Basque economy.

The fact that it is navigable as far as Portugalete enabled the establishment of important shipyards on its banks until the mid 1980s. Today the Ría still plays a leading role, but now as a source of enjoyment for the people of Bilbao and visitors.

The history of the Ría is the history of its bridges: the **San Antón Bridge** is part of the town's coat of arms. The **La Ribera Bridge** belongs to the old Bilbao that began to be modernised alongside the **La Merced Bridge**, as far as the **Arenal Bridge**, which gives onto El Ensanche.

## Bridges and walkways unite the new and the old Bilbao

The **Zubi Zuri Bridge**, the **La Salve Bridge**, the **Pedro Arrupe Walkway** and the **Euskalduna Bridge** lead to a new Bilbao. The latter is located over the old site of the famous Euskalduna shipyards, where today the **Congress and Music Centre**, is to be found. Alongside you will find the **Maritime Museum** and opposite, one of the cranes of the old shipyard: **Carola**.

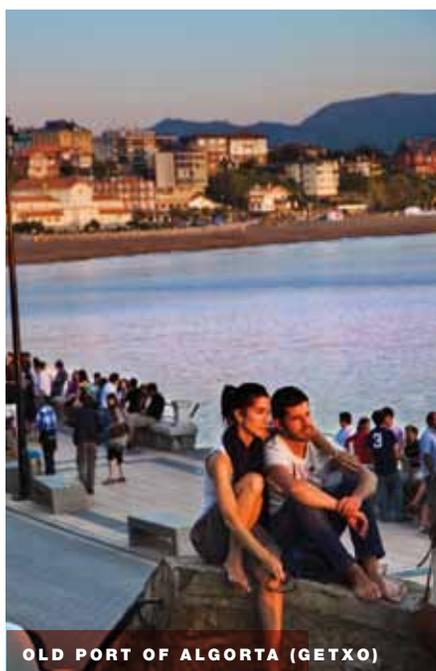
A visit to Metropolitan Bilbao and its surrounding area will give you a glimpse into its maritime history.



EUSKALDUNA PALACE

TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

“*The opening of the metro brought the beach close to Bilbao*”



OLD PORT OF ALGORTA (GETXO)

Since the opening of the metro, the beach has become far more accessible for the people of Bilbao. The two banks of the river are very different. The left bank takes you through working districts such as **Barakaldo** or **Sestao**, where the famous Altos Hornos (blast furnaces) were found. From **Portugalete** you can cross the Ría by the **Vizcaya Bridge** or take in the views from the upper walkway. Before, try some sardines in the port of **Santurtzi**.

Getxo awaits on the right bank with its **Las Arenas** and **Neguri** districts, close to the Leisure Port with its bars and restaurants. Passing the Ereaga Beach you arrive at the Puerto Viejo de **Algorta** (Old Port of Algorta), where the charm of the fishermen's houses will seduce you. If you take the metro you will get to the fishing village of **Plentzia**, with its small craft used for catching *txipiron* (baby squid).

## Sailing on the Ría

Do you want to see Bilbao from a different perspective? Take a boatripe and you will see landmark buildings and the changing rhythm of the city, the Ría's left and right banks, and a chance to discover the past, present and future of Greater Bilbao... All this and more from a privileged viewpoint: a boat trip on the Nervión River.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



# From Bilbao

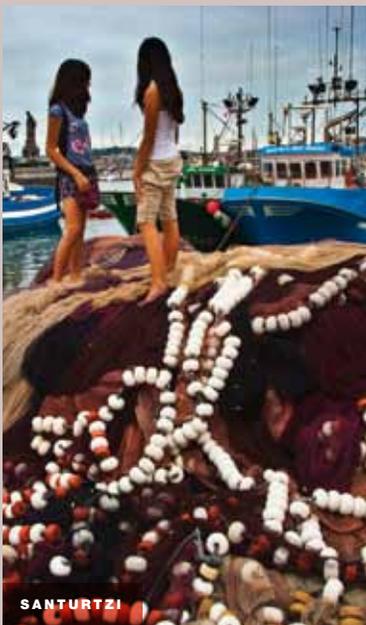
...if you are staying two more days



VIZCAYA BRIDGE

If you have followed our suggestions you will have more than an inkling of the nature of this great capital city: the Ría and the Casco Viejo, the great urban renewal, the Guggenheim and the regeneration Bilbao is undergoing. But there's more.

A day at the beach - or at the seaside - is always a good idea. Take the metro line 1 or 2 to **Getxo** or Portugalete, get off and cross the Ría using the Vizcaya Bridge.



SANTURTZI



SAN JUAN DE GAZTELUGATXE

The fourth day of your stay in Bilbao could be your chance to visit **the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve**. On the way, don't miss the nearby **Gernika-Lumo**, where you will find the Casa de Juntas (Assembly House) or Biscay Parliament, in front of which stands the Gernika tree, symbol of Basque liberty. From there you can visit tiny valleys that open onto a delightful estuary with extensive wetlands that sustain a rich natural wildlife. Watching the change of tides from **Sukarrieta** is a worthwhile experience. Nearby, **Bermeo**, **Mundaka**, **Elantxobe** and **Ea** are some of the lovely villages where the cuisine is out to captivate you.



BERMEO

Very close to Bermeo, nestled against Cabo Matxitxako, is **San Juan de Gaztelugatxe**, a precarious chapel erected on a coastal islet reached by a twisting footpath with 231 steps. Afterwards, why not reward yourself with some *txakoli* sparkling wine of **Bakio**.

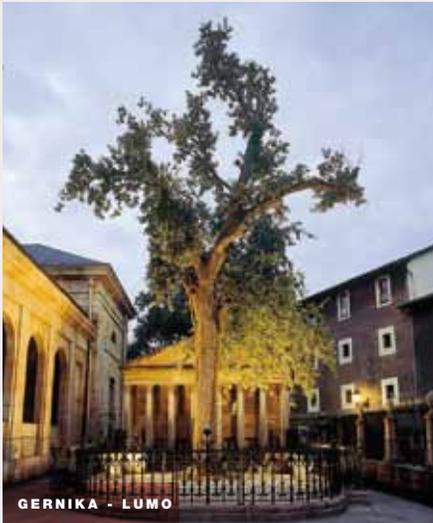


URDAIBAI

About twenty-five kilometres inland from Bilbao we find the district known as **Las Encartaciones**. This is a lovely spot with attractions like the Pozalagua caves, unique for their eccentric stalactites, the classic car museum in the Loizaga Tower and the famous *putxera* (kidney bean stew) of Balmaseda.



## ... and if you have a week



If you can stay three more days, visit the **Oma Forest**, via the **Kortezubi** road. There you will find a surprising land art composition of painted tree trunks by Agustín Ibarrola. The **Santimamiñe** Cave is also close by.

If you stay another day you'll be able to visit the villages of **Lekeitio** – with its island and the **Karraspio Beach** – and **Ondarroa**. Stroll along the piers, beaches and streets and try some delicious fish from the Cantabrian Sea.



We recommend a mountain excursion for your seventh day. **Mount Gorbea**, 1,482 metres high, is one of the most popular peaks. You approach it through the Arratia valley from the village of **Zeanuri**, and at the top you'll find an iron cross almost eighteen metres high. You will always find mountaineers of all ages ascending and descending the slopes. The views are spectacular.

If you have young children we suggest another natural surrounding: the **Urkiola Natural Park** which can be reached from **Durango**.

You can walk along the trails and enjoy the scenery offered by the neighbouring **Mount Anboto**, or learn about the traditions of the **Urkiola Sanctuary**, the scene of colourful pilgrimages.





Beautiful, elegant and stately  
**SAN SEBASTIÁN**  
*more than just an incredible backdrop*

“

*One look at the bay and its three beaches will make you want to discover all its secrets*

”

W

hen you visit the city it will be love at first sight: On

arrival you will want to take a stroll along **La Concha**. Walk on the sand at the water's edge from the **Alderdi Eder** Gardens to **El Peine del Viento** (The Comb of the Wind), by Chillida and Peña Ganchegui, leaving the **Ondarreta** Beach to one side.

Paradise surrounds the bay: the peaks of **Igueldo**, **Urgull** and **Ulía**; **Santa Clara Island**, the **Urumea** River and its bridges, and the **Zurriola** Beach with its powerful waves are all magnificent natural features of San Sebastián.

This urban beach is only a few metres from downtown San Sebastián, which makes it very popular for all kinds of water sports, especially surfing and body-boarding.



PEINE DEL VIENTO



ZURRIOLA

## LA CONCHA BAY



TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## The Pearl of the Cantabrian Sea

San Sebastián offers visitors a wide variety of activities, including relaxing ones such as massages and thalasso-therapy sessions, or walks through the romantic downtown area.

You may choose to joy around the stunning circuit from El Peine del Viento to **Sagües**, by the **Paseo Nuevo**, or along the banks of the Urumea. San Sebastián is also perfect to enjoy by bike. The *bidegorris* (bike lanes) will take you to any part of the city.

Find the river: the Urumea. The bridges joining the **Gros** district and the city centre give the River Urumea a unique personality.

There is a wide variety of themed-tours that enable you to experience San Sebastián from a different angle.

You'll find that San Sebastián is always charming, in sunshine or in rain...

[www.sansebastianturismo.com](http://www.sansebastianturismo.com)

Take a walk along La Concha to the base of Mount Igueldo. There you can take the funicular railway, opened by Queen Maria Cristina in 1912, to enjoy excellent views of the city and the Basque Coast.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



PORT

## SAN SEBASTIÁN

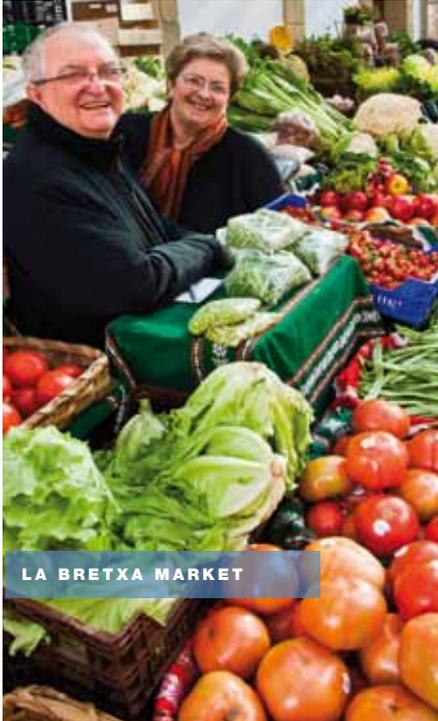
Learn the secrets and keys to success of San Sebastián's cuisine with a tour of the bars of the **Parte Vieja** (Old Quarter), the **Centro** (downtown), and the **Antiguo** or **Gros**. Taste their suggestive *pintxos*, which a little bite-size creations, while enjoying some *txakolis*, ciders or wine from the Rioja Alavesa. This is the kind of small-scale cooking that captivates more and more people every day.



One Basque custom consists in having a "Gilda" (*pintxo* made of chili pepper with olives and anchovy) to accompany a pre-lunch glass of wine. Many bars have a range of innovative *pintxos* on offer to whet your appetite.



# world capital of the *PINTXO*



## Here in San Sebastián our table is adorned with a 16-star tablecloth

San Sebastián and its surroundings are strewn with the stars that, year after year, the influential Michelin Guide awards to the best cooks in the world. Martin Berasategui, Juan Mari Arzak, Pedro Subijana, Andoni Luis Aduriz and Rubén Trincado, along with their colleagues in other Basque regions, have made San Sebastián's cooking the main tourist attraction of the Basque Country.

But these culinary stars also belong, in a certain way, to every pintxo bar, restaurant, cider bar and grill house that enriches the capital and its surroundings. The gastronomic quality is outstanding. The locals will often be able to suggest a place where you can find your preferred dish.

In the grill houses they will offer you impressive T-bone steaks or charcoal-grilled fish. The doors of an impeccably attended restaurant are open to you in any corner of San Sebastián.

But to really appreciate the atmosphere of the city it is essential to explore the Parte Vieja. This is where you will find the streets and the bars scattered along them full of life and movement.

One of the keys to the culinary success of San Sebastián is the excellent seafood and *caserio* (typical Basque farmhouse) products. Allow time in your plans to fit in a visit to the **La Bretxa** Market in the Parte Vieja, or the one in **San Martín** downtown. You will see professional and amateur cooks of all kinds discussing the qualities of some carrots or the origin of a sea bass with the vendors. It is not unusual to see three-star chefs like Arzak or Subijana in these markets... along with housewives and other lovers of top quality products!

**TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE**

## Route of *Pintxos*

If you don't know anyone in the city who can show you this peculiar circuit, take a professional to guide you through the **Route of the *Pintxos***. They will show you the top spots and tell you curious stories about the city. The gastronomic richness of San Sebastián is extraordinary.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)





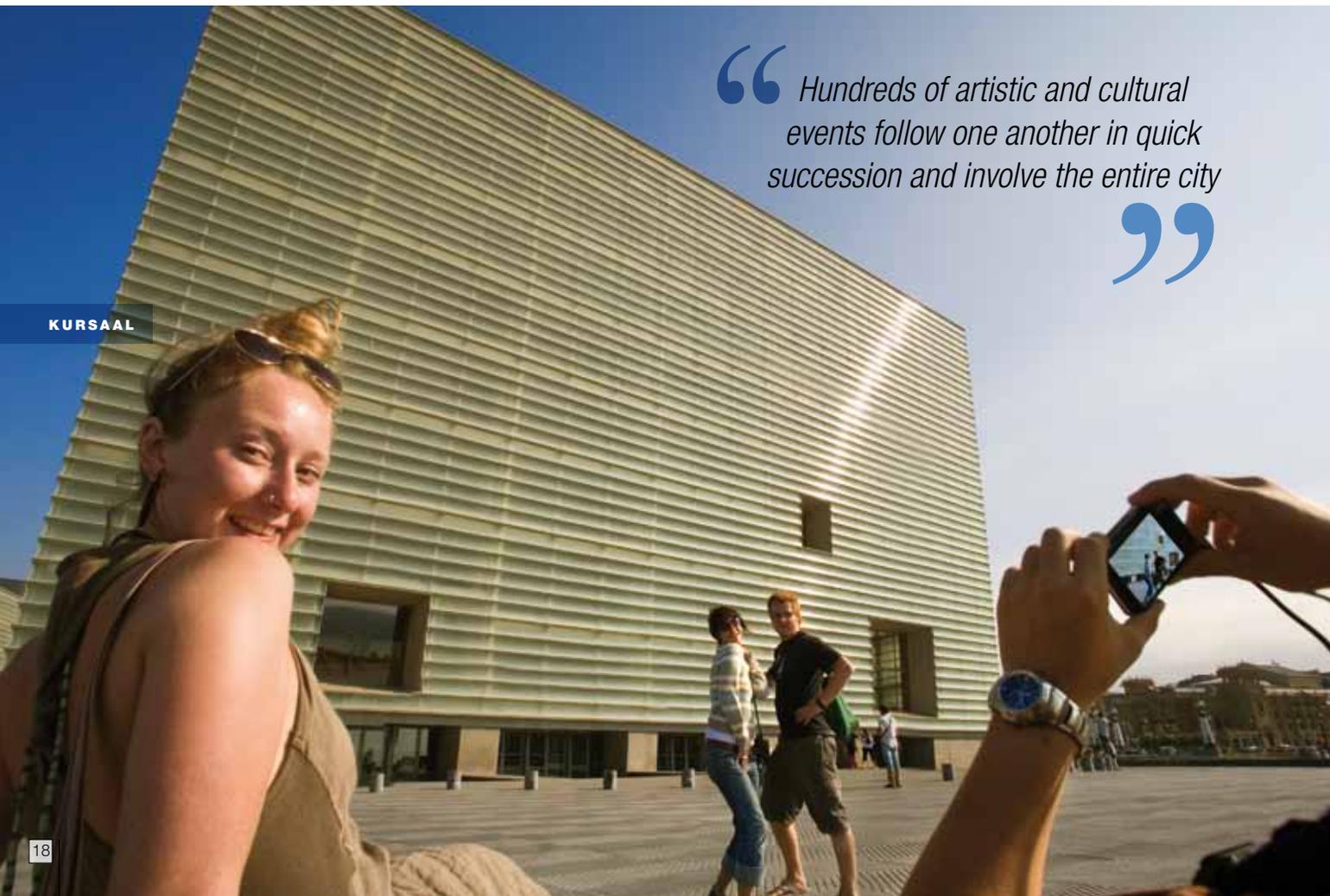
© San Sebastián Film Festival.

# SAN SEBASTIÁN

The city of film  
and  
*culture*

There's a reason why San Sebastián has been designated "European Capital of Culture 2016"...! Cultural life is intense here... From its popular –the **Tamborrada** (Procession of drums) on January 20– to the prestigious **International Film and Jazz Festivals**. Makes San Sebastián a world renowned cultural haven.

“ *Hundreds of artistic and cultural events follow one another in quick succession and involve the entire city* ”



KURSAAL



**C**atherine Deneuve, Glenn Close, Woody Allen... and many more have experienced it in person. Beyond the cinematographic festival, San Sebastián itself is a huge film set.

Directors, actresses and actors, scholars and critics over the last sixty years have fostered an incredible love of the cinema that permeates the whole life and activity of San Sebastián. The Tourist Office also organises a guided tour to learn about San Sebastián through the magic of the silver screen. It is worthwhile allowing yourself to be guided through the **Boulevard, La Concha Beach** and the **área romántica** (romantic area)... The film city!

The seventh art impregnates the very air of San Sebastián: witness the **Hotel María Cristina**, the **Victoria Eugenia Theatre** or the **Kursaal Conference Centre and Auditorium**.

[www.sansebastianreservas.com](http://www.sansebastianreservas.com)

[www.sansebastianfestival.com](http://www.sansebastianfestival.com)

In the European Capital of Culture 2016 the cultural encounters and events follow one another in quick succession. One classic is the **International Jazz Festival** and another outstanding occasion is the **Quincena Musical (Musical Fortnight)**. There is also the **Mountain and Sea Diving Contests** and **Fantasy Film Festival**.

And if you are a science and space enthusiast **Eureka! Zientzia Museoa** (the Science Museum) invites you to take part in amazing experiences, with new events every week.



San Sebastián's, neighbourhoods have schools, workshops and cultural centres that foster the creative exchange of ideas and social transformation.

A succession of celebrations, conventions, events and festivals exclusively related to the European Capital of Culture 2016 will take place during the coming years.

[www.sansebastian2016.eu](http://www.sansebastian2016.eu)

# From San Sebastián

...if you are staying two more days



FLYSCH

The agenda for enjoying two more days in San Sebastián contains several stunning sites based on this part of the Basque Coast. At **Zumaia**, the spectacular cliffs leave the ecological phenomenon called *flysch* in full view, one of the best places in the world to learn about the millions of years of history of our planet, and a unique landscape that stretches all the way to **Deba**, running through **Mutriku**. You can learn more about them by taking a coastal trek, following the Camino de Santiago (Santiago Pilgrimage Route), or on a boat trip.



ZARAUZ

In **Getaria**, in addition to its highly appreciated *txakoli* sparkling wine, you will find the original **Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum**. Close by, **Zarautz** is known for its beach, one of the international sanctuaries of surfing.



CIDER HOUSE

A fourth day of your stay in this Basque capital could be spent at the **Aia Forest**, near **Orio**, or be used to relax in the **Zestoa spa**. **Ekainberri**, an interpreted replica of the Ekain caves and cave paintings, is an enjoyable way to learn about prehistoric times.



CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA MUSEUM- GETARIA

Very close to San Sebastián, the towns of Astigarraga and Hernani will introduce you to the world of cider. The best time to experience it is between January and May. **Sagardoetxea**, or the **Basque Cider Museum**, offers a varied programme of activities throughout the year.



HONDARRIBIA

If you have a free afternoon, visit **Hondarribia**, near **Irún**, to enjoy the scenery of the **Txingudi Bay**. This seaside town has a lively fishing district and beautiful beaches and walks in the surrounding hills.



... and if you have a week

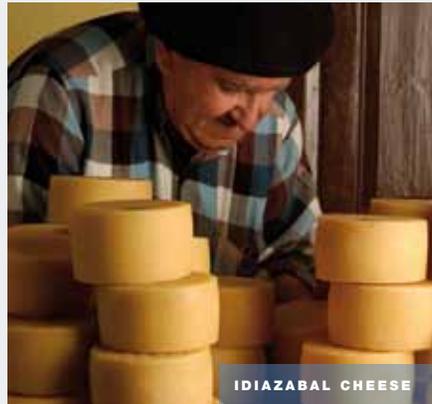


AIKO HARRIA

At this point in your journey you have got to know San Sebastián and its surroundings fairly well, but if you're lucky enough to have a whole week why not enjoy yourself even more? To do so you can take the **Idiazabal Cheese Route**. This is an inland tour taking in the Natural Parks of the **Aralar** and **Aizkorri** mountain ranges and the homesteads and caseríos where cheese is made. But since it's a case of making the most of your time, concentrate on the **Idiazabal Cheese Museum**, the **Pasture Ecomuseum** in Legazpi, the rural market at **Ordizia** or on the **D'elikatuz** Food and Gastronomy Interpretation Centre. Another Natural Park close to San Sebastián is that of **Aiako Harria**, with its dozens of mine shafts and galleries.



CARNIVALS OF TOLOSA



IDIAZABAL CHEESE

Also, for the children, the Tolosa's **International Puppet Centre – Museo Topic** – recreates the great puppet tradition. Tolosa is one of the districts that best conserves the original essence of its carnivals (*inauteriak*) free of commercial or media influences. When you visit the town try the delicious kidney beans (*babarrunak*) and the tejas and almond waffles (*cigarrillos*).

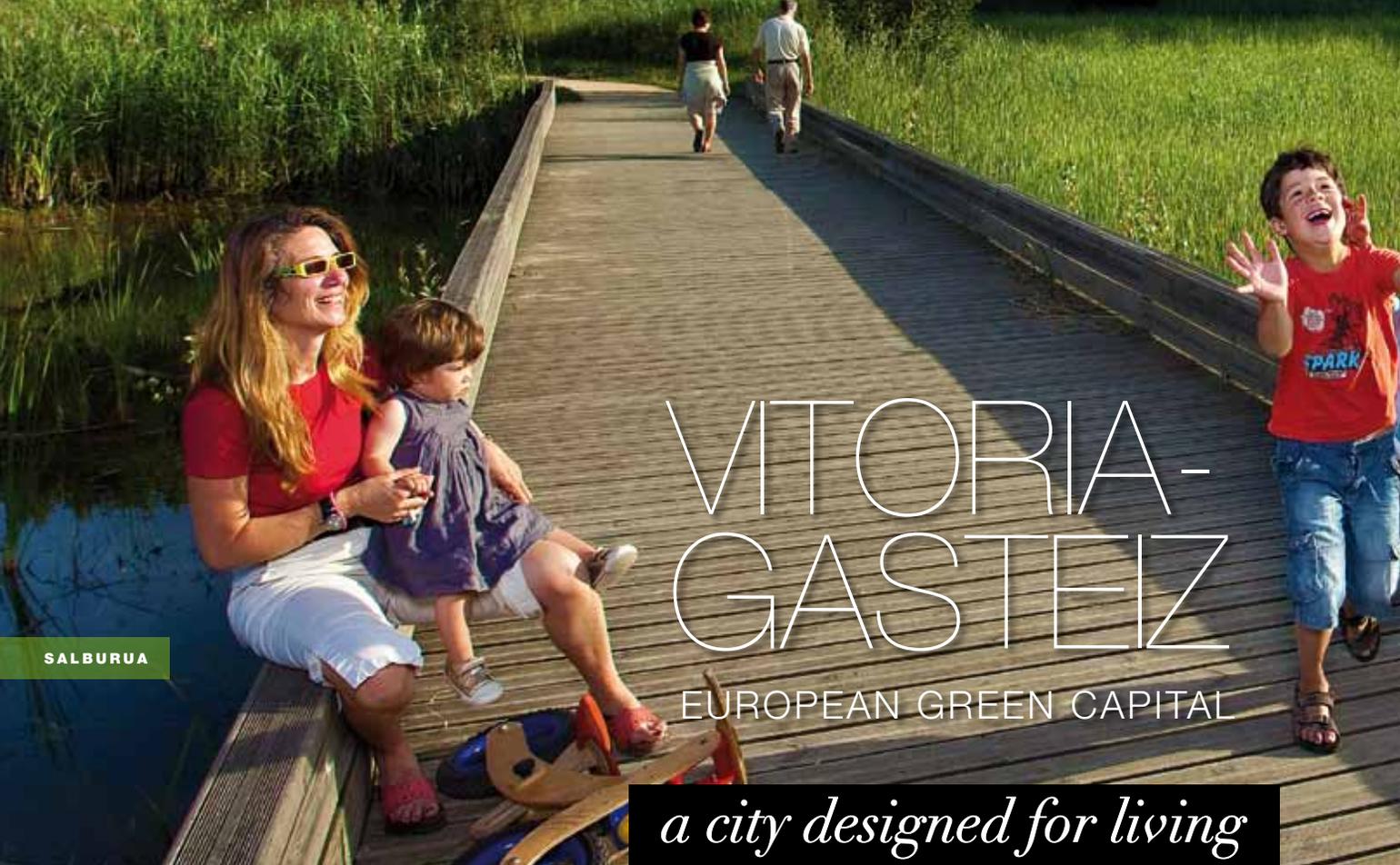


AZPEITIA



SANCTUARY OF LOYOLA

Close by in **Azpeitia**, is found the **Sanctuary of Saint Ignatius of Loyola** with its impressive basilica. You can also take the excursion to the **Basque Railway Museum**. In **Zumarraga** you will find the La Antigua Chapel, and in **Oñati** the **Sanctuary of Arantzazu**, where the sculptor Jorge Oteiza left his mark. The tour through Ignatius country will lead you to the valley of the Urola River, the origin of some of the most beautiful pages in the history of Gipuzkoa in the sixteenth century on the life and works of the founder of the Society of Jesus.



SALBURUA

# VITORIA-GASTEIZ

EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

*a city designed for living*

“

*Vitoria-Gasteiz combines technological and industrial activity with wide open spaces and pedestrian and sports areas.*

”



ZABALGANA

**t**hose who live here say that it is a convenient and agreeable city.

On foot or by bicycle, **Vitoria-Gasteiz** is accessible to all. There are urban trails, or bike lanes (*bidegorris*). They travel throughout the city, linking together the **Green Belt**. If you haven't brought your bike you can rent one from the municipal service.

The Green Belt is the natural perimeter of the capital of Alava. There are 47 kilometres of tracks and trails through the parks surrounding the urban area, from Alegria, Armentia, Olarizu, Salburua, Zabalzana, the banks of the Zadorra, Berrostegieta and Errekaleor to Lasarte. A green landscape of forests, rivers and all sorts of fauna and flora.

Vitoria-Gasteiz has grown while respecting its surroundings and its rich natural heritage. The **Salburua wetlands**, huge lagoons a few kilometres from the center, are host to herds of deer and thousands of waterfowl. The **Ataria Interpretation Centre** will enable you to see them close up.

Vehicles are not necessary to travel around the Basque capital or to visit these natural areas. Vitoria-Gasteiz is one of the European cities with the most green area per capita, and has been designed for the pedestrian. This is illustrated by walks like El Batan, La Senda-Fray Francisco





**TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE**

## A bird's eye view

Cervantes to the hill of the Basilica of San Prudencio de Armentia, parks such as La Florida, San Martin, Arriaga, Judimendi, the Green Belt... Routes that will enable you to enjoy beautiful natural views at any time of year.

Leaving the city to the south you will find the Mountains of Vitoria that are a must for any keen hikers. Going through Berrostegetia and Mendizorrotza you can reach the Zaldiaran, Errogana and Arrieta

summits. To the north, you can trek the Badaia, Arrato and Elgea ranges.

At the **Ullibarri-Ganboa** and **Santa Engracia** reservoirs you can enjoy the country around Landa, Erpidea, Garaio, Marieta and Legutiano for sunbathing, windsurfing, swimming or kite flying.

Vitoria-Gasteiz's "green" status is due to its devotion to natural resources. We recommend a visit to Atari, a facility in the Salburua Park, where you can see a multitude of birds.

Another interesting option, although only practicable at certain times of year, is to take a bird's eye view of the city by balloon.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



LA FLORIDA PARK



ATARIA

# IN THE AL **M**ENDRA **M**EDIEVAL OLD QUARTER

*“you will experience History  
as never before”*



**t**he **Almendra Medieval** (Medieval Almond), so named for its oval shape, is found within the urban green belt. It is the oldest part of the capital, located on a hill called **Gasteiz** back in the year 1000. Probably the first recommendation any *gasteiztarra* (Vitorian) would give you would be to visit the **Santa María Cathedral**. Authors such as Toti Martínez de Lezea and Ken Follett were inspired by this place and made it the setting of some of their books. The long restoration of the gothic cathedral has become a unique and highly sought-after activity for tourists and history lovers who appreciate how the building was constructed. Over a million visitors have toured its naves, atrium, walls and triforium.

[www.catedralvitoria.com](http://www.catedralvitoria.com)

**TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE -**

## The secrets of a Cathedral

Put on your safety helmet and let a professional guide show you the history of the cathedral through its passageways and restoration work. If you climb up the tower, you will get unparalleled views of the Almendra Medieval Old Quarter.

A set of lights in the Portico of the Light will take you through the evolution of the multicoloured wonder of the Paternina Chapel from the 16th century onwards.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

SANTA MARÍA CATHEDRAL



MURAL IN THE ALMENDRA MEDIEVAL

When you continue your tour of the Casco Antiguo (Old Quarter) you will visit the **City Walls**, the **Bibat** (Museum of Playing Cards and Archeology) and the **Escoriza-Esquivel** and **Montehermoso** Palaces. Escalators take you to the top of the Almendra Medieval Old Quarter, where you will be welcomed by an innovative social and cultural life.

Casco Antiguo is home to a restless cultural avant-garde. One of its latest ideas is the **mural itinerary** that covers old facades and walls with giant murals full of colour by young artists who are becoming influential in avant-garde European art.

Notice that the names of the streets of the Casco Antiguo: Cuchillería (cutlers), Herrería (blacksmiths), Pintorería (painters), Correría (harnessmaker)... denote the guild which exercised its trade there. On the first Saturday of each month there is a street market in which local tradespeople exhibit their produces.



ARTIUM

Nearby, there are the surrounding areas of the palaces such as **Bendaña**, the **Casa del Cordón**, post inns like the **Portalón** and the lively squares of **Brullería**, **Campillo** and **Matxete**. The latter, now open to Vitoria's Ensanche, is a relaxing area that takes its name from the oath taken by the Procurator General, formerly performed over a machete with which his head would supposedly be cut off if he failed to do his duty.

If you are interested in contemporary art you will find the **Artium**, the **Basque Museum-Centre of Contemporary Art** nearby. It is a cultural activity centre near the Almendra Medieval Old Quarter that collects, produces, disseminates and researches contemporary art. In addition to its unique architecture, it has a large collection of works.



MEDIÉVAL CITY WALLS

# AN *Ensanche*

that unites centuries



The **Plaza de la Virgen Blanca** is the heart of Vitoria-Gasteiz. The **Celedón**, protagonist of the fiestas, arrives here every 4th of August, dropping down from the Tower of San Miguel. To one side is the **Plaza de España**, seat of the Casa Consistorial (Council Hall), which provides a popular area of terraces and columned porches.

The main area of the city, the **Dato Street**, starts in this square, a pedestrian area and financial centre watched over by the figure of "**El Caminante**" (The Walker). From here you can explore the most relevant parts of the Ensanche, now renovated with sculptural constructions such as the **Plaza de los Fueros**, by Eduardo Chillida.

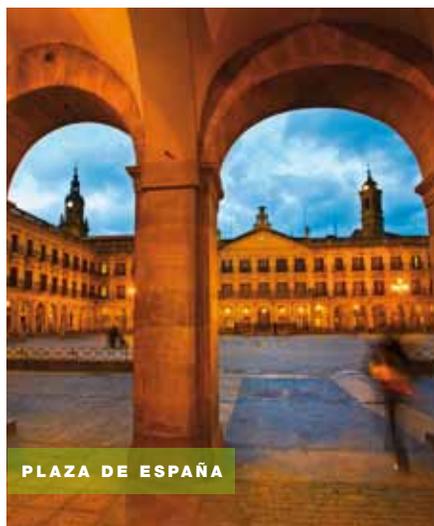
Close by, you can also see the 19th century **New Cathedral**, the **Basque Parliament**, next to the La Florida park, the French Basque-style **Post Office** and the

**Palace of the Autonomous Provincial Council**. With the aid of the Tourist Office, located in the Plaza de España, you can take guided walks to learn about the past and present of the city: the era of Carlos V, the

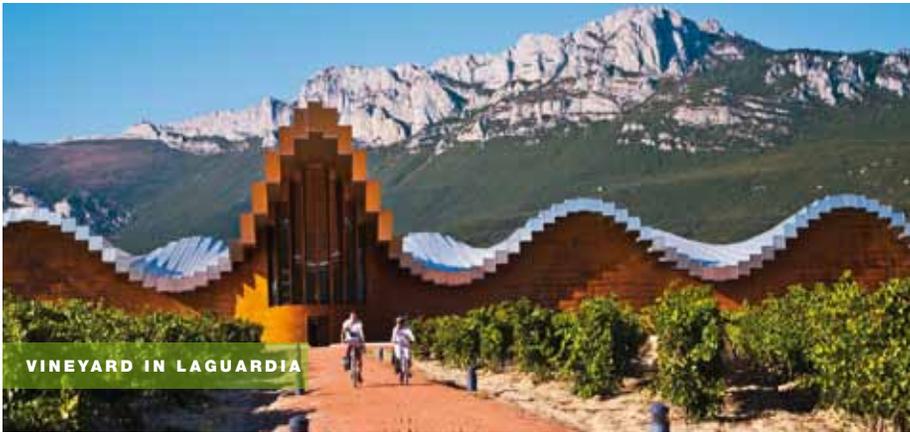
art of the altarpieces, the neoclassicism of Olaguibel and the milestones of the contemporary city.

Now is the time to do some shopping: you are in the right place.

[www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/turismo](http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/turismo)



The **Camino de Santiago** runs through the heart of Vitoria-Gasteiz. From the **Estibáliz Sanctuary**, through the Casco Viejo and the **San Pedro Church**, to the **Armentia Basilica**, modern pilgrims can get to know the medieval village. The streets and squares are signposted to show the way.



VINEYARD IN LAGUARDIA

## Vineyards on your doorstep

Vitoria-Gasteiz is very close to the **Rioja Alavesa**, an area with twelve thousand hectares of vineyard. Visiting a winery is a fascinating experience. You can see avant garde examples by architects like Gehry, Mazieres, Aspiazu, or Calatrava... or traditional ones that we call “cuevas” (caves).

Before visiting the Rioja Alavesa, spend some time in a wine shop in Vitoria-Gasteiz to become familiar with the wines. Don't miss the opportunity to take part in a tasting if you can.

Wine is an integral part of the life and culture of the area. The *trikiteo* is the custom of visiting various bars, as a group of friends and having some wines. Accompany the liquid with a *pintxo*! The Tourist Office will provide you with a “pintxo card” at reduced price that allows you to have a *pintxo* and wine from the Rioja Alavesa at five bars.

And if your visit coincides with the Week of the Pintxo and the Cazuelita (stew) or the Gourmet Wine Week, you will have hit the jackpot.

## A sweet temptation

Bakery is another specialty of the capital with decades of tradition. Succumb to the *gorxua* (layered cream cake), *txutxitos* (puff cakes), “Gasteiz tart”, chocolate truffles or *vasquitos* and *neskitas* (bonbons).



# VITORIA-GASTEIZ with kids

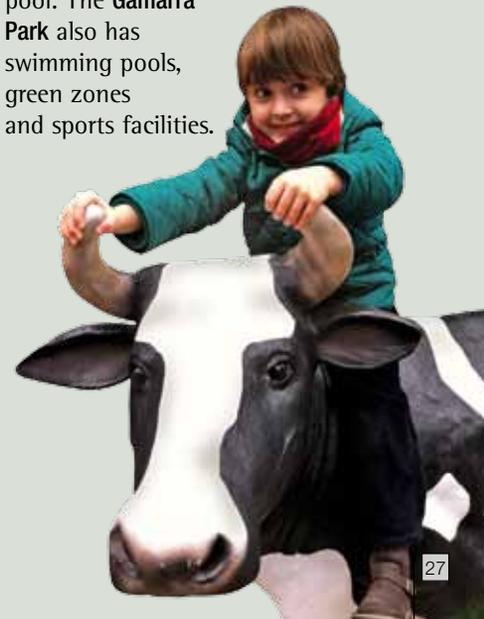
If you are accompanied by children on your trip to Vitoria-Gasteiz relax, because they will not be bored. There is an abundant of leisure activities.

One option is to visit the Green Belt, with its parks, forests, wetlands, a variety of flora and fauna and the **Ataria** bird observatory en Salburua, all just a few kilometres from the city centre. You can get there by bicycle or on foot.

Now in the city, the **Natural Science Museum** displays a priceless collection of amber and one of the most complete herbariums in Spain.

And if you are here in June, the **International Festival of Games in Vitoria-Gasteiz** is unique in the world for its size and volume. 4,000 different games in the open spaces that occupy much of the city.

The heat of summer is very bearable in Vitoria-Gasteiz, and even more so at the **AquaMendi** water park at the **Mendizorrotza** municipal swimming pool. The **Gamarra Park** also has swimming pools, green zones and sports facilities.



# From Vitoria-Gasteiz

...if you are staying two more days



SAMANIEGO



LAGUARDIA



LABRAZA



SALINAS DE AÑANA

After your stay in the Basque capital, you will probably have fallen in love with the lifestyle of this “Green Capital”. But there is also much to see in the surrounding areas of Vitoria-Gasteiz.

The **Rioja Alavesa** is an attractive area in southern Álava. Only 52 km from Vitoria-Gasteiz, the landscape is covered by vineyards, wineries and villages. That’s because wine is the driving force of the economy in these parts, producing Crianza and Reserva wines that win awards from all over the world. Rioja was promoted from Designation of Origin (DO) to Qualified Designation of Origin (DOCa) in 1991. A convenient way to explore the region is on board the **Enobús**, a wine tour bus service that departs from the capital of Alava. It takes you to visit a variety of wineries from traditional stone constructions to the latest design in titanium.

You will also stroll through medieval walled villages like **Labraza**, **Salinillas** and **Laguardia**. In addition to the culture of wine, this region situated on the Ebro River offers relaxing spas and wine therapy centres, cycling trails and natural attractions of the **Cantabria Mountain Range** and the **Laguardia Lagoons**.

If you want to have a good time with the children, **Valle Salado de Salinas de Añana** offers you an active plan. Take your family to witness the process of salt extraction from the saline springs. There are paths alongside the hundreds of wooden troughs that distribute the salt water from the springs over the more than 120,000 square metres of the saltern. The visit includes the open-air Spa Salino. You can bathe your hands and feet in the hyper-salty waters.



... and if you have a week

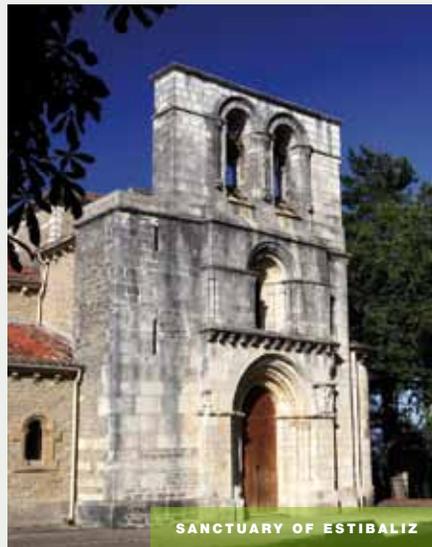


If you are in Vitoria-Gasteiz for a week, head to **Ayala** and **Montaña Alavesa** for some more sight-seeing.

**Llodio** is home to the **Basque Museum of Gastronomy**. Its neighbour **Amurrio** is the birthplace of *Txakoli* de Araba with various wineries producing this variety. The medieval town of **Artziniega** has spectacular green landscapes, and **Quejana**, a monumental construction containing a monastery and the Ayala Palace, is located nearby.



Not far away, close to **Delika**, you can visit the nearby "**El Mirador del Nervión**" (Nervion Lookout) where, suspended over the huge mountain basin you will discover the source of the Nervión. During periods of rain and snow there is a spectacular waterfall that plunges 270 meters over the Delika gorge to the depths of the Orduna Valley. It is reached by crossing the Orduna Pass in the Monte Santiago Nature Reserve (Burgos). The **Gorbea Natural Park** in **Murgia**, the **Legutiano** reservoirs and **Ullibarri Ganboa**, the **romanesque Sanctuary of Estibaliz** and the historic quarter of **Salvatierra-Agurain** are places to be enjoyed by young and old alike.



We recommend visiting **Montaña Alavesa**. Go up the Opakua pass from Salvatierra-Agurain until you reach the **Valley of Arana**, with its large Idiazabal Cheese factories, in **San Vicente**. **Korres** is the gateway to the **Izki Natural Park**, one of the best preserved forest areas on the Peninsula.



There's lots to choose from, from golf in **Urturi** and **Lagrán**, the equestrian centre and mountain biking in **Antoñana**, and the trout-fishing lake in **Santa Cruz de Campezo**. Finish your journey by visiting the museum in **Urizaharra-Peñacerrada**.



# THE BASQUE COUNTRY experiences





## *for all tastes*

**a**t this point you will know what the Basque Country has to offer. Bilbao, avant-garde design and an admirable capacity for transformation. San Sebastián, an elegant beauty with unrivalled gastronomic delights. Vitoria-Gasteiz, a European Green Capital with an Almendra Medieval Old Quarter.

But this is only a small portion of what's on offer. The fact is that the Basque Country, keeps some big surprises in store for you in a variety of ways.

Food and wine tourism is one of them, because even though you know that it is recognised around the world, it is only through experience that you can appreciate the reason for its fame.

You will discover why the coast gives meaning to the existence of this people.

If you love nature, you can enjoy it in a thousand varied ways: trekking, climbing, surfing, mountain-biking...

And if traditions and getting to know the cultural wealth of a region's people is your thing, the Basque Country keeps alive an ancient past that gives it its identity.

enjoy the

# dining delights *of the Basque Country*

“

*It may just be that one of the reasons you are visiting the Basque Country is the cuisine... Through each house, gastronomy club, bar or restaurant, Gastronomy and Cuisine are written in capital letters*

”





ARZAK



BERASATEGUI



SUBIJANA



ADURIZ



ATXA

When you meet the great figures of Basque cuisine, you will find that they have earned their reputation the hard way. Many stand out on their own and receive the acclaim of gourmet critics. Their 26 Michelin stars prove it (april 2013). Each award for Basque cuisine follows hard on the heels of another. Along with Paris, San Sebastian is the only European city that has 3 restaurants with 3 Michelin stars!

In the Basque Country there is an artist behind every dish

You will find that every small restaurant offers an attractive and impressive menu. The grill houses (*erretegiak*) propose menus based on charcoal-grilled fish or meat. Some outstanding establishments are located in Getaria, Orio, Tolosa, Sukarrieta, Larrabetzu or Armentia.

The cider houses (*sagardotegiak*) offer the same with the added attraction of the picturesque setting among barrels or *kupelas*. The wineries of the Rioja Alavesa offer another fine manner of dining.



TOP  
EXPE-  
RIENCE

Your  
introduction  
to gourmet  
cooking

You can go home from the Basque Country not only having tasted these delights in the form of pintxos or in a fine restaurant, but having learned to make them.

To do so, we would suggest taking one of the many culinary innovation courses.

They will allow you to enjoy an unforgettable meal in a restaurant with Michelin stars.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

NANOASTRONOMY

# PINTXOS



**t**he Basque Country has created a new way of dining: *pintxos*. They began as unassuming Gildas made with chilli pepper and anchovy and as Péles, or boiled eggs. The idea was to eat something between glasses of wine... Now the tiny snacks in bars are made with great care by their creators. This is the sophisticated science of nanogastronomy.

You will not be able to resist them: fish pudding from the Plaza de la Constitución in San Sebastián, or a sophisticated bite of roast pork marinated in spiced oil at the

Guggenheim Bilbao, or a curl of scrambled eggs with *perretxikos* wild mushrooms from Calle Prado in Vitoria-Gasteiz. You will discover the delicious world of the pintxo in the Basque Country...!

In Vitoria-Gasteiz and San Sebastián you can get the "**pintxo card**" and guides will help you to discover this new culinary expression.



**TOP**  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE -

## Beginners course in *pintxos*

If tasting them is fantastic, learning to make them is absolutely thrilling.

We suggest that you attend any of the introductory courses to pintxos or their association with the best wines under the guidance of experts and creative cooks.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

- [www.vitoria-gasteiz.org](http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org)
- [www.bilbao.net](http://www.bilbao.net)
- [www.donostia.org](http://www.donostia.org)
- [www.sansebastianturismo.com](http://www.sansebastianturismo.com)
- [www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)
- [www.campeonatodepintxos.com](http://www.campeonatodepintxos.com)
- [www.ondoloinapartments.wordpress.com](http://www.ondoloinapartments.wordpress.com)
- [www.pintxosdebilbao-patricia.blogspot.com](http://www.pintxosdebilbao-patricia.blogspot.com)





# the markets

ORDIZIA MARKET

TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## Seasonal fairs

Extraordinary markets are organised throughout the year, like those of **Saint Thomas**, in the three Basque capitals, the Livestock Fair in **Agurain**, the Potato Fair at **Valdegovía-Gaubea**, the **Santiago Fair** in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Day of the **Pepper from Gernika**, the Farmer's Market in **Balmaseda** and the Grape Harvest Festival in the **Rioja Alavesa**.

Cider, cheese, tuna, anchovies and mackerel, as well as *txakoli* sparkling wines, are sold in **Astigarraga**, **Ordizia**, **Orio**, **Hondarribia** and **Zarautz**. Basques like to buy seasonal products: Idiazabal Cheese, summer vegetables and fruit, autumn mushrooms and white beans for the winter.

[www.gipuzkoa.net](http://www.gipuzkoa.net)  
[www.bilbao.net](http://www.bilbao.net)  
[www.gernika-lumo.net](http://www.gernika-lumo.net)  
[www.mercadolaplaza.com](http://www.mercadolaplaza.com)  
[www.nekanet.net](http://www.nekanet.net)  
[www.gastronomiavasca.eu](http://www.gastronomiavasca.eu)  
[www.biolur.net](http://www.biolur.net)  
[www.ordiziakoazoka.com](http://www.ordiziakoazoka.com)

## Market days

You will love to get to know the municipal and produce markets where professional chefs and housewives alike buy their top quality products. And best of all, they add special attraction: a unique opportunity to engage in a lively discussion about one product or another.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



# SPRING

At whatever time of year you visit to the Basque Country, you will observe an authentic seasonal produce.

The Basque spring is the time for curds, or *mamiak*, of the first peas and broad beans, anchovies and mackerel. The new cider is also at the ideal stage for drinking. Beef and mutton -especially the lamb- offer a tempting reason for a fiesta or banquet. Don't miss it.



Autumn is the time for kidney beans (*babarrunak*), truffle and potatoes from Alava.

The hunting season adds pigeons, partridges, woodcock and wild boar to the table. And pay attention to the delicious mushrooms and other fungi that reach the kitchen -*zizahoris* (*Edulis amanita*), *onttobeltzas* (*Boletus aereus*) and *onttozuris* (*Amanita caesarea*)- and also chestnuts, walnuts and caserio apples. It's vintage time.

# AUTUMN



A dish for every

# SEASON



# WINTER

# SUMMER



Summer has the air of the sea: skipjack tuna, sardines from Biscay, *txipirones* (baby squid) from San Sebastián and Mutriku, red mullet, *txitxarros* (horse mackerel), *txangurros* (crab), sea bass, monkfish... You will enjoy the restaurants in ports and coastal towns! The same goes for meat: go to a grill house and check it out.

Basque market gardeners also join the summer party: red and green peppers, meaty tomatoes, spicy Tolosa peppers, green beans and superb lettuce...

Perhaps the best time to show off Basque cuisine is the winter. Edible thistles, beans, cauliflowers and leeks come from the gardens... Meat, bacon and black pudding from the fields and barns. The sea provides exquisite bream, and elvers...



## A gourmet goes shopping...

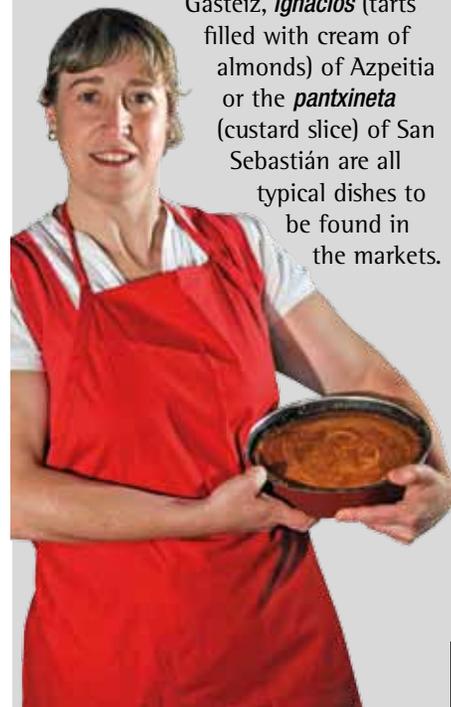
You will want it all: duck **foie gras**, **salt flower** from Añana, **cod** from the northern seas or **extra virgin oil** from the Rioja Alavesa.

The products offered by the Basque delicatessen is endless: suggestive *txistorras* (pork sausage) local vegetables, tasty preserves, the delicious **Peppers from Gernika**, *perretxikos* wild mushrooms from Araba/Álava, **skipjack tuna** from Lekeitio, **truffles** from Santa Cruz de Campezo, **Crianza** and **Reserva** wines from the Rioja Alavesa, *txakoli* or **Fish preserves** from Bermeo.



Sweets such as *cocotes* of Markina (tarts), *cigarrillos* and *tejas* (almond waffles) of Tolosa, *txutxitos* (puff cakes) or the *goxua* (layered cream cake) from Vitoria-

Gasteiz, *ignacios* (tarts filled with cream of almonds) of Azpeitia or the *pantxineta* (custard slice) of San Sebastián are all typical dishes to be found in the markets.



# Gastronomic contests and fiestas

“  
*Cuisine is present in every expression of Basque life in the form of well attended celebrations, gastronomic contests or culinary exhibitions*  
”



**O**n squares, in gastronomy clubs, shopping centres, on saints' days or popular pilgrimages, hundreds of cooking fans get involved in the most varied **culinary contests** that take place all over the Basque Country. Their proposals embrace the usual culinary fields: bean stews, paellas, *putxeras* (stew), potatoes, snails, tortillas, cod and *marmitako* (fish and potato stew). Entire families and groups of friends take part.

If you take a stroll beside the La Concha Beach in summer you will see housewives, young cooking fans willing to learn and professional chefs from the bars and taverns taking part in a “*tortilla de patatas*” (Spanish omelette) contest.

The competition in Bilbao's Arenal during the Aste Nagusia (August fiestas) focuses on casseroles, on the best paella in the meadows of Aixerrota de Algorta, stews in the Rioja Alavesa and rabbit goulash in Laudio-Llodio. But undoubtedly the *marmitako* is the favourite dish for culinary championships along the Basque Coast.

At a higher level, there are numerous **Basque gastronomy clubs** competing in regional competitions. The rivalries are fierce, but it's the fun that counts.

In Balmaseda, given its mining tradition, they still make the famous *putxeras* the traditional way: kidney beans, vegetables, ribs and chorizo. You too can take part.

Whether for amateurs or professionals, culinary contests cover the entire calendar

And if you really want to learn to cook, the **San Sebastián Gastronomika** and the **European Week of Cuisine** contests held at the Zaldiaran Restaurant in Vitoria-Gasteiz bring together the best chefs and food critics every year. And that's not all: events like **Algusto, Saber y Sabor** in Bilbao, the CineGourland Festival in Getxo, the Championship of **Pintxos 'Euskadi Saboréala'** in Hondarribia, the **Week of the Pintxo and the Cazuelita** (stew) in Vitoria-Gasteiz will give you new ideas and appetising moments.

**TOP  
EXPERIENCE**

## Pintxo route

You can do a guided pintxo tour to try these miniature delights in all of the three Basque capitals.

## Main course: Putxera

In Balmaseda, as a reminiscence of the Robla train that connected Bilbao to La Robla (Leon), they continue to make the famous putxera (railway stew) in the traditional way: beans, vegetables, spare ribs and chorizo. Go ahead and take part.

## And now dessert

Vitoria-Gasteiz offers the option of a guided tour of bakeries and pastry shops. Can you think of a sweeter walk?

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



Museums, interpretation centres and the university

# Cooking at the Basque Culinary Center

In the Basque Country cooking has attained the rank of a science, and the University has even devoted a faculty to it with the recently opened **Basque Culinary Center**. Several interpretation centres and gastronomic museums such as the **Basque Museum of Gastronomy** in Laudio-Llodio operate in the Basque Country, where you can investigate the various domestic and professional culinary fields, cuisine from different eras and machines to aid food preparation, as well as an extensive culinary bibliography.

In Tolosa the **Gorrotxategi Museum of Cakes and Pastries** exhibits the working techniques of confectioners from the 14th to the 19th centuries. **The Honey Museum** in Murgia has a collection of production techniques from the Gorbeia district.



**El Rincón del Pan** (Bread Museum) shows the milling and baking tradition of the Urola district. In Ordizia you will find the **D'elikatuz Food and Gastronomy Interpretation Centre**, and the **Idiazabal Cheese Interpretation Centre**, located in nearby Idiazabal, explains the secrets of the designation of origin and offers tasting.

## Wine science

Wine and cider also have their school. The "**Villa Lucía**" **Wine Centre** in Laguardia will show you how wine is made and includes virtual tastings and games. Another nearby museum is that of the Bodegas Valdelana winery of Elciego, which has a cellar dating from 1583 and a **Wine Museum** endowed with wine-making exhibits from the neolithic to last century.

The town of Astigarraga is home to the **Sagardoetxea Apple and Cider Interpretation Centre**. An attractive museum area offers the latest technologies with computer panels, interactive material, photos and games.

[www.euskolabel.net](http://www.euskolabel.net)  
[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)  
[www.sagardoetxea.com](http://www.sagardoetxea.com)  
[www.gipuzkoakomuseoak.net](http://www.gipuzkoakomuseoak.net)  
[www.bculinary.com](http://www.bculinary.com)



# RIOJA

A L A V E S A

A VOYAGE  
THROUGH  
THE WORLD *of wine*

LAGUARDIA

“

*Devotion to good food has given rise to wine tourism in the Basque Country, and new resources and proposals are added every day. If you are looking for a fun-filled getaway to mix your love of cooking with landscapes and a variety of activities:*

*This is your trip!*

”

**W**

ithin its area, Rioja Alavesa combines a

range of attractions that will enable you to learn all about grapes, vineyards and wineries.

The fame of Rioja Alavesa wines has a long history. Membership of the Rioja Qualified Designation of Origin is an expression of the high quality you'll find in both small and huge wineries. Tourist Offices in Laguardia, Labastida and Elciego will suggest travel plans suited to the time you have available. One option is to visit villages, vineyards and wineries enjoying the culture of wine. You may want to explore the area on a relaxing bicycle tour. There are also wine-related spas and numerous renowned restaurants throughout the region...

[The tranquility of the vineyards](#)



VINTAGE

The Rioja Alavesa, located between the left bank of the Ebro River and the Cantabria Mountain Range, possesses a rich historical and cultural footprint. Megalithic remains such as **Chabola de la Hechicera**, **los Llanos**, and **El Sotillo...**

Vineyards, olive groves, dolmens, outstanding architecture, necropolises, wineries, cave wine presses, chapels, bridges, trails and cellars are all found in this area. All this will contribute to making your journey both intense and relaxing.

[www.cuadrillariojaalavesa.com](http://www.cuadrillariojaalavesa.com)  
[www.riojalavesa.com](http://www.riojalavesa.com)  
[www.olivo-adora.org](http://www.olivo-adora.org)  
[www.alavaturismo.com](http://www.alavaturismo.com)  
[www.rutadelvinoderiojaalavesa.com](http://www.rutadelvinoderiojaalavesa.com)

## Visit a traditional winery...

In your visit to the Rioja Alavesa you will learn to appreciate both the small family winery with its long history and inexplicable underground cellars, hidden under a street or in the foundations of some home, and the spectacular design that modern architects create for the great wineries. Wine-related architecture is impressive.

## ...or the most avant garde

You will marvel at the Santiago Calatrava-designed Ysios winery at Laguardia with its outstanding undulating roof against the backdrop of the Cantabria Mountain Range. Iñaki Azpiazu is the architecture of the Bodegas Baigorri winery in Samaniego. The French architect Philippe Mazières designed Villa Real in Laguardia. Both the Campillo winery in

**TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE**



ELCIEGO

Laguardia and Faustino in Oion constitute landmarks on your trip to the Rioja Alavesa, and the Gehry-designed titanium facility at the Bodega Vinos de los Herederos del Marques de Riscal winery in Elciego is a delight to the eye. In a few moments you will pass 19th century underground cellars to the cutting edge of wine-related architecture.

But to explore the Rioja Alavesa in the most relaxing way we suggest you forget your car and use the **Enobús** (Wine Bus) that departs from Bilbao or Vitoria-Gasteiz and takes you on a guided tour to every corner of this fascinating region.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

# TXAKOLI

With three different designations of origin –Getaria, Bizkaia and Araba – *txakoli* is in demand on the sophisticated and innovative international wine market. The taste is different from anything else you will have experienced.

a wine that  
ignores  
borders

*t*he warm, humid air from the Bay of Biscay drove the cultivation of attractive vineyards for production of the *txakoli* sparkling wine, next to the hundreds of caserios along the coasts of Gipuzkoa and Biscay. Commendable progress in growth and quality of this wine began with inclusion in the designations of origin twenty years ago.

## With the breeze from the Cantabrian Sea

The districts of **Getaria, Zarautz and Bakio** (on the coast) and **Amurrio, Orduña and Goierri** (inland), have entertaining routes that combine culture with gastronomy and wine tasting.





**TOP**  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## The taste of *txakoli*

You can visit one of the wineries that produces this local delicacy, do a nighttime tasting perhaps, to discover the secrets of this unique wine.

While you are here, you can also discover coastal and inland villages full of character and tradition. Along your way, you'll see vineyards of the grape that goes on to work its magic and become *txakoli*.

When they teach you how best to accompany the wine with other local products such as Idiazabal Cheese, Anchovies from Bermeo or Peppers from Gernika, you'll start to feel like a true *sommelier*.

And remember that *txakoli* from the Basque Country boasts 3 designations of origin:

- for Álava (Aiara-Ayala and Alto Nervión) '*Arabako txakolina*'  
[www.txakolidealava.com](http://www.txakolidealava.com)
- for Getaria (Aia, Orio, Zarautz, Olaberri and Getaria) '*Getariako txakolina*'  
[www.getariakotxakolina.com](http://www.getariakotxakolina.com)
- for Biscay (Bakio and Gernika-Lumo) '*Bizkaiko txakolina*'  
[www.bizkaikotxakolina.org](http://www.bizkaikotxakolina.org)

If you would like to experience a winery tour:  
[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

**TOP**  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## Dining in a cider house

### *A robust menu*

Cider from the *kupela* (barrel), cod or pepper omelette, a magnificent T-bone ox steak, cheese, nuts and quince jelly... that's what any Basque cider house will place before you!

The cider season starts on the Feast of San Sebastián in January and ends in May, but virtually all establishments keep their doors open throughout the year. In many of them spontaneous *otxotes*, or choruses, are recited. Sometimes entertaining *bertsolaris* contests are organised, in which improvised verses are composed on the spot.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)





*Culture forged*

BY THE FORCE OF THE *Sea*

“

*The sea plays a leading role in the Basque Country.*

*Not only because it sculpts the varied landscape where gentle beaches meet towering cliffs, but also due to the wealth it provides for the towns and cities bathed by its waters.*

*To understand it is to understand the history, culture and traditions of the Basque people*

”

**t**he link between the sea and the Basque Country is nothing new. **The Cantabrian Sea** has always played an essential role in the landscape, economy and life of the people close to it, giving rise to customs still rooted in the maritime tradition. When you visit places with economies closely linked to the sea you will be better placed to understand something of the nature of the people and their ancient culture.

### The soul of the fisher

This maritime spirit has its origins in the whaling. Thus fishing offered a stable and worthy way of life: the men going down to the sea to fish, and the women mending the nets or selling the catch. Even today in many ports you can see how they keep to the same roles. The need to protect their

interests led the sailors to unite in **guilds**, an arrangement that still survives. You can visit the guilds of Hondarribia or the Etxetxu of the Puerto Viejo de Algorta today.

The need for protection from the ferocity of the Cantabrian Sea had something to do with the religious leanings of the sailors. This devotion is reflected in the numerous patron saint festivals, such as the “cármenes”, “madalenas” or “san pedros” (festivals consecrated to Our Lady of Carmen, Mary Magdalene and St Pedro respectively) taking place in many coastal towns. The churches they built also bear witness to this devotion: the Sanctuary of the **Virgen de Guadalupe** in Hondarribia, **Santa Catalina** in Mundaka and **San Telmo** in Zumaia are good examples.



MATXITXAKO LIGHTHOUSE

To comprehend the legacy of this maritime culture and explore its heritage, so you can better understand the relationship of the Basque people with the sea, we recommend visiting the many museums scattered along the coast. You could start with the San Sebastián **Aquarium**, a pioneering institution in maritime studies. You will love the Oceanarium, with its transparent tunnel giving 360° views of the marine world. Also in San

Sebastián you can see the **Naval Museum**, with dedicated exhibitions chosen for their historical and cultural relevance. The **Oiasso Roman Museum** in Irún takes its name from the city built here by the romans, and displays daily life in ancient times.

If you would like to see a working shipbuilder's shop, a coastal carpentry from the old days, the **Ondartxo Maritime Cultural Centre** restores seacraft by hand and exhibits a wide range of historical vessels. The **Bentalekua Museum**, in Mutriku, conserves a wooden apparatus that was used to aid organisation of the Dutch auction for selling fish.

### Explore the depths of the sea. They are full of treasure

In Biscay we have the **Fisherman's Museum** and "Aita Guria" **Whaling Interpretation Centre** in Bermeo. The **Plasentia de Butrón Museum** in Plentzia, tells the town's maritime history through navigational instruments and models. The **Maritime Museum Ría of Bilbao**, located in the old shipyards, shows vessels related to the port. The **Rialia Industry Museum** in Portugalete covers the history of mining and ironworks in Biscay. The **Navigation Technology Interpretation Centre** in Lekeitio explores the world of lighthouses and navigational techniques. The **Sea Interpretation Centre** in Santurtzi documents port life at the beginning of last century.

## The houses of the masters

### Ignacio Zuloaga Cultural Space, in Zumaia

In Zuloaga's house, located in the dunes of Zumaia verging on the Camino de Santiago, you will find works by the painter born in Eibar in addition to others including El Greco and Goya.

[www.espaciozuloaga.com](http://www.espaciozuloaga.com)

### Casa Víctor Hugo, in Pasai Donibane

The house where Victor Hugo wrote about the people of Pasaia is now a museum where you can see writings and drawings of the period when the artist lived in this seventeenth century building.

[www.victorhugopasaia.net](http://www.victorhugopasaia.net)

**TOP  
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RIEN-  
CE -**

## Apropos of Balenciaga

Considered the most influential designer of the twentieth century, his hometown of Getaria pays tribute to the great tailor and visionary at the **Cristobal Balenciaga Museum**.

Not only can you visit the museum as a TOP experience but you can also learn the secrets and techniques and, in the workshop under the guidance of professional experts, even make an article of clothing of your own.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)  
[www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com](http://www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com)



GETARIA





# BASQUE BEACHES

*favoured  
by queens,  
painters  
and poets*

“

*The Basque Coast stretches through 250 kilometres of natural wonders in the form of beaches, estuaries, cliffs and spectacular geological structures*

”

The seaside tradition of the **Bay of Biscay** between Getxo and Biarritz has a long history. In 1887 Queen Maria Cristina ordered the erection of the wooden Royal Huts to preserve her modesty on the beach of her favourite city, **San Sebastián**. It could be said that the area became the tourist destination par excellence when royalty, aristocracy and the European bourgeoisie chose this stretch of coastline for their holidays.

All the beaches guarantee the quality of their waters and services with certifications renewed year after year.

## [The Basque Country has 21 accessible beaches](#)

There are urban beaches ideal for families amongst which **La Concha**, in San Sebastián, **Astondo** in Gorniz and **Isuntza**, in Leketitio stand out.

The best for a young, fun-loving atmosphere are **Zurriola** Beach in San Sebastián, or the beaches of **Gorniz** and **Plentzia** in Biscay. The surfboard and sea kayak are most at home at **Zarautz**, **Bakio** or **Laidatxu**, the latter in Mundaka.

**Laida** in Ibarrangelua is a very special beach. Its charm derives from the beauty of the natural setting where it is located, in the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, one of the Basque Country's most important natural treasures.

Another jaw-dropping beach is **Itzurun** in Zumaia, and it can also teach you the geological history of the Basque Coast.

And if you need an accessible place, **Ereaga**, **Arrigunaga** (Getxo), **Laga**, **Karraspio** and **Toña** (Sukarrieta), in Biscay or **La Concha**, **Zarautz** and **Ondarbeltz**, in Gipuzkoa are a few.



ZARAUTZ

And finally, if you are into naturism, the Basque Country has a wide variety of small coves and several beaches where you can wonder freely. **Lapatxa** in Ea, **Barrrika**, **Ulía** and **Igueldo** in San Sebastián are wonderful bays. If you prefer beaches, try **Zurriola** in San Sebastián, **Zarautz**, or **Saturraran** in Mutriku. In Biscay **Meñakoz**, in Barrika-Sopelana, **Aizkorri**, in Getxo, or **Barrinatxe** in Sopelana-Getxo are outstanding.

It was at the end of the 50s when **surf** arrived on the Basque Coast, specifically to Biarritz. Slowly but surely the sport attracted followers, and today it is a benchmark surfing area. If you are interested, you can choose from numerous active tourism companies that offer courses and classes to get started or for those who are already experts. From **San Sebastián** to **Getxo**, including **Zarautz**, **Sopelana**, **Bakio** and **Mundaka**, which has the best waves in Europe, love of surfing is reflected in the endless number of surfers from around the world who come here. The towering waves provided by the Cantabrian Sea (some ranked World Class) makes it possible to hold major championships such as those of San Sebastián, Zarautz and Sopelana, the latter two included in the European and world circuits and Punta Galea Big Challenge, Getxo (Big Wave Surf Championship).

[www.surfingeuskadi.net](http://www.surfingeuskadi.net)



MUNDAKA

# BASQUE COAST GEOPARK



TIDAL PLAIN

**a** must for your trip is a route along the coast taking in the *flysch*, a stratified stone complex showing 60 million years of the history of our planet and which makes up the **Basque Coast Geopark**. As if it were the leaves of an open book, contemplating the *flysch* you will appreciate the evolution of the earth through the formation of the rocks in this area of the coastline. This enclave also stores other natural and cultural features of the region.

The rock layers that you will see have been uncovered due to continual wave action.

You can access the enclave from the towns of **Zumaia**, **Deba** and **Mutriku**. For a better look there are various alternatives: boat trips, *trekking* the *flysch*, horseback routes and a visit to **Algorri**, the **Natural Resources Interpretation Centre of Zumaia**, that will enable you to explore this geological structure of the Basque Coast in an easy and entertaining way.

Other areas of geological interest are the petrified dunes of **Astondo**, in Gorniz and the stretch of cliffs beginning at **Punta Galea** in Getxo and taking in **Sopelana**, **Barrika**, **Plentzia** and **Gorniz** before ending at **Armintza**.

[www.algorri.eu](http://www.algorri.eu)  
[www.geoparkea.com](http://www.geoparkea.com)

“

*The Basque Coast Geopark has been a member of the European Network of Geoparks recognised by UNESCO since 2010*

”



There is also something for bird-watchers. The **Txingudi wetlands** in Irún, **Cabo Higuier** in Hondarribia or the **Aketxe Island** in Bermeo are some great natural observatories. The **Urdaibai Bird Center** in Gautegiz-Arteaga is a bird banding and study centre. In fact the Basque Country has a tourist product giving full information on bird watching:

[www.birdingeuskadi.net](http://www.birdingeuskadi.net)



## Flysch & Karst Experience

Thanks to the Nautilus Geological Interpretation Centre in Mutriku you can take a boat trip to see the cliffs from the sea. We then dock at Zumaia at the Algorri Natural Resources Interpretation Centre where you will be able to satisfy your curiosity about the rock formations.

## On the high seas

Place yourself at the orders of an expert skipper who will teach you some of the secrets of sailing on the high seas as, with a bit of luck, you sight dolphins that greet you as they leap from the waves.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



“ Mountains that rise from the sea and fall to form picturesque valleys and plains spread with vineyards... The Basque Country is revealed in all its glory as a landscape full of contrasts, bewitching and full of colour

”

# THE NATURAL BASQUE COUNTRY

a little  
paradise  
to be enjoyed



AIZKORRI-ARATZ

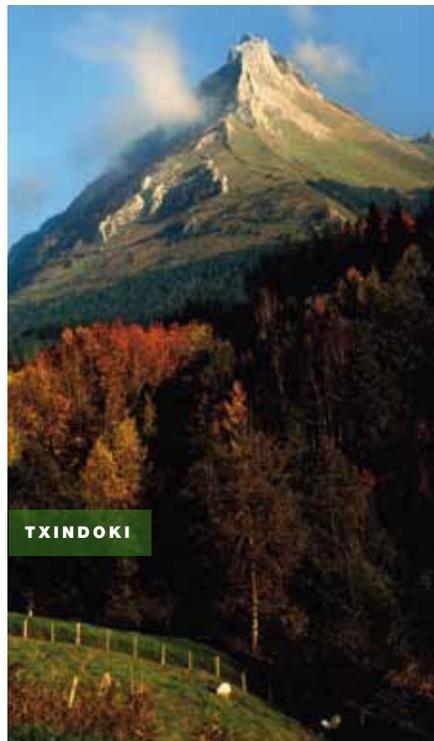
**P**rotected sites, natural parks and rich ecosystems comprise the diverse scope in which nature shows herself in this small country.

This is the case of the **Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve**. This unique enclave, enables you to enjoy walks along the **Laida and Laga Beaches**, or to enjoy the views of the sea from the **San Juan de Gaztelugatxe Chapel**. You can also immerse yourself in trails to arrive at the **Oma Forest**, a truly enchanted place.

Here culture, heritage and nature combine to offer you a **network of natural parks** that spread throughout the territory.

Near Vitoria-Gasteiz you have the **Gorbeia Natural Park**, the traditional benchmark for Basque mountaineering. On both its Alava and Biscay faces you can enjoy wonders such as the **Goiuru** falls, or historical references like the **Cross of Gorbea**, which crowns the summit. If you prefer, you can visit the **Sanctuary of Arantzazu** or walk the mountain pass of the **San Adrián Tunnel**, in the **Aizkorri-Aratz Natural Park**, in the very heart of Gipuzkoa, where you can also visit the **Arrikruz Caves**, 14 km of interconnected galleries which make it the largest cave system in the province.

In the **Aralar Natural Park** you will find megalithic monuments, and in the **Armañón Natural Park** caves such as Pozalagua, unique for its eccentric stalactites, await you. In the **Urkiola Natural Park** you can visit the Sanctuary of San Antonio Abad and San Antonio de Padua,



TXINDOKI

### Culture, heritage and nature come together in a network of natural parks spread throughout the territory

a magical enclave with a popular legend about the stone at its entrance: anyone who turns it around three times will find their love.

Erosion of the limestone that abounds in the Basque Country shows the imprint of time in the **Valderejo Natural Park**. A natural route that will leave you speechless. **Izki Natural Park** is a beautiful little quiet spot, and before leaving the area, you should visit Peñacerrada and its amazing walled village.

In the foothills of the Pyrenees and only 10 kilometres from the Basque Coast, the **Aiako Harria** rise up. Their three main peaks, of great scenic beauty, are known as the **Tres Coronas** (Three Crowns). You can enjoy walks in the **Pagoeta Natural Park**, in Gipuzkoa, and in the **Iturraran Botanic Gardens**.

# THE ACTIVE OUTDOORS *by foot or bike*

BETWEEN ORIO AND ZUMAIA

**h**ikers and mountain enthusiasts have a perfect opportunity to enjoy walking in the Basque Country. Seeing the **Cultural Landscape Legacy** of the Basque Country allows you, in a route of just 40 kilometres, to experience a wide variety of different landscapes: from ordered vineyards to unspoiled mountains, from the coast to the inland plains.

Taking the GR-38 trail you can witness an ancient heritage: the mule-driving tradition of the **Wine and Fish Route**. The route takes you from the Rioja Alavesa to Lekeitio, Bermeo and Ondarroa, on the Basque Coast.

This is a vivid example of the Cultural Landscape Legacy that defines Basque culture.

Likewise, by taking the GR-120 you can follow the footsteps of San Ignatius of Loyola on the **Route of the Three Temples**, that includes the pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Loyola, the Sanctuary of Arantzazu and the Chapel of La Antigua, while you explore the interior of Gipuzkoa.

[www.tierraignaciana.com](http://www.tierraignaciana.com)  
[www.senderismoeuskadi.net](http://www.senderismoeuskadi.net)





## Greenways, growing by leaps and bounds

The Basque Country has several **Greenways**, old railway lines converted into bicycle paths crossing landscapes.

**t**here are four **BTT Centres** (mountain bike centres) in Basque territory. Whether you choose the Basque Coast, the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve or the Mountains of Alava, climb on your bike and enjoy the beauty to be found along the routes.

[www.btteuskadi.net](http://www.btteuskadi.net)



There are hundreds of kilometres of routes, trails and tracks at your disposal for your favourite sport while you enjoy new scenery. Can you imagine anything better?

[www.viasverdes.com](http://www.viasverdes.com)

# The charm of the *rural world*

“

*In the Basque country more than anywhere else you notice the differences between the urban and rural environments.*

”

**TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE**



Aizkorri, Txindoki and Gorbea are three of the Basque Country's hallmark peaks.

But another of the interesting activities you can take part in on your routes through the Basque mountains is learning to make cheese and sharing the ancestral culture of the shepherds.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)

# W

hen you go to the country you will see that the character and traditions of the Basque people remain unchanged. Thus you will love getting to know what life is really like in these areas. There are numerous hotels and cottages where you will find its true history. Authenticity is the keynote of the Basque countryside.

But if you are interested in the activities of day-to-day life in the country you will be fascinated by a stay in a caserío (traditional Basque farmhouse), sharing a few days with a Basque family. This idea has the appeal of a direct contact with a nature that will stimulate your senses as you participate in everyday activities: cheese production, cider making, preparing meat, honey, jam, milking cows... in short, all kinds of activities that will immerse you in the reality of Basque rural life.

You will become familiar with their customs, enjoy the local cuisine especially related to the area you choose, learn words in the Basque language... you will be another member of the family. And if you are lucky your stay may coincide with one of the festivals, markets and popular celebrations that occur throughout the year in the surrounding area.

[www.nekatur.net](http://www.nekatur.net)





**TOP**  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE -

## The Basque Country in original version

If you want to go beyond a mere visit to the Basque Country we recommend that you immerse yourself in the experience of a different life, living with a family in a *caserío* and discovering everything involved in the Basque countryside.

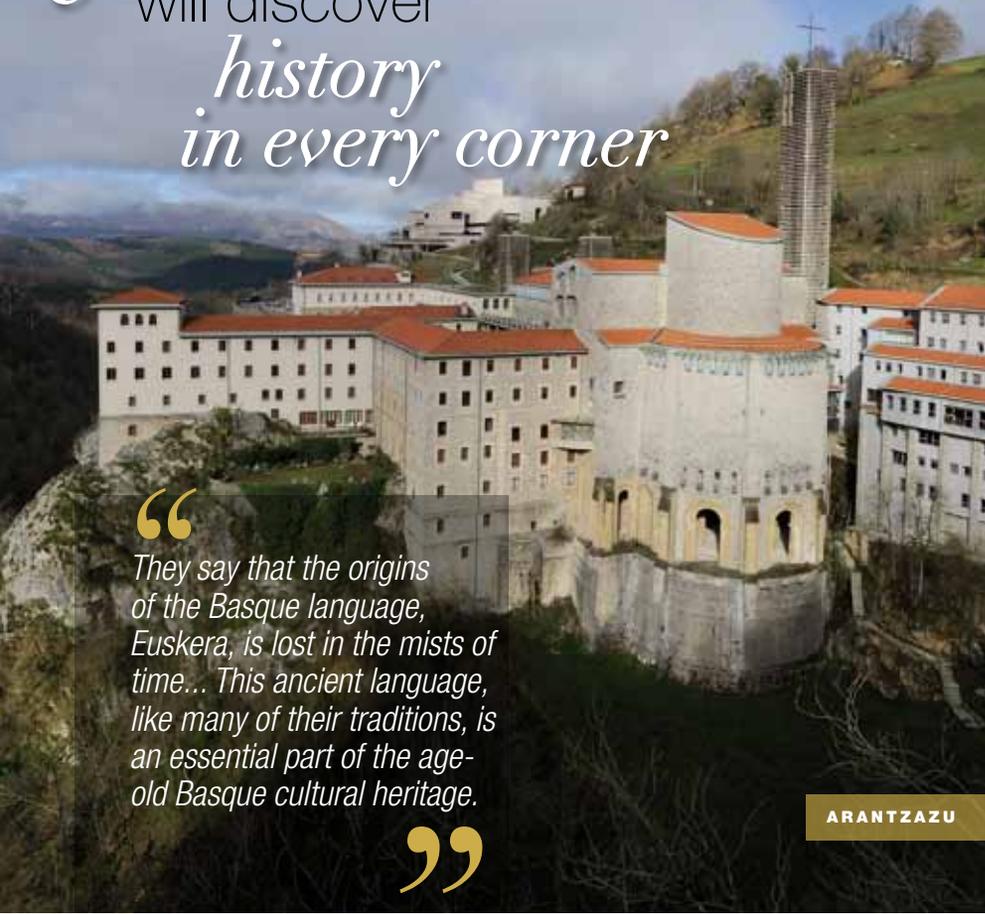
You will take part in the daily tasks of the *caserío* alongside the *baserritarras* "farmers", in their love of quality natural products, their cultivation, life in the open air, unsurpassed landscapes, contact with local traditions... and feel the peace and quiet of the countryside.

Choose the agrotourism option that most appeals to you and give free rein to your *baserriterrra* side.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



*you*  
will discover  
*history*  
*in every corner*



“  
*They say that the origins of the Basque language, Euskera, is lost in the mists of time... This ancient language, like many of their traditions, is an essential part of the age-old Basque cultural heritage.*

”

ARANTZAZU

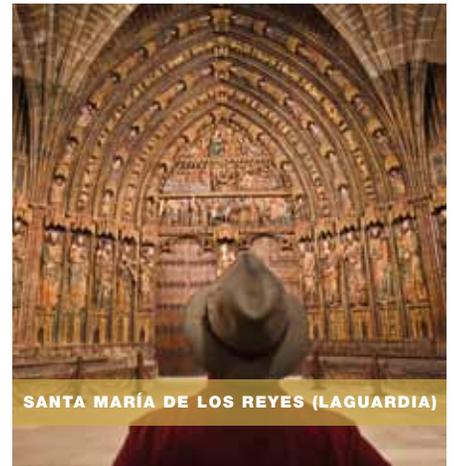
W

hen you are planning your route remember

that this corner of the Cantabrian Sea was inhabited by various peoples such as the vascones and has an ancestral language, Euskera, the origin of which is still unknown. It was an indomitable people and fought against the romans, arabs and visigoths. It was part of the Kingdom of Navarre, conquered by Castile in the 16th century.

What remains today is the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, which shares much of its culture with neighbouring Navarre.

If you have an interest in history you should begin your journey in the **paleolithic caves** at **Ekain** or **Santimamiñe**, or observe the **flysch** at the **Basque Coast Geopark** or visit the **dolmens** and **cromlechs** of the **Aiako Harria**, **Mount Adarra**, **Aralar**, **Rioja Alavesa** and **Valdegovia**.



SANTA MARÍA DE LOS REYES (LAGUARDIA)

When you travel the lands of **Álava** you will see the walled towns of **Antoñana**, **Vitoria-Gasteiz**, **Peñacerrada**, **Laguardia** and **Labraza**, which defended the interests of the Kingdom of Navarre. The towers and strongholds of **Quejana** in the Valley of **Ayala**, **Mendoza** and **Villanañe** will take you back to past ages... In the religious field, the **Santa María Cathedral** in **Vitoria-Gasteiz**, which is undergoing restoration, is definitely worth a visit.

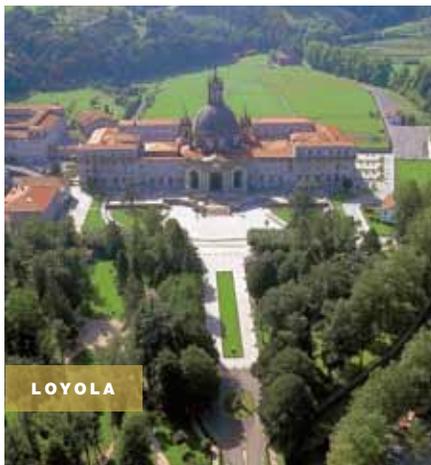


FINE ARTS (BILBAO)

**I**n **Biscay**, the cultural heritage is generous. You could start with the island city of Orduña, the Haizko megalithic itinerary, the Casa de Juntas (Assembly House) of Gernika-Lumo and, in Avellaneda, the docks and metalwork museums on the left bank of the Nervion. Don't forget the Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Archeology and the Bellas Artes Museum in Bilbao, the Zenarrutza Monastery, the Chapel of San Juan de Gaztelugatxe or the Vizcaya Bridge in Portugalete.

In **Gipuzkoa**, you can follow roman footsteps in the mines of Arditurri or the old port of Irun. If you are an art lover -or religious- the Basilicas of San Ignatius de Loyola and Santa Maria del Coro will attract your attention, as will the modernist Sanctuary of Arantzazu in Oñati, where the University is another must.

The San Telmo Museum in San Sebastián offers you an ethnographic study of the territory. The City Council, Library and Plaza de la Constitución in San Sebastián teach you about the history of the capital of Gipuzkoa.



LOYOLA



UNIVERSITY (OÑATI)

## the 2 Basque routes to Santiago

**T**he **Coastal Route**, also known as the **Northern Route**, is one of the oldest routes and was used by pilgrims from the Nordic Countries. From Hondarribia to Deba you will keep to the highroads overlooking the Cantabrian Sea on a delightful trail, experiencing the lively atmosphere of sea and fishing communities, not forgetting the ever-present farmhouses and their green pastures.

From Markina-Xemein the route becomes easier through the hinterland of Lea-Artibai and Busturialdea to reach the tranquility of Las Encartaciones.

The **Inland Route**, which joins the **French Route**, and allows you to explore territory with a variety of colours, forms and spaces... from the borders of Gipuzkoa and Álava. For the romans this route was the European freeway.



LA ARENA (MUSKIZ)

**Coastal stages:** Hondarribia  
San Sebastián - Zarautz - Deba Markina/  
Xemein - Gernika-Lumo - Bilbao  
Balmaseda or Portugalete - Kobaron

**Inland stages:** Irún - Hernani  
Tolosa - Zeraín - Salvatierra  
Vitoria-Gasteiz - La Puebla de Arganzón  
Salinillas de Buradón.

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)  
[www.oriodonejakue.net](http://www.oriodonejakue.net)



SAN TELMO (SAN SEBASTIÁN)

TOP  
EXPE-  
RIEN-  
CE

## Basque Mythology

Learn about Basque mythology, and the characters that fill the literature of a legendary country.

Your stroll will certainly be most entertaining if someone describes some of the characters in Basque mythology! **Mari**, a woman of fire who combs her hair in her cave before crossing the heavens; **Lamiak**, beautiful women with webbed feet who haunt the river banks; **Basajaun**, the lord of the forests with his brutal looks; **Jentilak**, the gentiles with their supernatural strength, and the **Sorginak**, witches with magic powers...

[www.basquecountrytourism.net](http://www.basquecountrytourism.net)



LAMIA

BASAJAUN

ALBOKA

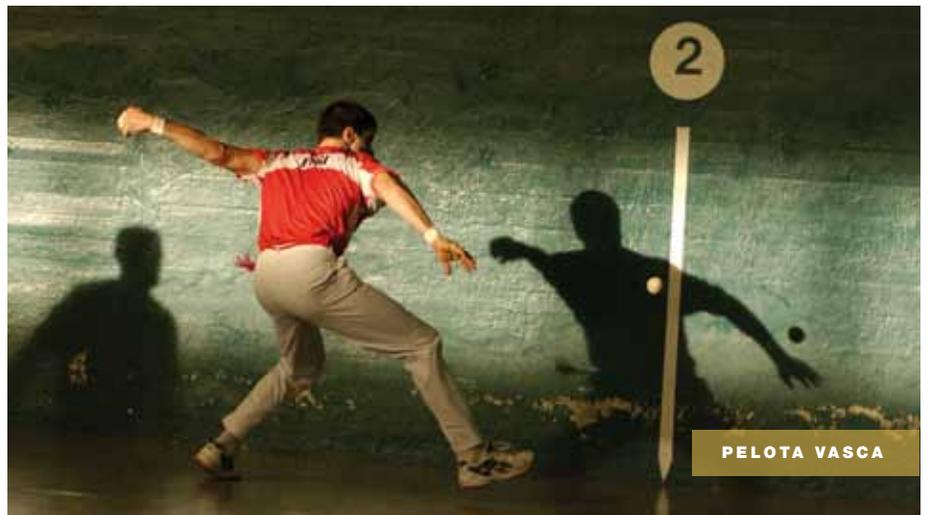


# Well conserved traditions

If you have never visited the Basque Country before you will probably be curious about a lively dance that opens many celebrations: the **auresku**, a welcoming dance full of energy in which the **dantzari** (dancer) shows incredible flexibility. This is just one of the many examples of a rich heritage which, in addition to folklore, also includes legends, mythology, language, customs, traditions, rural sports, history, and all the expressions of art. Music has an idiosyncratic nature achieved by the use of traditional instruments such as the **alboka** (woodwind), the **tristu** (flute), the **trikitixa** (accordion) and the **dultzaina** (oboe).



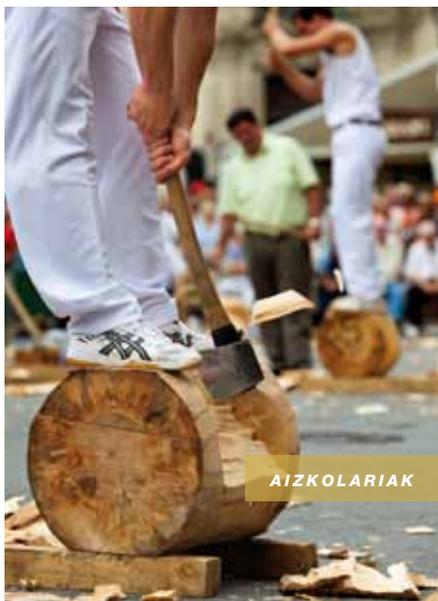
CASERIO



PELOTA VASCA



BASQUE DANCING



AIZKOLARIAK

### The rural sport (herri kirolak) is a reflection of work in the countryside.

Sport is also part of Basque traditions. and the *pelota mano* (handball), *pala* (bat) and *cesta punta* (basket tip) stadiums are always full. Bets are placed and the courts are a trilling spectacle.

Regattas of *traineras* (traditional fishing boats) and championships of *aizkolaris* (axes), *tronzalaris* (trunk sawing), *harrijasotzailes* (stone lifters) and *idi-demak* take place in many Basque localities.



TRAINERAS

## INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS

# *The Basque Country* on the **world scene**

Key Basque cultural events in the world of music, dance or theatre such as the Vitoria-Gasteiz and San Sebastián International Jazz Festivals know no borders.

In Getxo there are Folk, Blues and Jazz Festivals. The Basque Symphony Orchestra's Euskalduna opera season and the BBK Live Macro-Festival take place in Bilbao.

In San Sebastián you have Zinemaldi, the Film Festival, the Musical Fortnight, the Fantasy and Horror Film Week, the festivals of *bertsolaris*...

In Álava the Early Music Week, the Dantzan Maiatza Festival (dance), Magialdia (magic), the International Festival of Games, the Television and Radio Contest and the Azkena Rock Festival stand out...

For these reasons, whether you come with your family or with friends, your visit to the Basque Country can combine all the attractions this country has to offer in an endless succession of cultural ideas: music, sports, film and many more.



JAZZ FESTIVAL

# The

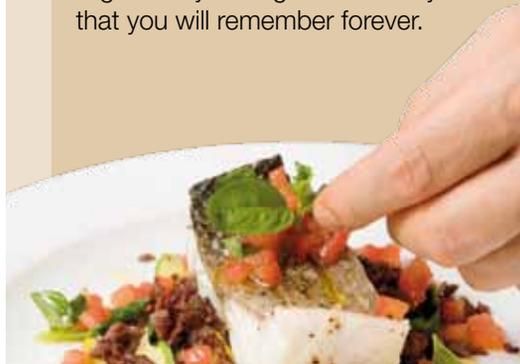
# 10

Ten, a hundred, a thousand... there are so many reasons that make the Basque Country an incredible destination. You will experience this at first hand when you meet the friendly hospitable people, learn its history, customs and traditions and admire the art and architecture of the cities... Not to mention all the delicious food that you will get to taste.

## 1

### Michelin-starred restaurants

A genuinely unforgettable luxury that you will remember forever.



## 2

### In San Sebastián and along La Concha in style

One of the most romantic strolls possible along the esplanade of La Concha Bay. San Sebastián has always set the style.



## 6

### Bilbao, Guggenheim and much more

Inmerse yourself in the most avant garde art and architecture surroundings of the present day.



## 7

### Traditional and avant garde wineries

And you can taste an Alavan Rioja in any of them. Txakoli is another interesting wine.

If you want to spend a lovely evening you can share a "txotx" in any Basque cider house.



*...we invite you to experience it all.*

# Unmissable experiences

*to savour the Basque Country...*

## 3

### Top class festivals

Film, Jazz, Rock, Folk, ancient or classical music, magic... a cultural offer that will delight you.



## 4

### A *pintxo* route

Enjoy a meal while you share conversation and laughter.



## 5

### A stroll through Urdaibai

Recognised as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, it will bring you closer to nature.



## 8

### The beach, sun and waves

Urban, natural, elegant, rough or calm, here you can choose the kind of beach that suits you for sunbathing or surfing.



## 9

### The Old Cathedral of Vitoria-Gasteiz, open for restoration

Explore one of the most surprising restoration processes in history.



## 10

### A gourmet purchase

To take home a memento of any of the high quality products made here.





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