BASQUE COUNTRY

Family Tourism

Enjoy this little country with the whole family

Play games to discover the Basque Country the fun way

EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY
There are 150 experiences to choose. They are subject to change and may be updated. Therefore, before you choose an experience and to find out about prices, schedules and places available, we advise you check the website:

www.basquecountrytourism.eus
There are many reasons why the Basque Country is the perfect destination for the whole family. We will showcase a small selection of things that you cannot miss. There are endless attractions that will enchant you. Wait and see.

The 10 musts from the Basque Country

Find them

- Bilbao
- San Juan de Gaztelugatxe
- San Sebastian
- Urdabai
- Vitoria-Gasteiz
- Balenciaga Museum
- Assembly House of Gernika
- Sanctuary of Loiola
- Bizkaia Bridge
- Laguardia

Your first challenge is to match the numbers on the map with the places of interest. To give you a hint number 1 is Bilbao. Now fill in the rest. This game will help you familiarise yourself with the location of these wonderful places.
THE BASQUE COUNTRY
Ideal for a short-distance family visit

It would be impossible to find a small area that has so many stunning places packed into one space. The Basque Country is the ideal place to enjoy numerous attractions in a short period: varied landscapes, pleasant climate, ancient culture, world-famous cuisine...

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

You will see that the Basque people have strong links with these natural environments: land and sea. Both have been determining factors in a lifestyle revealed by their idiosyncrasies: deeply rooted customs, a rich culture and traditional sports...

To better understand the nature of these people it is important that you immerse yourselves 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 notice the difference between the inhabitants inland and along the coast.

Memorable historical figures have shaped the personality of these communities and if you look closer 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 no less fascinated by the three capitals. Bilbao will surprise you with its transformation from an industrial city to an avant garde metropolis bringing together the great contemporary international architects. San Sebastian, 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 is an affordable luxury in the Basque Country: local seasonal products in 'pintxo' matched with a good wine from Rioja Alavesa, txakoli or cider. You are in the land of the good table.

Enjoy! Experiment, observe and surrender to the thrill...

www.basquecountrytourism.eus
Bilbao
with a brilliance that reflects its modernity

A city designed to be enjoyed where you can learn about its architecture and history, that provides endless fun options for the whole family: Museums, parks, street-markets, the Ría... Join us on this adventure.
Bilbao’s most famous crane owes its name to a beautiful young girl who crossed the estuary by boat every day at noon to bring lunch for her father who worked in the shipyard. The pretty young lady’s name was Carola, and the worker would greet her when she arrived. She became so popular that they named the crane after her.

In 1879 walls were built at the entrances of the Plaza Nueva and the arcades to fill it up with water and organize a huge, Venetian style, nautical festival with gondolas and everything!

Did you know that there is a devil’s bridge? The Castrejana bridge was used by pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Legend has it that a girl sold her soul to the devil for a bridge that would enable her to cross the Cadagua valley, where her loved one lived. She repented when the last stone was about to be placed and the crowing of the cockerel drove the devil from the place and she saved her soul.

Immerse yourself in the Old Quarter and its famous seven streets which is considered one of the best places to find great “pintxos” and to “txikitear” (have a few wines) in the city. Somera, Artekale, Tendería, Belostikale, Carnicería Vieja, Barrenkale y Barrenkale Barrena are a must to explore to taste the true flavour of this land.

Do some sport in one of the numerous parks and gardens: skating, cycling and running along the Ría, football and basketball. And if water sports are your thing, how about trying a giant paddle-surfboard for 6 people, or try some canoeing on the estuary.

Time to go shopping in the top trending establishments. You will find quality amongst top international brand names. Bilbao’s best children’s wear and toy shops are in Abando, Gran Via, Indautxu and the Old Quarter.

Visit Plaza Nueva on Sunday, when there is a street market for books, antiques, records... and if you collect football cards you can swap them right here.

You will feel the call of the sea as you cruise the Nervion Ría on one of its boats and discover Bilbao from a different viewpoint. An entertaining route on which you will be able to photograph the Guggenheim Museum, Calatrava’s Zubizuri Bridge, the Isozaki towers, the Euskalduna Concert Hall and the City Council building. Last but not least arrive at the Bizkaia Bridge. A World Heritage site and the only bridge of its kind still in working condition.

The greater part of these buildings are in Abandoibarra, a pedestrian zone on the banks of the Ría that you can explore on foot or by bike. This beautiful walk was once filled with shipyards and port facilities where now, sculptures by world-famous artists dot the landscape.
Doña Casilda Park: you can feed the ducks in their lovely pond and have fun in an extensive games area. In Abandoibarra there are activities such as basketball on a Sunday in Spring.

Etxebarria Park: Is an extensive green zone in Bilbao with facilities for skateboards, bikes, skates, etc. It is also the scene of the Aste Nagusia festival.

Bilbao’s green belt: provides routes especially designed to enjoy nature.

Europa Park: A large park located in the Txurdinaga district, ideal for sports such as skating, cycling, jogging, etc. There is also a sports centre within the park itself.

Deusto Park: A green zone located by the Ría with unbeatable views of the Euskalduna Concert Hall and the Paseo de Abandoibarra. It has a skate-park, a hockey field, a basketball court and park swings.

Plaza Nueva: Located in the heart of the Old Quarter, it is surrounded by arches and bars with terraces. It is a safe, quiet area where stalls are set up during certain festivities (Santo Tomás, Aste Nagusia...) to invite visitors to try the local products and buy whatever tickles their fancy.

Campo Volantín: This green zone has a bike lane ("bidegorri") and park swings surrounded by trees and leisure zones.

Arenal: One of Bilbao’s traditional parks with green zones and good public transport connections. On Sundays and holidays the kiosk is converted into an outdoor auditorium for the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra. It also has park swings and a small climbing wall.
Discover your inner artist at the Guggenheim Museum. The building designed by Frank Gehry evokes a grounded ship, in homage to Bilbao’s maritime history. Its wide and varied art contemporary collection will surprise young and old alike. Don’t forget to ask about its extensive family workshop programme.

Enjoy the family opera programme at the Arriaga Theatre. Discover the world of music and theatre in one of the city’s outstanding buildings. Built in the late nineteenth century and dedicated to Bilbao composer Juan Crisostomo de Arriaga, the “Spanish Mozart”, it suffered a fire in 1914 and flood damage in 1983.

The Ria de Bilbao Maritime Museum will give you the chance to discover the fascinating world of the sea and shipping. A panorama of the maritime heritage and its links with the Ria and its surroundings. And what better way to introduce this legacy to the little ones than a Playmobile click exhibition!

The Campos Eliseos Theatre with its superb modernist building and varied programme is well worth a visit and has children’s activities throughout the year.

Don’t miss a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts and revel in the painting and sculpture by great artists like El Greco, Sorolla, Gauguin and Zurbarán. Children can also enter the fascinating world of art thanks to the wide and varied programme of activities.

You can cool off in the water jet fountain outside the Guggenheim Museum during hot summer days. The children will enjoy playing in the jets of water that these entertaining underground fountains launch from time to time. And after cooling off, go play on the swings! Undoubtedly the most modern ones in the city.
We invite you to **nose around**

The La Ribera Market first opened its doors in the 14th century. The Bilbao market area was established in the Plaza Vieja next to the church of San Antón. Today it is the biggest covered market in Europe. It has a commercial area of 10,000 m² on three floors that houses stands for an endless variety of products, especially fresh food. There is also a special area for direct sale of produce from the baserris (traditional farmhouses).

Experience the **Aste Nagusia**. During the Semana Grande (the Great Week) at the end of August all Bilbao is a fiesta, and Marijaia (the Lady of the Fiestas) makes the festival into an unforgettable event for the children.

The football stadium is called **San Mamés** because the field was near an old chapel on land belonging to what is now the Casa de Misericordia. The chapel was a shrine to the child-saint Mamés de Cesarea, whom the Romans took to the Coliseum to be torn apart by a lion. However, it turned out that the lion refused to touch the child and let him live. And that’s why the players of the Athletic Club are known as the Lions of San Mamés.

Bilbao has its own **font style**. That’s the way we are! It has its origin in the funerary steles. These letters are widely used in commercial signage. Look for an “A” with a txapela!
...or the sun shines, explore Azkuna Zentroa, a former wine warehouse transformed into a modern leisure and cultural centre by designer Philippe Starck. Here you will find all kinds of cultural activities, exhibitions, health food restaurants, a terrace and... a gorgeous pool! In its play-centre, "Txikilandia", you can read a story with the little ones, browse through art books or listen to music while they have fun in the workshops.

Don't leave without...

- Try a Carolina, the most typical sweet from these parts. The story goes that in the mid-19th century a pastry maker wanted to impress his daughter by making a unique cake for her birthday. It turned out to be so delicious that he named it after his daughter. The butter buns, rice cakes... are delicious sweets that keep faith with the traditions of the city.

- Have a serving of the popular rabas (battered calamari) in the Old Quarter. There are all kinds. The kiddies will be licking their lips!

- Visit the flower market in the Areal on Sunday mornings. A treat for the senses.

- If you like football, attending one of Athletic's matches at San Mames is a must. It's absolutely spectacular. You can also visit the club museum and even make a special visit to the stadium and discover its secret corners such as the locker room and bench!
And in the vicinity of Bilbao everything is up and down.

Don’t miss crossing the Bizkaia Bridge “as if you were flying”. The origins of the bridge date back to the late nineteenth century. Did you know that was the first shuttle bridge in the world with a steel framework? It opened on 28 July 1893 has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2006. The Hanging Bridge of Bizkaia is the last remaining shuttle bridge in the world and was designed by Alberto Palacio, a disciple of Eiffel.

To round off the day the Pozalagua caves, world famous for their curious eccentric stalactites, are not too far.

Visit the Boina museum in Balmaseda. It is a former beret factory dating from 1892 now converted into a museum. You will learn how the legacy of the textile industry has influenced the land. In addition to the factory tour, the museum has a cafeteria for refreshments and a children’s recreation area.

Would you like to explore Basque mythology? You could visit Izenaduba Basoa. It is a theme park in Mungia where you can find the authentic Casa and in the vicinity of Bilbao everything is up and down.

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There is a gigantic fingerprint at the Artxanda lookout. It is a sculpture in memory of the victims of the Spanish Civil War created by Juan Jose Novella. The funicular station, the skating rink and the adjacent restaurants were bombed in 1936 and that is the reason behind the creation of the sculpture.

The engine of the Funicular de Artxanda was designed in Switzerland by specialists in mountain trains and cost 488,407.30 pesetas (nearly 3,000 euros). The tracks and the top station were bombed during the siege of Bilbao in the Civil War and the railway was out of service until July 1938. At that time the village used the funicular to transport everything from motorbikes needing repairs to farm products or calves on their way to the abattoir.

If you like animals, don’t miss Karpin Aventura, a park where the whole family can learn more about the animal kingdom. It houses over 200 animals of 55 species among which bobcats, bears, bison, otters, reindeer, birds of prey and wildcats are the stars. It also has more than a dozen animated dinosaurs. And if adventure is your thing, your best bet is to visit Sopuerta Abentura, a park located in a fantastic natural setting very close to Bilbao. Tibetan swing-bridges, cable slides and log rolls await you. You can even swing from the vines like an authentic Tarzan!

You can also take the metro and spend a day on the coast: the first beaches are only 20 minutes from downtown Bilbao. Las Arenas, Neguri ... and a marina with a wide choice for family dining await you. Visit the old port of Algorta (Getxo) or enjoy a great day at the beach in Plentzia or Sopela. The Getxo Aquarium is another excellent option.

Did you know that?

POZALAGUA

BILBAO

www.bilbaoturismo.net/BilbaoTurismo/en/tourists

Guggenheim
Gran Vía 2, 48009 Bilbao.
944 35 90 00 · guggenheim-bilbao.eus
informacion@guggenheim-bilbao.eus

Arriaga Theatre
Plaza Arriaga 1, 48005 Bilbao
944 79 20 36 · www.teatroarriaga.eus
informacion@teatroarriaga.eus

Ría Marítima Bilbao Museum
Muelle Ramón de la Sota 1, 48013 Bilbao
94 608 55 00 · www.museomaritimobilbao.eus
info@museomaritimobilbao.org

Campos Eliseos Theatre
Bertendona 3 bis, 48008 Bilbao
94 443 86 10/41 · www.teatrocampos.com
atencionesaspectador@klemark.com

Museum of Fine Arts
Museo Plaza 2, 48009 Bilbao
94 439 60 60 · www.museobilbao.eus

The Hanging Bridge of Bizkaia
Barria, Nº 3 - Bajo Las Arenas, 4893 Getxo
94 480 10 12 · www.puente-colgante.com/index.php/es
promocion@puente-colgante.com

Pozalagua Caves
Ranero Auzoa, 48891 Karrantza Harana
649 811 673 · www.cuevadepozalagua.eus
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Izenaduba Basoa
Olentzero Baserria - Landetxo Goikoa, 48100 Mungia
94 674 00 61 · www.izenadubabasoa.com
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Artxanda funicular railway
Ctra. Artxanda a Sto. Domingo, 27, 48015 Bilbao
94 454 966 · www.bilbao.eus/c/satellite/funicularArtxanda/Home/en/100010291/Home
funicular@funicularartxanda.bilbao.net

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San Mamés Stadium
Rafael Moreno Pibidi Kalea, s/n, 48013 Bilbao
94 424 08 77 · www.athletic-club.eus/cas/home.html
contacto@athletic-club.eus

Azkuna Zentroa, Alhóndiga Bilbao
Plaza Arriquibar 4, 48008 Bilbao
944 014 014 · www.azkunazentroa.eus/es/ingl/home

Bilboats
Pantalan Pio Baroja, 48001 Bilbao
94 642 41 57 · www.bilboats.com
bilboats@bilboats.com

Sopuerta Adventure
Sopuerta.
663 80 56 09 · www.sopuerta-abentura.com

Karpin Adventure
Carranza Valley.
946 10 70 66 · www.karpinabentura.com

La Encartada Boina Museum
Encartaciones.
946 80 07 78 · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus

Forest Park
Erandio.
608 44 49 39 · www.forestpark.com/bilbao
San Sebastian

discover the surprising corners of this elegant city

Welcome to San Sebastian (Donostia in Basque), an ideal, safe and accessible city when travelling with the family. A fascinating history, world-class gastronomy, marvellous golden beaches and a wide variety of leisure choices are all waiting to be discovered.

Strolling through its streets or touring it by bike are a sheer delight. Here are some suggestions to enjoy it in all its many dimensions. Would you like to discover it while playing?
Visit the Peine del Viento: Three steel sculptures that comb the wind before you enter the city. Built in 1977 by Eduardo Chillida and Luis Peña Ganchegui, it features powerful jets of water that spurt out of holes in the ground when the sea gets rough. An amazing spectacle!

Explore the Old Quarter: an indispensable visit for anyone who arrives in the city for the first time. The best way to enjoy it is to wander through the streets trying the "pintxos" in the countless bars you will find along the way.

Discover the Port: a magic place packed with stories. Enjoy a stroll at sunset to end up dining in one of its seafood restaurants. To whet your appetite you can try a paper cone of karrakelas and shrimps. And the Aquarium is close by, fantastic!

Take a bike ride. This is an easy and extremely safe city for the whole family to tour by bike. There are several places where you can easily rent bikes if you haven’t brought your own.

Hop on the tourist train. It is an interesting way to see the city for the young and old alike and the best way to get some great photos. And don’t miss the tourist bus if you want to extend the visit and see the city from a different perspective.

Sail on La Concha Bay. You will enjoy a wonderful boat trip and discover the city from the ocean side... A spectacular panoramic view!

The church of Santa María was known in the old days as the chocolate church because it was built with funds from the cacao that the Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas imported from Venezuela along with tobacco, coffee and other Venezuelan products.

The queen regent María Cristina established her royal summer residence here and attracted numerous aristocrats and people of the European nobility.

Raimundo Sarriegui, whose statue you can visit in the square that bears his name, composed the San Sebastian March in 1861. It is the city’s anthem and can be heard non-stop to the sound of drums for 24 hours on the 20th January.

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Pass it on

**a great time**

without leaving the city

Visit the Miramar Palace and Gardens: This is a former royal residence. Its gardens provide a beautiful view of the bay and it is a safe place to play.

Stroll through the parks and gardens of the city. The Aiete (with its pond that is home to ducks and swans), Alderdi Eder and Cristina Enea parks all have playgrounds. The latter also has a duck pond, peacocks and an environmental resource-centre.

Play a sport: San Sebastian’s beaches are the ideal place to enjoy sports like surfing, stand-up paddle boarding or kayaks. In summer there are various platforms on the bay with trampolines and slides.

Climb one of the three hills to enjoy impressive views: in Urgull you will find the remains of a castle that defended the city: corners, paths and passages steeped in history. To learn more about this “young” 800 year-old city, don’t miss a visit to the charming Casa de la Historia on the hilltop. On Igeldo you can take in the best panorama of the city and on Ulía you can climb to the very top, to the lookout from which whales were sighted in bygone days. This last hill also has a picnic area with park swings, a café that serves meals and extensive parkland where the whole family can have fun.

“Three beaches you can enjoy in the city itself”
La Concha beach gives its name to the entire bay. One of the most beautiful urban beaches in the world, Queen Isabel II came here under doctor’s orders to bathe in the sea. Many people bathe in its waters all year round. It is ideal for types of bathers and for paddle surf.

Ondarreta beach is the continuation of the former and has a children’s playground. Its waters are calm and the waves tiny... perfect for an unforgettable family day.

Zurriola beach is the surfer’s beach, popular with surfers who come here to catch some of the best waves in the district. Discover this sport at any Surfing Euskadi school.

The sunsets from the Sagües children’s park are an unforgettable experience.

You can rent awnings and parasols at all three beaches.

Did you know what the rocks that separate the beaches of La Concha and Ondarreta on the coast are called?

El pico del loro (the parrot beak).

This is because there was a chapel here dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto (a pun on “loro”, Spanish for “parrot”). The local children love catching crabs on the rocks. What about you?

in 1875 the City Council gained control of the coastal esplanade formerly used for drilling troops and turned it into the Alderdi Eder gardens. In the Belle Epoque there was a velodrome, a circus and all kinds of amusements. Today, the only trace of this past is the famous carousel.

Ascending Monte Igeldo in the century-old funicular train is an absolute must. Did you know that it still uses the same mechanical system and bodywork as when it opened in 1912? Once you arrive you can explore a very special amusement park, climb the Swiss mountain or discover the mysterious river. Make sure you take photos: they will undoubtedly be the best holiday souvenir of all.
talking about great Food

Did you know that?

The Plaza de la Bretxa owes its name to an event on 31 August 1813 when the Anglo-Portuguese forces opened a breach (bretxa) in the wall and charged in, expelling the French and sacking the city in the process. After an intense bombardment a great fire swept through the old quarter. Only two churches and 35 houses, all on a single street, were saved and since then the street has been called Calle 31 de Agosto.

This is the gastronomic city par excellence. The gourmet restaurants alone have a total of 18 Michelin stars. The choice of cuisine ranges from traditional home cooking restaurants to international cooking... a wide choice to satisfy young and old alike.

The custom going out for “pintxos” is a ritual not to be missed. It consists of strolling through the streets, stopping at the main tapa bars to taste the recommended “pintxos”. Authentic miniature cuisine artworks for all taste buds, including the kiddies!

There is no better way of exploring the local cuisine than a visit to the two markets, where the children can discover the colours, aromas and tastes that enter our kitchens. Be sure to visit the outside of the La Bretxa market where the people from the farmhouses set up their open air vegetable, fruit and aromatic plant stalls.
A wide variety of cultural choices awaits you

- San Sebastian Day or the Tamborrada: 20 January.
- The Great Week: Week of 15 August.
- The Bandera de la Concha rowing race. The first two Sundays in September
- San Sebastian Film Festival. September
- The Santo Tomás fair: 21 December.

The magic of Olentzero: Every Christmas a mythological character comes down from the mountains and journeys to all Basque villages to distribute toys and happiness to the children.

Don’t leave without...

- Taking a walk by the Concha bay, riding the carousel at Alderdi Eder and having an ice-cream
- Enjoying a good hot chocolate with “churros” at one of the cafés. Having a picnic on Santa Clara Island in summer: The ideal plan for the whole family and a deeply rooted local tradition. There is a motorboat service during the summer months.
- Trying the “pintxos” in the Old Quarter: Unbeatable for the children!
- Learning to make a Gilda. Do you know the origin of the name of this pintxo?
- Exploring the three hills where you can walk, observe and enjoy the beautiful views of the sea and cliffs.
Be sure to visit a local cider house (Astigarraga). This is your chance to learn about the secrets and history of a highly popular drink: the production process, how the apples are collected... you can even make your own apple juice! Discover the various workshops for families that provide these options. And those who want to delve deeper into the subject can visit the Sagardoetxea, the Cider Museum.

Become a potholer at the Arditurri Mines in the Aia Nature Reserve. Visiting these mines is like travelling back into the past: the sound and lighting create a magical atmosphere inside the gallery that will take you back to the various eras in the history of the mines: from the noise of the breaking rocks through the absolute silence accompanied only by the oscillating reflections of the water in the pools. The visit to the gallery is definitely an unforgettable experience. And if you are the daring type make you ask for the “Adventure tour”.

Visit the Oiasso Roman Museum. This is an archaeological museum that brings together Roman remains found in Irun, the ancient Oiasso. It offers a wide range of activities and educational workshops for children.

Would you like to discover how people lived in the Basque
caseros in the olden days? Visit the Igartubeiti Caserio Museum. Built in the mid-sixteenth century, it is a magnificent example of the golden age of the Basque farmhouse. A visit to the past in which the kids will have the chance to learn more about the history and culture of the Basque people.

A visit to Ekainberri will open another window onto our history. Works of art by our remote ancestors can be seen in the Ekain cave. And if you like a challenge the “Ekain Adventure” allows you to put your hunting skills against various animals on the hunting circuit adapted for this purpose, all in a wonderful natural environment that follows the course of the Sastarrain stream. The route also will enable you to learn about the flora and fauna of the area, make rock paintings and light a fire to cook the prey...

And while you are in Azpeitia take the chance to see one of the architectural crown jewels of the Basque Country: the Loiola Sanctuary. This architectural complex was built around the tower house of the Loyola family. Two events convert it into a place of continuous pilgrimage: the birth of Ignatius Lopez de Loyola in 1491 and his spiritual conversion in 1521. It took more than two centuries to finish the construction.
Welcome to Vitoria, one of the greenest cities in Europe and one that will undoubtedly surprise you. With its completely pedestrian medieval old quarter full of history and an extensive network of natural parks with endless possibilities, this city has become a must for families who come to the Basque Country with children. Would you like to discover some of its most secret legends?
Visit the Santa María Cathedral with helmet and all! Put on a safety helmet and professional guides will show you the history of the cathedral among the catwalks and scaffolding. You will get the best views of the medieval city from the top of the tower. There are tours specifically for children.

Explore the Almendra. The medieval almond, so called because of its oval shape, is the oldest part of the city. It contains the following landmarks, among others: the Santa María Cathedral, the Walls, the Bibat and the Escoriza-Esquivel and Montehermoso mansions. This is the place where the most modern shops rub shoulders with traditional pubs and the streets combine the atmosphere of a bygone era with contemporary urban touches. Discover it as you walk through ancient places full of mysteries and stories to tell.

Some streets of the Almendra Medieval have the names of trades. Do you know which?

Plaza de la Virgen Blanca, that dates back to the 17th century and is the authentic nucleus of the city. The beautiful monument to the Battle of Vitoria, fought on 21 June 1813 between the French troops lead by Joseph Bonaparte in his fight against an army of Spanish, British and Portuguese troops under the command of Arthur Wellesley the Duke of Wellington.

The Ensanche district is the ideal place to find that high quality, exclusive, specialised shop.

Did you know that?

Enjoy the best sweets in the traditional bakeries of Vitoria-Gasteiz: the txutxitos (puff cakes), the gaxua (pastry cake), the vasquitos and neskitas (chocolates), the chocolate truffles... will reveal the confectionery traditions of the city.

And if you want to be an authentic pirate, the Akua Pirate Ship Park awaits you. A ship with a length of 33 metres in an extensive area full of games to ensure that the children have a great time.

The Cathedral of Santa María inspired famous writers like Paulo Coelho, José Saramago and Ken Follet to write their famous novels "The Pillars of the Earth" and "World Without End".
Getting around Vitoria-Gasteiz on foot or by bicycle is accessible to all. It has one of the largest area per capita of green zones of any European city and has been designed for pedestrians. Vehicles are not permitted within these green zones in the capital. Discover why it was the European Green Capital 2012!

The Green Belt, with its 47 kilometres of paths and tracks through the parks that surround the urban centre, is the natural perimeter of Vitoria-Gasteiz. You will delight in the huge variety of flora and fauna only a few kilometres from the city.

The Salburua wetlands are huge lagoons a few kilometres from the centre where you can find herds of deer and thousands of waterfowl. Do not hesitate to visit the Ataria Interpretation Centre if you want to see them up close.

There is a permanent exhibition inside where you can learn, observe and even touch! You will discover where the water comes from, the animal and plant species that inhabit the wetlands, the migratory routes of the birds, how they navigate and many more fascinating subjects.

Urban pathways and bike lanes run throughout the city and interconnect the Green Belt with over 100 kilometres of beautiful nature.

The seat of the regional parliament is located in the La Florida Park in a building that used to be a secondary school in the 19th century.

Did you know that?
The La Florida Park is a typical example of an urban park from the beginning of the last century with its bridges and places to hide or play ball games. The interest from travellers and the great expeditions of the nineteenth century encouraged the city to turn La Florida into a botanical garden. For these purposes the authorities of the time acquired many of the exotic trees that now grace the park from the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1855. The Txoroleku, an area designed specially for kiddies where they can watch puppet theatre performances and take part in puppet-making workshops with recycled material, is waiting to be discovered.

The Prado and Plaza de Amárica children’s parks is an ideal spot for parents with young children. Watch your children play on the swings from one of the outside terraces that surrounds the park.

The Ullibarri-Ganboa reservoirs with their Garaio and Landa and Santa Engracia beaches enable you to enjoy the sun, go for a swim or play water sports such as wind-surf.

AquaMendi is an aqua park with great slides that forms part of the Mendizorroza municipal swimming pools.

The Gamarra park has barbecues, large swimming pools and extensive green zones idea for playing.

Paseo de la Florida to Armentia. An ideal route for families that takes you from the La Florida park through La Senda to the beautiful San Prudencio Basilica in Armentia with its picnic area. The local people come here to have an aperitif and play the traditional bowls game of Alava. This circuit can be rounded off with a stroll through the Armentia forest, just 10 minutes walk from the Basilica.
A wide variety of choices

Cultural

Did you know that?

The famous Kas soft drink originated in Vitoria? It all started in 1870 when the Roman Knörr Streiff arrived from Germany and founded the La Esperanza brewery. After his death, his son, also named Roman, founded a soft drink company under the trademark of AS, to which he later added the K of Knörr, thus creating the KAS brand.

Vitoria has a symphony composed by Ludwig van Beethoven himself. It was commissioned by Johann Nepomuk Märzel to commemorate the Battle of Vitoria (1813), that ended the Peninsula War.
The Bibat Museum is really two museums in one: Playing cards and Archaeological. You will discover the best collection of card decks in the world in the part devoted to playing cards. And the fascinating archaeological heritage of Álava awaits you in the Archaeological Museum.

The Artium Museum of contemporary art brings you more than 3,000 works by prestigious international artists. Adults can enjoy the works of Picasso, Miró, Chillida and Oteiza, while children can learn about the secrets of art and express themselves in workshops designed especially for young participants. Don’t miss the great guided tours for the whole family.

Visit the Álava Natural Sciences Museum. An ideal place for science lovers. It is housed in the Torre de Doña Ochanda, one of the city’s medieval defensive constructions. It displays important geological, botanical and zoological collections. The amber fossils discovered in the province are especially interesting.

You can have a great time at the ice rink, in the Bakh sports centre. Put on the skates and enjoy a fun afternoon gliding around the rink.

Don’t leave without...

Visiting the Almendra market. On the first Saturday of every month the Medieval town hosts a street market in which 180 local merchants take part. In addition to the Market Route, Craft Corner and the Cultural Route there is an Infants’ Corner especially designed for the enjoyment of the youngest members of the family.

Take in one of Baskonia’s basketball matches in the Buesa Arena pavilion.

Have a delicious pintxo de tortilla made with mashed potato in any of the bars in the Plaza de España. Young and old alike will be licking their lips!

Visit the Teatro Principal to enjoy a good play. If you go on a Sunday afternoon you can attend one of their family sessions.

And if you are here at Christmas you can visit the nativity scene in the La Florida Park that has more than 50 years of history, or have fun at the skating rink set up during the Christmas holidays in the Plaza de la Virgen Blanca.

"Magialdia" International Magic Festival In September. Is an exhibition of magic and conjuring that captivates the young and old alike.

Jazz Festival. Held in July.

Fiestas Virgen Blanca, in the heart of the city. Celedón hits town in early August. The hero of the fiestas descends from the top of the tower of the Church of San Miguel.

International Games Festival. In June. The biggest in the world! 4,000 different games are dotted around the city.

Discover the Mural Route. Gigantic designs painted on empty façades and walls in the Old Quarter, the result of the work of artists, art students and the enthusiastic residents of the neighbourhood. A colourful walk during which you can learn about the history of the city and discover the mystery behind these beautiful paintings.
Discover the spectacular scenery of the Añana Salt Valley, a cultural landscape of salt (live) with more than 6,500 years of history. You will learn how the salt is produced and all about the structures used for extraction in the olden days is the most entertaining way.

You can also enjoy the flora and fauna that has evolved in this unique place, take walks along its pathways and follow the route of hundreds of wooden channels that distribute the salt water from the springs. Why not join one of the family workshops.

If you like trekking your best bet is to visit the nearby Valderejo Nature Reserve on the boundary of the province of Burgos. Explore the spectacular River Purón gorge and if you look up into the sky, with a bit of luck you will see the largest colony of griffon vultures in the Basque Country. There is a family recreation area and an interpretation centre in the village of Lalastra.

The Santa Catalina Botanical Gardens, housed in the ruins of an Augustine monastery, are close by. It is like an open air flora museum and is especially wonderful in springtime.

We are going to see castles!

Alava is full of castles and fortified houses that you can see as you tour the province. Those of Mendoza, Quejana, Torre de los Varona and the walls of Peñacerrada enjoy widespread fame.

In the city of Vitoria you can visit the Tower of Doña Otxanda, an extremely interesting natural science museum, or walk part of the wall, finding the Torre de los Anda, the oldest house in the city or mansions such as Eskoriza- Eskibel on the way.
The Izki Nature Reserve and the river that lends its name to the park is just 31 kilometres from Vitoria-Gasteiz. You can explore it on foot, horseback or by bicycle. The information centre (parketxe) in the village of Korres will inform you of all the available activities.

The cave chapels used for prayer will also attract your attention. They are excavated in the rock and are called “gobas”. Those in Laño, Faldo and Marquinez are famous.

Visit Aventura Sobrón to enjoy a day in the open air. An adventure park classified as a Special Protection Area for bird species, it is located in a beautiful natural setting. It is ideal for the whole family to spend the day doing fun outdoor activities: archery, trekking, canoeing, climbing, orienteering or following walkways in the trees. It has parking facilities, a cafeteria with a terrace, sports areas, green zones with picnic tables, showers with hot water, and in summer, swimming pools!
Rioja Alavesa is ineluctably associated with wine, but it offers a wide range of cultural, gastronomic and nature-related activities if you are travelling with the family. You will become knights and dames of the Middle Ages, learn about the winemaker’s trade, discover the flora and fauna of the land of vineyards and, be converted into curious archaeologists, learn more about the past of this magical land full of incredible legends.
King Sancho El Fuerte (the Strong) of Navarre ordered construction of the wall that surrounds Laguardia to this day. Do you know how he earned his nickname? Because of his enormous size and strength. They say he was between 2.22 and 2.31 metres tall. He needed a special horse and claimed he was able to use maces and broadswords with one hand that his comrades could hardly manage with two.

Visit a traditional wine cellar: locally called “calados”. They are underground excavations that maintain the wine at a constant temperature. This is also an unforgettable experience for the kiddies, who can learn about winemaking and enjoy various workshops and children’s activities organised by many of the wineries.

Immerse yourselves in Labastida, Elciego and the walled towns of Labraza, Laguardia and Salinillas de Buradón. Medieval towns full of legends that have been able to conserve their walls. Wandering through the streets and exploring the secret corners is a good way to learn more about their past.

Hop on the amusing Racimo Train. This tourist train will take you on a tour of the vineyards and wineries. Anecdotes, traditions, curiosities, legends... everything you need to learn all about Rioja Alavesa.
A unique landscape between the River Ebro and the Sierra de Toloño for nature lovers

The region provides numerous choices to enjoy a superb day surrounded by nature. Visit any of its many recreational areas where you will find children’s playgrounds and even barbecues in addition to picnic tables. El Cristo in Samaniego, Bercijana in Yécora, San Justo in Oion, San Ginés, 2.3 km from Labastida and Berberana in Laguardia are some of the most popular.

Stroll through the vineyards. Don’t miss the chance to enjoy this wonderful family experience. There are countless trails that will immerse you in this incredible scenery. An interesting option to learn more about the natural environment of Rioja Álavesa. Take the opportunity to learn parts of the grapevine and even identify the flora and fauna that surrounds the vineyards.

Take a canoe trip on the Ebro. Discover Rioja Álavesa and its vineyards from the Ebro River. This is your chance to explore the natural wealth and fauna of the region while participating in a sport activity for the whole family.

Laguardia Lagoons Protected Biotope.
You can find this wetland habitat with its lagoons in the heart of the Rioja Álavesa. Access from Laguardia is on foot or by bicycle along rural roads surrounded by vineyards. The Prao de la Paul reservoir is set up for visitors with areas especially prepared for bird watching.

Although the habitat is always interesting, the greatest variety of bird life can be observed between September and March.
Vineyards, olive trees and lagoons... a landscape full of contrasts and colours that change with the season.

Take in the views of the Sierra de Toloño and the valley that stretches to the banks of the Ebro.

The Collado park in Laguardia that surrounds the wall to the east and ends at the statue of Samaniego is the best place from which to enjoy this superb landscape.

The storks

Do you know these amusing inhabitants? They are long-necked, long-legged aquatic birds that inhabit the warmer regions of the world. It is a migratory species that spends winter on the savannah of southern Africa but nests in Europe, usually on urban constructions such as bell towers or electric power pylons since large trees that can withstand the weight and size of the nest, to which the birds return every year, are rare. Surely you’ve already seen one!

Learn the secrets of wine

Participate in the winemaking process from grape-picking to stripping and pressing. The children can learn about the winemaker’s trade and even tread grapes to make their own natural grape juice!

Enjoy a wine tasting and grape juice for the kiddies

This activity will help the children to identify the parts of the cluster and the grape as well as their shapes, flavours and colours. Have you ever tried the juice of freshly squeezed grapes? It is not only nutritious and healthy, but utterly scrumptious!

Number the drawings from 1 to 6 according to the winemaking process.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Rioja Alavesa has attractive wine tourism options for all audiences, with gastronomic proposals that meet the expectations of the most discerning palates.

You can see the entire olive oil production process at first hand.

For kiddies and adults

A visit to the Plaza Mayor of Laguardia, where you will find a carillon-style clock from which dancers or "dantzaris" emerge at certain hours to perform the dance of Laguardia to traditional local music. It is a good idea to get there three or four minutes early to be sure you don’t miss these charming figures. (Clock schedule: 12:00, 14:00, 17:00 and 20:00. Also 22:00 in summer)

Enjoy a picnic in the vineyards. There’s nothing better than roast lamb chops with vine shoots, bacon and chorizo, cooked to order and accompanied by good wine and grape juice to top up your energy level. And all in the unique setting of the twelve thousand hectares of vineyards that comprise the area.

Don’t miss out on trying the pintxos in Laguardia. Come and taste the pintxos and famous casseroles made from local produce. And if you are here at end of August you will be able to enjoy the medieval pintxos contest!

Visit an olive oil press, one of the best kept secrets of the region. You can visit ancient olive groves and, depending on the cultivation sequence, participate in their care and treatment.

World class gastronomy

Don’t leave without...

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A wide variety of Cultural choices

Join in one of the dramatised tours available in the area. A fun way to learn the history of the region. Don’t miss the one in Labraza. Charming and little-known, it won the 2008 Best Walled City in the World award.

Laguardia is a town of fables because the writer Félix María de Samaniego, who adapted many of Aesop’s fables including The Ant and the Grasshopper, The Dog and the Crocodile and The Fox and the Grapes, was born here in the 18th century.

Music in the vineyards (July). An extensive program of concerts for all audiences: jazz, blues, rock and swing festivals held in various towns of the region.

Olive Oil Festival. (March) This great olive oil festival is held every year. Make it part of your trip itinerary to learn about the production process of this delicacy so widely used in our land. The festive atmosphere is ideal for the whole family. Dramatised tours to learn about the oil presses are also a habitual attraction.

Vintage Festival. (September). This festival is held in Rioja Alavesa every year. This is an itinerant event that begins with treading the first grapes and tasting the first must (grape juice). Fun for the kiddies is assured with an extensive programme of children’s entertainment.

What are fables?
Fables are short stories featuring animals and imaginary characters to convey moral teachings in a simple, entertaining way.

Unbridled ambition will never lead to anything good. Give thanks for what you have and what you get.

Do not spend all your time having fun. You must also study and work hard to achieve your goals.

Human beings often pretend to despise things we secretly crave but consider unattainable.
Discover some of the megalithic remains in the area

Like the Witch’s Hut in Elvillar, Alava, one of the most important dolmens in Basque Country. It is probably the biggest and best conserved of the entire region. It was erected about 5,000 years ago by neolithic people who engaged in agriculture and kept livestock in the area.

Other well-known dolmens can be found at Layaza, El Sotillo, San Martin, the Alto de la Huesera, Los Llanos and El Encinal.

From the most traditional to the most contemporary

As you travel around the region you will come across wineries designed by prestigious architects such as Gehry, Calatrava, Aspiazu...

A good opportunity to get that photo with the avant garde backdrop.

If you have been to Bilbao, the Marqués de Riscal winery will certainly remind you of the Guggenheim Museum: it wasn’t designed by the same architect for nothing.
Just like the great cathedrals

Most of the major churches in Rioja Alavesa are endowed with altarpieces of outstanding artistic merit where you can admire exquisite baroque, plateresque and renaissance works.

The most famous are found at Elvillar, Santa María de Laguardia, Lanciego, Oyón-Oion, Samaniego and Labastida.

During the visit to Santa María de Moreda, in addition to its altarpiece, you can see an exceptional body of frescoes and carvings on the dome.

Visit the Villa Lucia Wine Theme Centre. You will learn even more about the world of wine, discovering the significance of colours, aromas and tastes through the highly didactic virtual tasting. But this museum conceals a surprise: a 4D movie theatre! Put on the glasses and immerse yourself in the magic of the film “In the Land of Dreams”

Archaeology enthusiasts should visit the La Hoya Museum. It will provide you with the keys to understanding the archaeological excavations. La Hoya was an inhabited village between the Bronze Age and Iron Age, so that a visit to its remains is a stunning way to approach the past of this land and its people.

The Remelluri Farm Museum in Labastida is also a fascinating option. Here you can see the interesting paintings from the Chapel of Santa Sabina, the medieval necropolis, the wine cellar and the wine theme museum.
THE BASQUE COAST

how to become a seafarer "for all coasts"

From Muskiz in the westernmost reaches to Hondarribia in the east, the Basque Country provides a wide range of beaches, fishing villages, gastronomic experiences, museums and other tourist attractions for the whole family to enjoy throughout the year along its 250 km of coastline. If you love the sea, the Bay of Biscay is calling you!
Climb the 241 steps to San Juan de Gaztelugatxe.
Come and discover the traditions and legends that speak of this magical place. The island, with its rustic chapel, simulates a castle rising from the sea and has witnessed naval battles and invasions by privateers. The magnificent views from the chapel, unforgettable at sunset, are an absolute must.

Cross the Bay of Pasaia by boat.
Take the marvellous boat ride from San Pedro to San Juan while enjoying the stunning scenery of the bay and working up an appetite for the best fresh fish.

Visit a fishing boat. A traditional tuna craft converted into a boat-museum. On the good ship Mater Museoa in Pasai San Pedro you will discover the secrets of the fishing tradition: fishing gear that respects the environment, the distinctive rhythm of the fisherman’s life, the features of the boat... you can even learn how to make traditional preserves!

Hone your senses with a visit to the markets to learn about the most typical products. In the Bermeo and Zarautz Municipal markets you can discover the local produce used in the best Basque recipes.

Discover an authentic sixteenth century whaler. In Albaola you can watch the actual construction of a replica of the whaler San Juan and learn about the maritime heritage through the character “Txo” and his friends. Bermeo offers you the chance to discover the Aita Gruria, a 17th century whaler, and the Whaling Interpretation Centre.

Immerse yourself in the old quarters of the charming fishing villages. Hondarribia’s old town still retains its walls and buildings. In San Juan the local fishing people’s houses have a superb view of the bay of Pasaia. Getaria, the birthplace of Juan Sebastian Elcano, brings you the delicious aroma of grilled fish while you discover its narrow streets and medieval mansions. The old port of Bermeo is a beautiful area surrounded by typically colourful, narrow houses. You can watch the fishing boats leave the port while you try the wonderful pintxos in the town’s bars. Finally, in Lekeitio you will find mansions, tower houses and the traditional seafarers’ dwellings.

Enjoy the fantastic views along our coastline. The chapels of Santa Catalina in Mundaka and San Telmo in Zumaia enjoy a privileged location on the Cantabrian sea coast. Don’t miss a visit to these incredible temples overlooking the sea.

Sail along the coast. Discover the best-kept secrets of our coast by taking any of the numerous trips from Hondarribia, Zumaia or Getaria in Gipuzkoa or from Bermeo, Getxo or Santurce in Bizkaia. Or go dolphin-watching!

The island of Garraitz in Lekeitio can only be accessed at low tide. It used to be a leper colony to protect the rest of the population from contamination.

Juan Sebastián Elcano was born in Getaria. He was the first seafarer to sail around the world. It took 3 years!
Unique land and seascapes that paint the coast in green and blue

Plaiaundi Ecology Park and wetlands. This nature reserve is one of the best in Europe to observe some of the 312 bird species found in the area by several crisscrossed trails. In addition to the birds you will discover freshwater ponds, meadows, wooded areas and facilities such as information posts, stands and observation towers. Its ecological wealth makes Plaiaundi a great place to enjoy nature.

Walking around Sakoneta.

Did you know that?

Besides the old Agorregi ironworks, you can find one of the most important botanical gardens in Europe in Pagoeta. Thanks to its privileged "micro-climate", species from both cold and warm climates thrive here and it is home to more than 5,000 species from 5 continents.

This tour takes you through the most spectacular parts of the Deba-Zumaia biotope. Seen from the edge of the cliffs or overlooking hidden coves, the scenery is nothing short of awesome.

Pagoeta Nature Reserve. Located between Zarautz and Orio, this park embodies the balance between the natural and the human environments in more than 2,800 hectares. Traditional caserios, betizu cows, pottoka horses, wild boar, hares... can be found within this wonderful setting. And it is the perfect place to enjoy an entertaining day with the kiddies thanks to its recreational areas equipped with tables, grills and fountains.

Marine esplanade between Zarautz and Getaria. This is an ideal route for all the family. It is short and easy with superb views of the bays.

Iñurritza dunes and biotope. Another example of an area where nature and culture come together to form the heritage of the place. In its 51.7 hectares you will find cliffs, marshes and dunes, a sample off the diversity of our coast. Remains of the curious activity of bygone days are also in evidence in addition to the characteristic fauna and flora of the area. The Mollarri loading facility is the best example.
Basque Coast Geopark

This unique environment, where geology plays a vital role, is located between Zumaia and Mutriku. 13 kilometres of cliffs that contain a spectacular rock strata formation called flysch that illustrates more than 60 million years of the planet’s evolution.

On foot or by boat, you can discover the thin layer of black that provides evidence of the impact of a huge meteorite that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs and many other secrets that our coast conceals.

Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve

This wetland area from the source of the Oka River to Mundaka was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1984. Its varied flora and fauna can be observed from the lookouts. Don’t forget to visit the Urdaibai Bird Centre to learn more about bird watching. Take the opportunity to visit Basondo, an animal refuge in Kortezubi. You can also rent a canoe or take a boat trip on the estuary.

Nothing else compares to a visit to the Oma Forest where nature shares its domain with art. The landscape itself is used as a canvas. Hundreds of pine trees are painted in colour in a way that each spectator creates the perspective as they walk. An animated forest that will delight the whole family.
THE BEACHES

Do some surfing and other water sports

Basque beaches provide the ideal conditions for surfing, with demanding waves like the famous Mundaka left-hand barrel and others for all levels in Sopela, Gorliz, Bakio, Laida, Karraspio, Itzurun in Zumaia, Zarautz or Zurriola in San Sebastian. You will find a surfing school associated with Surfing Euskadi that offers courses tailored to your needs at almost every beach. They will also provide you with any gear you may need and the guarantee of a product club (surfingeuskadi.eus)

For a quiet day

There is a wide choice if you prefer to spend a day at a quieter beach with fewer current and tidal hazards: Gorliz and Isuntza (Lekeitio) in Bizkaia, and Malkorbe and Gaztelueta (Getaria), Hondarribia beach and La Concha (San Sebastian) in Gipuzkoa.
Lighthouses

Fully integrated into the landscape, the lighthouses are now a unrivalled tourist attraction well worth discovering on your walks: the La Plata lighthouse in Pasaia, Gorliz lighthouse at Cape Bilbao, Getaria lighthouse on Mount San Antón and Matxitxako near Bermeo are some outstanding examples of these constructions. They began life as watchtowers that were reformed to guide the fishing boats. Today the only one that allows visits to its interior is the Santa Catalina lighthouse in Lekeitio.

Accept the challenge and try a water sport. A surfing course, canoe excursion or catching waves on a SUP board - or even all together on a BIG SUP! a boat trip... there are endless possibilities in unique surroundings that combine fun, excitement and the option going out to sea and seeing the coast from another point of view.

The establishments comprising the surf camps provide accommodation with meals and surf lessons plus activities such as skateboarding, surfing or outdoor cinema for children.

surfingeuskadi.eus
Bites from the **sea**

One of the keys of Basque cuisine is the freshness and quality of its products due, among other things, to its proximity to the sea. The best anchovies, hake, sea bream... prepared in a wide variety of ways are available at any of the fishing ports. Getaria, known for its superb grilled fish, is a must. Other delights you mustn't miss include the baby squid in their own ink, peppers stuffed with fish or seafood and the famous marmitako.

Nothing beats the young, fruity white wine, **Txakoli** to accompany these dishes. Long considered a “poor wine”, its consumption has increased dramatically in recent years under the “Getariako Txakolina” and “Bizkaiko Txakolina” D.O.s. You can now find this delicious wine in any tavern or restaurant in the region and, if you are interested, visit the vineyards and wineries to taste and learn its secrets.

But the key place to learn about the production process is the **Txakolingunea**, in Bakio; where you can join in educational workshops adapted to the needs of children.

And if you want to learn the secrets of fish **preserves**, both Maisor in Getaria and the **Mater Boat-museum** in Pasaia will reveal the traditional techniques developed by artisans from generation to generation. In Mater the type of preserve will depend on the season, and in Maisor you will learn to prepare authentic Cantabrian anchovy. And best of all, you can take the preserved fish you have prepared home with you.

The **Fiesta del Arca** in Hondarribia and the **Kaxarranka dancing** in Lekeitio commemorate taking of office by the elected heads of the fishermen’s guilds.

The **fiestas de San Telmo** in Zumaia celebrate the day of the patron saint of fishermen and **Whale Day** in Orio commemorates the capture of the last whale in the Basque country in 1901.

**Anchovy Day** in Ondarroa, the **Fishing Fair** in Bermeo in May and Santurtzi’s **Sardine Day** in July are unique opportunities to learn about our products and try them in an atmosphere of fiesta and celebration.

In September you can take delight in our land’s best products both on **Octopus Day** in Zumaia, and **Txakoli Day** in Zarautz. In October the **Seafood Fair** takes place in Zierbena.

In addition, every four years in August the **arrival of Elcano in Getaria** is re-enacted... with ship and all!

Another of the well-known festivals on our coasts is the **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** in September in Hondarribia. In this festival the highlight is the Parade (Alarde) of Our Lady of Guadalupe, where the vow made to the Virgin en 1639 in gratitude for the victory over the French in the siege of the city is fulfilled. These curious parades of military origin, in which special care is taken with the authenticity of costumes, are not to be missed.

The **San Pedros** of Orio, Mundaka, Zumaia and Pasaia in June. **Our Lady of Guidance** in Portugalete, **Our Lady of Carmel** in Santurtzi, Pasaia and Hondarribia, the **Magdalene Festivals** in Plentzia, Mutriku, Bermeo, Mundaka and Elantxobe in July, **Our Lady of the Port** and the maritime procession in Zierbena, **Arrantzale Day** in Ondarroa in August, the **Day of the Goose** in Lekeitio, **Arrantzale Eguna** in Bermeo and **Euskal Jaiak** in Zarautz in September are other festivals to be kept in mind.

And for the kiddies, the **International Street Theatre Festivals** held Lekeitio and Zarautz in July are unbeatable.
When it rains... we're off to visit museums

Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum, en Getaria. The dresses worn by elegant ladies who spent the summer months on the coast of Gipuzkoa and the loose jackets of the sailors inspired this young man born in Getaria to become a master of high fashion. Be sure to visit this impressive museum and contemplate the best dresses designed by the artist.

Nautilus Interpretation Centre, in Mutriku. Take a journey back in time to the era when dinosaurs roamed the earth and ammonites dominated the seas. This museum is the ideal place to find out all about the geological history of the Basque coast and to discover the most curious fossils.

Fishing Museum in Bermeo. This interesting museum devoted to the life and work of the fishermen is located in the historic Torre de Ercilla. The customs, lifestyle, family life, boats, gear and techniques... all you need to know about the history of the Basque fishing tradition is on display here.

Victor Hugo Museum in Pasaia. From the house where he lived in 1843 you can enjoy the views of the bay that inspired the French novelist Victor Hugo in the writings and engravings he made during his stay in Pasaia. You can discover more about the artist's life through the exhibition "Victor Hugo, a voyage of remembrance".

The fishing boat Agurtza in Santurtzi. The Agurtza is one of the last of the traditional wooden fishing vessels remaining on our coasts, and you can visit it to find out about the arrantzales’ way of life and work.

More than 40 museums and heritage sites dotted along the coast are members of the Network of Museums of the Basque Coast and have a free guide that provides discounts and benefits for users. www.losmuseosdelacostavasca.com
BASQUE HILLS AND VALLEYS

enchanted landscapes, charming people

Nature is displayed in all her splendour in the Tolosaldea and Goierri districts of Gipuzkoa and the Gorbea Nature Reserve: a green breathing space located on the border between Álava and Bizkaia with endless activities related to the rural world, traditions, culture, gastronomy and sport for the whole family. If your goal is to discover the essence of Basque Country, don’t fail to take full advantage of these offerings.
Take a walk through Goierri. This region has countless marked trails for hiking, walking, running, etc. each labelled with the level of effort required. Don’t miss this opportunity to immerse yourselves in nature and enjoy a great family day out.

There is a lovely walk bordering the Arriraran wetland or a stroll through the medieval village of Segura, full of stories and magical legends.

Hiking routes in Gorbeia for the whole family: there is a network of 14 trails that enable you to discover the superb landscape of this protected area and observe its flora and fauna. You can even observe the footprints of human history such as tombs, menhirs, farmlands, charcoal hearths, mills and concealed huts.

Climb to the Gorbea Cross. At 1,482m above sea level you will find an enormous 18 metre-high cross on the summit of Gorbea, which welcomes thousands of hikers and mountaineers every year.

Take part in water sports at any of the reservoirs on the Zadorra River in Álava. You can go rowing, windsurfing, sailing and fishing at the Urrunaga dam where you will find two leisure areas on the banks of the reservoir: Sorgimendi is a recreation zone with tables, fountains, beaches and woodland, and Zabalain, a park in a wooded area with tables and barbecues. Albina is the perfect place for canoeing. And then there is Ulibarri-Gamboa, ideal for kayaking, water skiing and sailing. The Vitoria Nautical Club is located here and at Landa there is a recreational area equipped for bathing. You can also go cycling or walking along the green route around the reservoir.

Visit a farm. There are numerous dairies throughout inland Basque Country that can be visited. A visit to any of them is undoubtedly the best way to appreciate the famous Idiazabal cheese. A shepherd will tell you all about the latxa sheep breed, herding, cheesemaking, the designation of origin and many other things. Of course, the visit ends with a tasting of wonderful Idiazabal cheese. Delicious!

Did you know that?

That there is a native breed of pig in the Basque Country!
In Bidania you have the opportunity to discover an authentic “Euskaltxerri” pig farm, the only native pig breed of Basque Country. Here you can see how they raise these so-called “happy pigs”, how they live in peace. To finish off the visit, why not try some of the cold cut meats produced at the farm?

Miner for a day at La Montaña del Hierro (Iron Mountain).

Visit the Aizpea mining complex in Lerain and discover the secrets of its galleries and old calcination furnaces: the casa del inglés (the Englishman’s house), the powder magazine and the casa del mecánico (mechanic’s house) are a few of the attractions of this fascinating landscape.

The first references to the mine date from the twelfth century and it was still active until the mid-twentieth century, finally closing down in 1951. You can also visit the jail in Lerain and play a game of traditional Basque bowls.
Go on a family adventure in Hontzaextrem. An adventure park in the trees that includes games that combine skill, agility and adventure (Tibetan bridges, cable slides, vine swings, rolling logs and net, Nepalese and monkey bridges...). For adults there is archery to show off your aim and finally a tree-climbing course to learn how to climb the trees safely. (Children over four years old).

Visit the Gujuli waterfall. With a drop of more than 100 meters, this is one of the most impressive scenic attractions in the Gorbeia area and not one to be missed. Go to the lookout and marvel at one of nature’s showpieces. It also has a number of marked itineraries (suitable for all ages) that winds between beech forests, heathlands, grasslands and ancient yews.

Orienteering game. There is an orienteering game for families on the Mutiloa-Ormaiztegi greenway. Orienteering and trekking combined with a touch of fun. With a map in hand, you will have to correctly answer the questions at each mark you find along the way to complete the challenge. The questions are related to topics like nature, the environment and mining: ideal to learn while having fun. The map and information can be collected at the Ormaiztegi tourist office.

Experience a family adventure in the lap of the Txindoki. With safety as its emblem, Txindokiko Itzala gives you the chance to try an active lifestyle and have enriching experiences.

Did you know...? In summer, the shepherds live in the cottages in the mountain folds with their flocks of latxa sheep, making tasty local cheeses. In winter they descend to the pastures in the valley, where they remain until the grass in the mountain pastures begins to grow again.
For bike lovers

Durango as a starting point.
There are numerous trails for trekkers and BTT (Mountain Bike) that start from Durango. Durango is a medieval town where you can enjoy a guided family visit and other resources for kiddies plus a wide variety of playgrounds.

Enjoy nature by bike throughout the Gorbeia. There is a large number of marked trails for biking in the nature reserve. You can rent bikes at several places such as the Casa del Patrón de Murgia, the Orozco Ethnographic Museum or Bicigune in Otxandio.

Greenways. Greenways are disused railway infrastructures that have been converted into routes for trekking or biking. There is an extensive network of these trails and depending on your plans you can choose the best one for an excursion through these fascinating surroundings.

Tolosaldea by bike. Through its BTT centre, the Tolosaldea district provides routes beginning in Tolosa for all levels. The best ones for family enjoyment are near Leaburu where in addition to sports you can discover the most amazing landscapes and be in direct contact with nature. There are also several recreational areas to relax and have a snack along the route.

Visit Druku’s world. This farm-school in which visitors and animals are constantly interacting is located in Zuia. There you will see border collies herding the sheep, a hawk that swoops above the visitors, horses that you can feed... An experience in direct contact with nature.

Learn the craft at first hand. Stone, wood, ceramics... craftsmanship is a way of life for many people in the Gorbeia area. If you would like to get to know the craftspeople, learn about their tools and even make something yourselves, be sure to take part in any of the workshops available in the area.

Learn more about medicinal plants. The use of herbs for medicinal purposes has been closely linked with the Basque tradition and culture for centuries. In the Gorbeia you can learn about medicinal plants, their use and properties and find out more about traditional Basque medicine.

Becoming a shepherd for a day.
Discover one of our most important traditional crafts. This is your chance to accompany a shepherd while he guides the flock during his day to day routine among the hills and to learn everything there is to know about his trade.

Go on a family picnic.
You can find areas set up for a quiet day with the family to enjoy a lovely picnic in the countryside anywhere in the Gorbeia Nature Reserve. You can even choose to go by kayak!

Do you know what these native Basque animals are called?

A. LATXA SHEEP  B. POTTOKA  C. EUSKAL TXERRI
The Nature Reserves

Urkiola

Mount Urkiolagirre is a green oasis in the rugged profile of the limestone rocks of Durangaldea. That friendly profile, its proximity to the Sanctuary of Urkiola and the stunning views of more ambitious summits make it the perfect place to introduce the kiddies to the world of mountains and trekking. The landscape of the Urkiola Nature Reserve is of great beauty and you can explore it with the whole family through the carefully graded trekking routes and bike trails.

Visit the Toki Alai Interpretation Centre: Learn more about the details of the landscape by perusing the exhibition on the Nature Reserve. You can also see an audiovisual presentation and observe a colony of vultures through a live video camera.

Aralar

Is the centre of many of the legends of Basque mythology, this park is a good choice to spend a day surrounded by nature. You will be sure to find some megalithic monuments and local fauna during your walk. The Lizarrusti Information Centre provides guided tours to familiarise yourselves with the Reserve and its mythology and there are dramatised tours in summer.

Gorbeia

Recreating the forms of the traditional Gorbeia shepherds’ huts, the park’s welcome cabin encloses an entire world for the little ones to discover: interactive panels, holograms, devices that let them smell the aromas of plants or even hear a stag roar...

It has an extensive programme of attractive proposals for the kiddies to learn more about not only the landscape but also the rural traditions of the area. There are 2 information centres: Areatza if you are travelling from Bizkaia and Sarria if you access the park from Álava.

Aizkorri-Aratz

Source of Gipuzkoa’s major rivers, this is one of the most important nature reserves in Basque Country. Megalithic monuments, underground galleries, the Sanctuary of Arantzazu... the area is full of items of cultural heritage just waiting to be discovered. Visit Aizkorri to immerse yourselves in nature and spend an unforgettable day while visiting the San Adrian tunnel (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) that connected Castile to the Basque Country and Europe in the Middle Ages.

We have one more fun idea for you in the Gorbea Nature Reserve: to sleep in natural surroundings in original and unique lodgings. If this appeals to you, take a look at the following offerings:

The “Zuhaitz-etxeak” or tree houses in Zeanuri are a unique opportunity to sleep in the trees at one with nature as if you were a bird!

Don’t forget your camera: you may see birds and even deer walking below the cabins.

And for the little ones, the best option is the colourful gypsy caravans. The complex has a cafeteria and bar and you can order dinners and picnic lunches for your excursions. There is even wifi in the Caserío.
Can you name these two characters?

L _ M _ _ K
B _ S _ J _ _ N

Ordizia Basque festivals. They have been held in the first week of September since time can remember. The special market and subsequent Idiazabal cheese contest in which the winning cheese fetches astronomical prices of up to 13,000 euros in the auction that follows are among the highlights. The streets are packed with people dressed in typical Basque costumes.

Going to the fayres and festivals in Gorbeia. Agriculture, handicrafts and gastronomy are the stars, and this is reflected in the festivals and fayres devoted to their products. In May you have San Isidro in Zeanuri and the Gorbea Nature Reserve Livestock Fair on the second Saturday of the same month. Orozko Products Day is in June and the Zigoitia Horse Fair is held in Orduñez on the last Sunday of the month.

Visiting the fascinating Mekartea fayre in Artea is a must on the third Saturday of September. The Livestock fayre in Murgia is held on the first Sunday of October. On the last Saturday of the same month there is a Craft Market in Ibarra de Aramaio and the Urkabustaiz Izarra fayre on the Sunday. Finally, in December, the fayre of Santa Lucia is held in both Otxandio and Orozko.

Tolosa Choral Contest. This event has been held in the town every year since 1968. If you are a fan of choir music then this event that features choirs from all over Europe is the one for you.

The Tolosa carnival. This is an event you simply can’t miss. A singular fiesta that fills the town with locals and visitors from far and wide in a unique festive atmosphere. Parades, processions, drumming, bulls... A fiesta that appeals to the young and old alike.

Basque Country is a land full of legends and mythology. You will hear stories about Mari who spits flames, the Lamiak, beautiful women with duck’s feet, Basajaun or the Lord of the Woods and the Sorgiñak, witches with supernatural powers.

When it rains...

- **Topic International Puppet Museum in Tolosa.** The only comprehensive centre devoted to puppetry in Europe, Topic has an extensive collection of puppets from around the world. One of its goals is to introduce the youngest audiences to the world of theatre, and is a fantastic option for a rainy day.

- **Ecomuseum of the Basque Caserio in Artea.** You can learn about the customs and lifestyles of Basques in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in this ethnographic museum. Utensils, dresses, suits and other objects are gathered in one place, perfect for gaining insight into the roots of our land and how the people once lived in the Basque farmhouses.

- **Museum of Basque Traditional Pottery in Ollerias, Elosu.** Located in an old pottery dating from 1711, the museum has a marvellous collection of ceramics. You can also visit the huge oven that was used for centuries to fire thousands of pieces. You can visit the working pottery where you can see how the potters ply their trade.

- **Orozko Ethnographic Museum.** Here you can enjoy an entertaining and educational visit with an interactive and participatory approach about the Orozko area, its livestock activity and the Gorbea Nature Reserve.
Honey Museum in Murgia. Located in the Casa Oregi, this space is designed to introduce you to the essence of the fabulous world of beekeeping. The instruments and other items traditionally used to handle hives and make honey and its derivatives are exhibited... everything you need to master the world of bees and honey. Delicious!

“Bee-keeper for a day”
Immerse yourself in the fabulous world of beekeeping, a trade and ancient activity that still maintains its splendour in Gorbeia. This smooth, natural honey is finger-licking good!

Learn about good nutrition. At the D’Elikatuz Food and Gastronomy Centre in Ordizia you can learn more about this subject, about the history of Goierri and Ordizia and their market, Idiazabal cheese and healthy eating. The centre offers several activities aimed at children to have fun and learn at the same time.

Ordizia market. The most important market in the Basque Country is held in Ordizia every Wednesday. Although its origins date back to the twelfth century, it was Joanna the Mad (Juana la Loca) of Castile in 1512 who provided the impulse that has ensured its survival to the present day. Here you will find the freshest produce of our land delivered directly from the caserio. There’s nothing better than losing yourselves in the market and finding the best vegetables, cheeses, meats and fruit of the region.

Tolosa market. Another of the most important of the province, this market has been held every Saturday for centuries. Vegetables, fruit, flowers, textiles, etc. A wide variety of the key products of our land. Discover flavours, aromas... and when in doubt, don’t hesitate to ask the baserritarras.

Bread workshop
You can learn about the traditions of the workers and their secrets from professional bakers who are passionate about their work. Enter the world of traditional Gorbeia baking and pastry-making under the watchful eye of the Bizkarra family.

Cut this delicious cheese into 12 equal parts using only straight cuts... a delectable portion awaits you.

And you can learn to make bread the traditional way in the mill in the Zgartzza historical heritage complex in Beasain. A perfect activity for the whole family with the added incentive that you can taste the product made with your own hands!
Idiazabal cheese. Undoubtedly one of the best known products of Gochierri, this exquisite cheese produced entirely from Latxa or Carranza sheep milk is a delicacy not to be missed. Smoked or not, this cheese with its own designation of origin can be found in any market or shop in the province.

Tolosa beans. This is another of the star products of the province of Gipuzkoa along with the Ibarra hot peppers. You can follow the cycle of the beans from sowing to the table. A farmer who grows this legume, one of the emblematic ingredients in Basque cooking, will take you on an easy trek on Mount Urkizu to the plantation on different days: sowing, harvest and the preparation of the product before it goes to market. The experience, of course, culminates with an alubiada (bean stew) in Tolosa Bean Week (November)

And if you would like to delve deeper into the world of this cheese visit the Cheese Information Centre in Idiazabal, the town for which it is named. Izal the mouse will guide you through an audiovisual presentation of the history of this award-winning cheese. You can also take part in a tasting.

Gorrotxategi Museum. This museum is the ideal place to learn about the history of confectionery and candle-making. Here they will teach you the working techniques of the traditional confectioners to produce coffee, chocolate, caramel... and you will enjoy one of the sweetest days of your life.

And since you are in Tolosa, try the famous tejas and cigarrillos (almond waffles). Created in century-old Pasteleria Eceiza, these delicacies made of butter and almonds are the star dessert of the town.
Write or draw the funniest thing that happened to you during this adventure: For example, what you liked best, anecdotes, or what surprised you.
Small Dictionary

Yes: Bai
No: Ez
Hi there: Kaixo!
How are you?: Zer moduz?
How are you doing?: Zelan?
All right: Ongi, ondo
Not so good: Gaizki, txarto
Good and you?: Ondo, eta zu?
Goodbye: Agur
Until next time!: Ikusi arte!
See you later!: Gero arte!
Thank you: eskerrik asko
You are welcome: Ez horregatik
I do not understand: Ez dut ulertzton
Good Morning: Egun on
Good afternoon: Arratsalde on
Good evening: Gabon
Welcome: Ongi etorri
Please: Mesedez
I'm sorry: Barkatu
What time is it?: Zer ordu da?
Hotel: Hotel
Restaurant: Jatetxe
Food: Janari
Breakfast: Gosari
Lunch: Bazkari
Snack: Askari
Dinner: Afari

Bread: Ogi
Water: Ur
Coffee: Kafe
Wine: Ardo
The bill: Kontu
Beach: Hondartza
River: Ibai
Sun: Eguzki
fine rain: Zirimiri
Museum: Museo
Street: Kale
Plaza Enparantza
School Ikastola
No smoking: Ez erre
Hamlet: Baserri
Party: Jai
Beret: Txapel
Congratulations!: Zorionak!
Mother: Ama
Father: Aita
Grandfather: Aitona, aitite
Grandma: Amona, amama
Spring: Udaberri
Summer: Uda
Autumn: Udazken
Winter: Negu

NUMBERS
1. Bat
2. Bi
3. Hiru
4. Lau
5. Bost
6. Sei
7. Zazpi
8. Zortzi
9. Bederatzi
10. Hamar
There are many reasons why Basque Country is an essential destination. You will find this out when you get to know its people, its history, the heritage that its cities breathe, and even better when you talk about it over a great meal.

Want to have fun and explore Basque Country at the same time?
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