

The ——— ——— Basque Route ———

CREATE
YOUR OWN
PATH

EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY

The ——— ——— Basque Route ———

#CreateYourOwnPath

CREATE YOUR OWN PATH

OTXANDIO

VITORIA-GASTEIZ

LEKEITIO

MARTINA-XEMEIN

ZORITZA-BOLIBAR

DUANALDE

ELBORIO

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1

From **Bilbao**
to **Lekeitio**

Pág. 6



2

From **Lekeitio**
to **Zarautz**

Pág. 10



3

From **Zarautz**
to **San Sebastián**

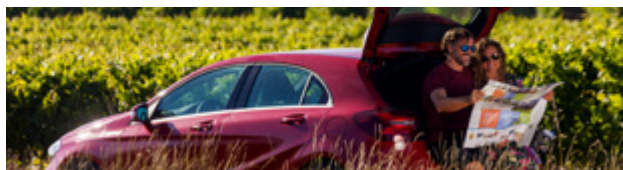
Pág. 14



4

From **San Sebastián**
to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

Pág. 18



5

From **Vitoria-Gasteiz**
to **Laguardia**

Pág. 22



6

From **Laguardia**
to **Orduña**

Pág. 26



7

From **Orduña**
to **Bilbao**

Pág. 30



8

From **Lekeitio**
to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

Pág. 34

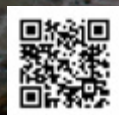
THE BASQUE ROUTE, CREATE YOUR OWN PATH

The Basque Route is a proposed route to discover the most attractive roads and landscapes in the Basque Country by car or motorbike.

The route is designed to let travellers enjoy everything the Basque Country has to offer from the freedom of their own vehicle. Discover cosmopolitan cities, fishing villages or medieval towns. Start the journey with the smell of the sea or watching the fog spread over a valley surrounded by mountains. Savour the renowned Basque cuisine in a restaurant in a fishing port or watch the sun go down over the vineyard-covered hill from your hotel balcony. The sections are also fully designed to be enjoyed by electric vehicle.

There are still special spots for you to discover during your visit. Spoil yourself.

thebasqueroute.eus





1 ALWAYS BY THE CANTABRIAN SEA
From **Bilbao** to **Lekeitio**

2 SEA AND MOUNTAINS
From **Lekeitio** to **Zarautz**

3 THE KINGDOM OF GASTRONOMY
From **Zarautz** to **San Sebastián**

4 TRIP THROUGH THE GREEN GIPUZKOA
From **San Sebastián** to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

5 DOLMENS AND TITANIUM
From **Vitoria-Gasteiz** to **Laguardia**

6 WHERE THE RIVERS HAVE THEIR SOURCE
From **Laguardia** to **Orduña**

7 FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO BILBAO
From **Orduña** to **Bilbao**

8 TRAVELLING AROUND MAGIC EUSKADI
From **Lekeitio** to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

ALWAYS BY THE CANTABRIAN SEA

1

A route alongside the Cantabrian Sea along impressive cliffs, surf beaches, traditional fishing villages and restaurants where you can taste the delicacies of the sea.



From **Bilbao**
to **Lekeitio**

115,5 km
3 h approx.

1. BILBAO	0 km.	0 min.	9. MUNDAKA	3 km.	6 min.
2. GETXO	11,5 km.	27 min.	10. BUSTURIA	4 km.	5 min.
3. SOPELA	7,5 km.	16 min.	11. GERNIKA-LUMO	7,5 km.	8 min.
4. PLENTZIA	7,5 km.	10 min.	12. KORTEZUBI	7 km.	11 min.
5. GORLIZ	1,5 km.	5 min.	13. GAUTEGIZ ARTEAGA	1 km.	2 min.
6. LEMOIZ	5,5 km.	9 min.	14. ELANTXOBE	16 km.	23 min.
7. BAKIO	15 km.	21 min.	15. EA	6 km.	10 min.
8. BERMEO	12,5 km.	20 min.	16. LEKEITIO	10 km.	14 min.



**Santimamiñe,
World Heritage Site,**
has 50 12,000-year-old
charcoal-drawn figures. The pine
tree trunks in the forest of Oma
are works of art.



Gernika, symbol of peace

Gernika gained a place in the pages of World History following the bombardment by the German Condor Legion in 1937, as immortalized by Picasso in his famous painting. Two thirds of its buildings were destroyed but the Assembly House was left intact, together with the famous Gernika Tree, which it is located alongside. It is worth visiting the Museum of Peace or the weekly market on Mondays, selling the best Basque produce.

— The **Guggenheim Museum Bilbao** stands where there were once shipyards, warehouses and wharves. By following the BI-711, with the Nervión river on the left, we reach the **Bizkaia Bridge**, the transporter bridge linking **Portugalete** and **Getxo**.

The BI-634 connects Getxo with **Sopela**, where we link up with the BI-2122, a pleasant road with the sea on the horizon. The beaches of Arriatera and Atxabiribil invite us to take a dip. Nudism is allowed on the small beaches of Meñakoz and Muriola in the neighbouring village of **Barrika**.

Plentzia looks peculiar because of the meandering **Butrón river** as it approaches the sea. From **Gorliz**, we head along the BI-3151 to the port of Armintza, a coastal neighbourhood of **Lemoiz**, with four little houses scattered among the sea, the rocks and the mountains. »

» We retake the BI-3151 towards **Bakio** and we're soon surprised by a fantastic view of the eastern coast of Bizkaia. In Bakio we first see the vines for the famous txakoli, a native white wine, very slightly sparkling, dry, with a hint of acidity, an ideal accompaniment for fish dishes.

We leave the BI-2101 in the direction of **San Juan de Gaztelugatxe**, one of the most picturesque places on the Basque coast. It is an

islet connected to the mainland by a bridge with a solitary chapel at the top. This chapel is reached by means of 241 steps, rewarding us with a 360° panoramic view of the coast.

We can go as far as **Matxitxako** lighthouse, the westernmost point of the Basque Country. We head down to **Bermeo**, a town with a strong tradition of fishing. You absolutely must visit the port, try some fish, experience the boat races or visit one of its museums.

The BI-2235 will leave you in the neighbouring town, **Mundaka**, a small and welcoming place which is also a destination for surf lovers. The journey to the historic town of **Gernika** along the BI-2235 is dotted with scenic viewpoints.

We follow the BI-2238 northwards and link up with the BI-4244 just before reaching **Kortezubi**, heading towards magical spots: **Santimamiñe** cave, one of the cathedrals of Basque prehistory and



the **Forest of Oma**, by the artist Agustín Ibarrola.

Along the BI-3234, next to **Ogoño** Cape, **Laga** beach has some of the most crystal-clear waters in the Basque Country. The road runs alongside it to reach **Elantxobe**, a small fishing village whose houses climb up the slopes of Ogoño. Finally, the BI-3238 leads us to **Ea**, another unusual town on the Bizkaia coast. From here, we'll head to **Lekeitio**. •

—— The Urdaibai estuary was declared a biosphere reserve by unesco in 1984. The landscape undergoes radical changes depending on the tides



SEA AND MOUNTAINS

2

We set out inland, towards the green Basque Country of rivers and mountains, of lonely farmhouses hiding in the folds of the valleys.



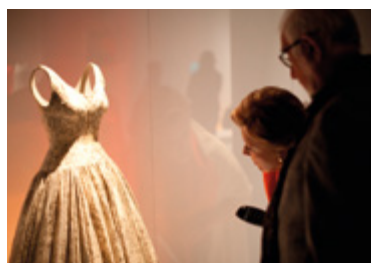
From **Lekeitio**
to **Zarautz**

1. LEKEITIO	18,5 km.	23 min.
2. ONDARROA	5,5 km.	10 min.
3. MUTRIKU	6 km.	8 min.
4. DEBA	27,5 km.	45 min.
5. AZKOITIA	2,5 km.	5 min.

6. AZPEITIA	9,5 km.	13 min.
7. ZESTOA	8 km.	9 min.
8. ZUMAIA	7,5 km.	16 min.
9. GETARIA	4 km.	6 min.
10. ZARAUTZ		

89 km

2h. 15 min. approx.



The sailor **Elcano** and the fashion designer **Cristóbal Balenciaga** were born in **Getaria**. The latter has a very interesting museum.

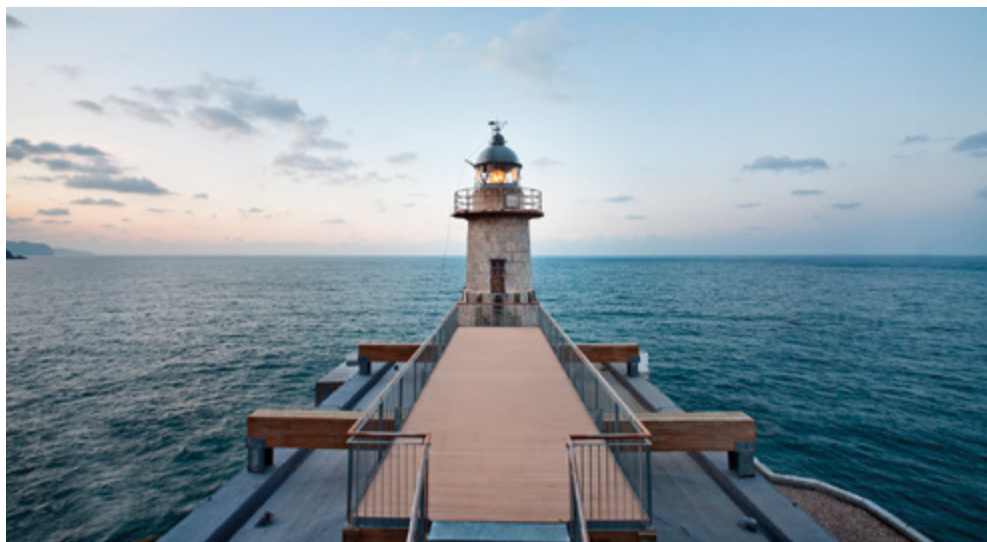
— **Lekeitio** begs to be discovered by starting out from the Santa Catalina lighthouse and walking along its narrow streets full of colourful fishermen's houses. We follow the BI-3438 along a wild coastline until we reach **Ondarroa**, whose

old quarter is protected by the monumental church of Santa María, and the port, which is very busy, is home to a curious piece of engineering: the Alfonso XIII swing bridge.

Having reached Gipuzkoa, we continue along the GI-638 to **Mutriku**, which made a living from whaling for hundreds of years; the old quarter is medieval, with many steep slopes. Heading east along the GI-638, we cross the Deba river and link up with the N-634. Following the river to its mouth we reach **Deba**, a town that played a very important role in European trade. The church of Santa María has a multicoloured doorway and a Gothic cloister inside, the first one to

be built in Gipuzkoa. We retake the N-634 towards San Sebastián and visit the Gothic sanctuary in the rural neighbourhood of Itziar. The GI-3210 takes us south to the **Lastur valley**, a hidden spot where a native breed of bulls is bred (and fought), the 'betizu'. Once past the Lastur quarry and Azkarate heights, we link up with the GI-2634 as far as **Azkoitia**, a picturesque noble town. On the way to Azpeitia, we'll visit the chapel of San Martín, high on a hill with views of the crag of Izarraitz.

In **Azpeitia**, besides the basilica devoted to **Saint Ignatius of Loyola**, we can visit the interesting **Basque Railway Museum**. We follow the River Urola »



2 SEA AND MOUNTAINS

—— The port of Ondarroa, an important place on the Basque coast, has some of the most up-to-date facilities on the cantabrian sea

» to **Zestoa**, a town with ties to tourism centred around thermal waters. **The cave of Ekainberri (a reproduction, open to the public, of the cave of Ekain)** is considered a European sanctuary of cave painting with animal figures oozing realism. In **Zumaia** we once again reach the sea. The landscape here is unique, recognized as the **Basque Coast Geopark**. The Algorri Visitor's Centre will tell us all about the geological phenomenon, but the only way to really experience it is to walk along it.

The N-634 runs very close to the sea, so close that heavy seas can lead to waves caressing it. **Getaria** is famous for its charcoal fish grills. **Zarautz** has no port to boast of, but it can be proud of its beach, with surfers taking part in the sport they are passionate about. A lively marine promenade, a fistful of small palaces, the photography museum and the Iñurritza dunes, which are a protected biotope. •





Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Company of Jesus and the most universal of the Basque saints, was born in a small neighbourhood close to Azpeitia. A large Baroque sanctuary, built around the medieval tower house in which Ignatius was born, commemorates him. The most outstanding feature is the basilica, a project by the Roman architect Carlo Fontana, a follower of Bernini and artifice of the immense dome with a diameter of 20 metres.

THE KINGDOM OF GASTRONOMY

3

We're in Gipuzkoa, land of charcoal-grilled fish, Roman mines, mountains by the sea and even a village with a touch of Venice. Let's not forget San Sebastián, with its pintxos and its famous La Concha beach.



From **Zarautz**
to **San Sebastián**

92 km
2h. 45 min. approx.

1. ZARAUTZ	5,5 km.	7 min.	6. IRUN	5,5 km.	16 min.
2. ORIO	14,5 km.	15 min.	7. HONDARRIBIA	19,5 km.	39 min.
3. HERNANI	6,5 km.	13 min.	8. PASAIA	14 km.	34 min.
4. ASTIGARRAGA	19 km.	30 min.	9. SAN SEBASTIÁN		
5. OIARTZUN	7,5 km.	11 min.			



In 1843, **Victor Hugo** spent a few days in **Pasai Donibane**. The town has a beautiful old quarter next to the river and a museum devoted to the French writer.

—— The Comb of the Wind sculpture is at the foot of mount Igeldo in San Sebastián. This work by Chillida is best enjoyed with rough seas



La Bella Easo

San Sebastián is, above all, a daughter of the Belle Époque, full of romantic buildings reminiscent of Paris. This is no hindrance to its acceptance of new architectural approaches such as the Kursaal Centre, Tabakalera and Musikene. The Old Part is a world-famous place due to its pintxo bars. Pintxos are true gastronomic works of art in miniature, reinvented year after year.



— **Orio** will surprise us upriver, both for its fishing village appearance and its char-grilled sea bream restaurants. Before we leave, we'll climb on foot (about 20 minutes) to the chapel of San Martín de Tours, of medieval origin. We return to the N-634 to once again follow the river among market gardens and eel fishing villages until we link up with the GI-2132 at **Lasarte-Oria**. After passing through **Hernani**, we reach **Astigarraga**, the cider house town, which even has a museum devoted to cider, **Sagardoetxea**.

We continue along the GI-2123 as far as the pleasant village of **Oiartzun** where we take the GI-3420. The road runs along a wide valley containing many farmsteads. On the left, after the Pagoaldea industrial estate, we'll see a turn-off to the Arditurri Mines from which minerals were extracted as long ago as prehistoric times. There are guided tours available.

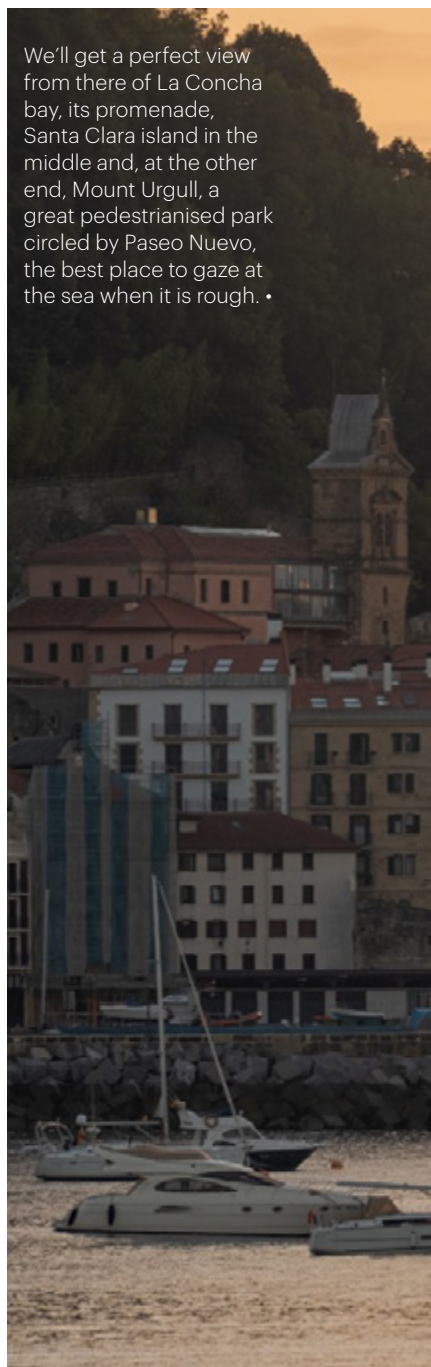
Irun is our next stop; the old quarter and the chapel of Santa Elena are worth a visit, as is the **Oiasso Roman Museum**, containing all you need to know about the Romans' activities in this area. A brief journey

along the N-638 brings us to **Hondarribia**. Txingudi Bay, the green mass of Mount Jaizkibel and the mouth of the Bidasoa, which marks the border with France, are elements to bear in mind. In Hondarribia, a lot of which is pedestrianised, the first thing we come across is the fishermen's neighbourhood, **La Marina**, with its colourful houses with wooden cross-beams, and the best pintxo bar atmosphere.

The GI-3440 leads us to the **Sanctuary of Guadalupe**, the patron saint of Hondarribia, with a fort from the 19th century and fantastic views. We climb **Jaizkibel** along a route with fabulous views of the coast. After a descent we reach the beautiful village of **Pasai-Donibane**, with **Pasai San Pedro** across the river. It is reached by a small ferry. Both villages maintain a great tradition of boat races, while **Albaola, The Sea Factory** of the Basques, keeps traditional boat-building skills alive in Pasai San Pedro.

From Pasai Donibane we skirt the entire industrial port and take the old N-1 road to land in **San Sebastián**. To get a good idea of the city we have to climb Mount Igeldo.

We'll get a perfect view from there of La Concha bay, its promenade, Santa Clara island in the middle and, at the other end, Mount Urgull, a great pedestrianised park circled by Paseo Nuevo, the best place to gaze at the sea when it is rough. •





TRIP THROUGH THE GREEN GIPUZKOA

4

We'll move through a Basque Country of meadows, beech forests and cider houses. Sometimes we'll drive beneath the gaze of Txindoki and other mountains, in the shadow of medieval towns and hundred- year-old markets.



From **San Sebastián**
to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

163,5 km
3h. 40 min. approx.

1. SAN SEBASTIÁN	26,5 km.	28 min.	9. MUTILOA	4 km.	7 min.
2. TOLOSA	26 km.	42 min.	10. ORMAIZTEGI	8 km.	6 min.
3. LAZKAO	4,5 km.	9 min.	11. ZUMARRAGA	5 km.	7 min.
4. ORDIZIA	10,5 km.	12 min.	12. LEGAZPI	12,5 km.	16 min.
5. IDIAZABAL	6 km.	11 min.	13. OÑATI	25 km.	30 min.
6. SEGURA	5 km.	7 min.	14. LEINTZ GATZAGA	23 km.	36 min.
7. ZEGAMA	6 km.	8 min.	15. VITORIA-GASTEIZ		
8. ZERAIN	1,5 km.	3 min.			

We'll leave **San Sebastián** by the GI-41 and then the A-15 and the A-1 as far as Tolosa, the leading town in this valley which lives between two worlds, the rural and the industrial. Tolosa, which was capital of Gipuzkoa in the mid-19th century,

is a little big city with many possibilities to offer, such as attending a pelota match in the Beotibar pelota court or enjoying a visit to the Topic puppet museum. The Tinglado building, one of the epicentres of the traditional Saturday

market, is found on a meander alongside the River Oria.

We leave **Tolosa**, once again taking the A1 south towards **Ordizia**, near Alegia, we take the GI-2133 which will take us to villages such as »



The menu at a cider house consists of cod omelette, cod pintxo, T-bone steak and, for dessert, cheese and walnuts. The entire ritual is washed down with cider straight from the barrel.

Idiazabal Cheese

It is quite normal to come across latxa sheep grazing in the highlands of Gipuzkoa. They can be identified by their abundant curly wool and their dark face. Their milk is used to make Idiazabal cheese, which has Protected Destination of Origin. In September, during the Euskal Jaiak (Basque Festival) in Ordizia, a competition is held to find the best Idiazabal cheese of the year. Up to 13,000 euros has been paid for 500g of cheese at this event.





» **Amezketeta, Abaltzisketa** and **Zaldibia**. We'll get to know Txindoki on this road, one of the most emblematic mountains of Gipuzkoa, with some beautiful photo opportunities.

Ordizia is the doorway to the **Goierri area**. The old quarter is almond-shaped and it crowds around its covered main square, the Plaza Mayor (dated 1925), where the hundred year-old market is held on Wednesdays. We reach **Idiazabal** along the A-1, home to the famous cheese of the same name.

— During the spanish civil war, the Ormaiztegi viaduct was cut with blowtorches to stop the advance of the national troops



By means of the GI-2637 we reach **Segura**. The Camino Real passed along the main street of this medieval jewel. Near Segura, **Zerain** is a small village with numerous points of interest. We continue south and in **Zegama** we can stop at the Aizkorriko Ataria Visitor's Centre in the Aizkorri-Aratz Nature Reserve.

We'll know we've reached **Ormaiztegui** (along the GI-3262 when we go under the striking iron and steel viaduct (1864) carrying the Madrid-Paris railway. We link up with the GI-2632

towards **Zumarraga** and then climb up Mount Irimo to the chapel of Santa María of Zumarraga, with its remarkable wooden structure. The GI-2630 will lead us through the Udana Pass to **Oñati**, a town with interesting monuments such as the Sancti Spiritus University (16th century). 9 km away along the GI-3591 we find the modern Sanctuary of Our Lady of Arantzazu, which marks an apparition of the Virgin Mary. On the way, alongside the Jaturabe reservoir, we'll make a stop at the **Arrikrutz** caves, an impressive subterranean landscape.

We return to Oñati and take the GI-2630 to **Arrasate-Mondragón** and then take the GI-3310 to a charming spot, the village of **Leintz Gatzaga**. The Museum of Salt and the Sanctuary of Dorleta are its main tourist attractions. On the way back, the GI-3310 will take us to the GI-627 and the N-240 to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**, in the heart of the Alavan Plain. •

DOLMENS AND TITANIUM

5

Rioja Alavesa is an entirely different Basque Country on the banks of the River Ebro. We set out from Vitoria-Gasteiz on a route which will take us through a sea of vineyards full of walled towns.

From **Vitoria-Gasteiz** to **Laguardia**

122,5 km

2h. 20 min. approx.

1. VITORIA-GASTEIZ	30 km.	35 min.
2. AGURAIN/SALVATIERRA	31,5 km	33 min.
3. CAMPEZO	36,5 km.	45 min.
4. ELVILLAR	18,5 km.	22 min.
5. ELCIEGO	6 km.	6 min.
6. LAGUARDIA		



The Vitoria-Gasteiz Green Ring is a flat 30- kilometre circuit which passes through all the parks surrounding the city.



Green city

Years ago, Vitoria-Gasteiz gambled on a green future, by means of pedestrianised streets, cycle lanes and urban parks. It gambled, and it won, managing to become a city with an enviable quality of life and an ideal size to explore on foot. The medieval Cathedral of Santa María is its most emblematic monument. It is located in the heart of the old quarter, a short distance from the Plaza de la Virgen Blanca and the Artium Museum.



— For more than a decade, Elciego has been home to a surprising contrast: the baroque stone of its church and the titanium building by Frank O. Gehry



—— We leave **Vitoria-Gasteiz** along the N-104 until we pass Ilarratza and take the A-3110 turn-off. We follow roads parallel to the Camino de Santiago with numerous monuments tied to this thousand-year-old pilgrim's route such as the **Romanic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Estíbaliz** and, nearby, the Álava Romanesque Visitor's Centre. In Elburgo we'll be surprised by the Romanesque chapel of San Juan of

Arrarain, while Alegría-Dulantzi offers us its tall slim church tower. After passing Adana and Guereñu we hook up with the A-4140 which, in a matter of seconds, takes us to the gates of **Alaitza**. Its church of La Asunción houses one of the few examples of Basque Gothic frescos. The story is repeated in nearby **Gazeo**, whose medieval temple has striking Gothic frescos, this time depicting biblical scenes.

Agurain/Salvatierra is the most monumental town on the Álava Plain and the town with the best-preserved remains of the city walls that used to protect it. Seen on the map, the shape of Agurain/Salvatierra is reminiscent of Vitoria-Gasteiz: a medieval almond with just three parallel streets and numerous stately houses emblazoned with coats of arms. At either end is a church that looks like a fort: Santa María and San



Juan, both built into the old town walls.

Along the A-2128, towards **Opakua** and then along the A-4112 heading towards Arriza we reach the **Sorginetxe dolmen**, one of the Basque Country's great megalithic monuments. Now we'll set course for Opakua and climb one of the highest mountain passes in the Basque Country, with its enviable views. We descend to the valley of Arana and, by

means of a leafy canyon, we reach **Santa Cruz de Campezo and Antoñana**, two markedly medieval towns.

Along the A-3136 towards Bernedo, accompanied by the rocky walls of the Cantabria sierra, **Izki Nature Reserve** is a little paradise worthy of a weekend's stay. **Kripan, Elvillar** with its famous **dolmen La Chabola de la Hechicera (The Witch's Hut)**, **El Campillar** and **Lapuebla de Labarca**

with its Baroque and Renaissance façades, are all towns we'll pass through on the way to **Elciego**, where we'll be surprised by an imposing titanium building which is situated alongside a Baroque church. We have reached Rioja Alavesa, with its sea of vineyards spreading out at the foot of the Cantabria sierra. **Laguardia** is its capital city. •

WHERE THE RIVERS HAVE THEIR SOURCE

6

After Rioja Alavesa we'll visit some of the most extraordinary corners of the Basque Country, including a church dug out of the rock, a salty valley and a series of waterfalls.

From **Laguardia**
to **Orduña**

110 km
2h approx.

1. LAGUARDIA	6 km.	6 min.
2. LEZA	13 km.	14 min.
3. PEÑACERRADA/URIZAHARRA	49 km.	49 min.
4. AÑANA	27,5 km.	28 min.
5. URKABUSTAIZ	14,5 km.	17 min.
6. ORDUÑA		





Añana Salt Pans

We find ourselves before an ancient Roman villa and one of the most extraordinary landscapes in the Basque Country. The Añana Salt Pans are in a ravine dug by human hands and covered by a complex system of terraces and channels made of wood. What for? To extract salt, considered “white gold” for centuries, from a spring. The Añana salt pans have their roots 6000 years ago and have been functioning uninterrupted ever since.

At the **Centro Temático del Vino Villa Lucía** (Wine Visitor's Centre) in **Laguardia** we'll learn all there is to know about fermented grape juice.





—— **Laguardia's** greatest treasure is hidden in the high part of the town. The multi-coloured doorway of **the church of Santa María de los Reyes** is unique. Strolling through the old quarter is a must. You'll discover the network of subterranean wine cellars dug in the 16th century.

The N-232a takes us to **Leza** in a straight line, but we recommend a small diversion along the A-4207 to Navaridas and, from there, northwards along the A-3212, with a perfect panoramic view of Laguardia, the vineyards and, in the background, the Cantabria sierra, which looks like a giant wave trying to swallow itself.

We climb the Herrera Pass along the A-2124 and from **the Balcony of La Rioja** gaze upon a landscape of vineyards and cultivated fields spreading along the Ebro valley. As we descend, the landscape changes and beech forest take on the starring role. We continue along the A-2124 and soon discover that the tree cover disappears and gives way to the green meadows of the mountains of Álava. We'll soon reach **Peñacerrada-Urizaharra**, a well-looked after town which still maintains part of its defensive walls and towers. Then we head along the A-2124 and the A-4129 to **Faido** to visit the **pre-Romanesque chapel of Nuestra**

Señora de la Peña, carved into the rock.

Along the A-3126, following the Inglares river, we reach **Berganzo**, where the valley widens and the forests retreat. We can see the **castle of Ocio** high on a hill in the distance. We take the N-124 towards the north as far as the A-1 in the direction of Burgos. It's just a kilometre to **Rivabellosa**, where the A-3312 begins. This road will take us as far as the A-2122 through **Zubillaga, Lantarón, Fontetxa** and **Larrazubi**. The Ebro river accompanies us on the left and also acts as a natural border between the Basque Country and Castile-León. We'll pass **Bergonda** along the

A-2625, and the A-2622 will take us to **Añana** and its salt pans.

The A-2622 leads us out of the valley to the east, as far as the A-3314, which runs alongside the motorway for a few kilometres. Once past **Izarra**, we reach the A-2521, which we take heading east towards Goiuri-Ondona, in **Urkabustaiz**. From the dryland and the salty valley, we move on to

a green landscape of meadows and pine forests. Before reaching **Goiuri-Ondona**, a signpost indicates a short walk to the 100 metre-high **Gujuli waterfall**. Along the A-2521, after Orduña, we climb the pass of the same name along the A-2625, where we can enjoy fantastic views before taking a turn-off to the **Nervión Waterfall**. The river falls from the top of the cliff. A spectacular sight! •

— After a short walk, a viewpoint above the abyss will reveal to us the 270 metres of the Nervión Waterfall



FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO BILBAO

7

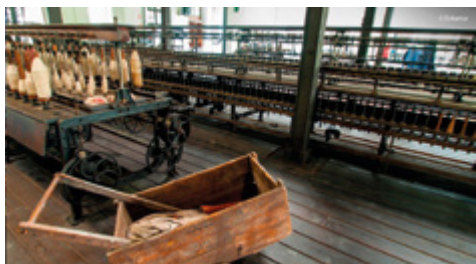
Beyond Orduña Pass a little-known area full of history awaits us: Encartaciones. Then the crowning glory, the stretch from Santurce to Bilbao.



From **Orduña**
to **Bilbao**

152,5 km
3h. 40 min. approx.

1. ORDUÑA	21 km.	20 min.	6. MUSKIZ	14,5 km.	25 min.
2. ARTZINIEGA	13 km.	20 min.	7. SANTURTZI	2 km.	5 min.
3. BALMASEDA	27 km.	35 min.	8. PORTUGALETE	6,5 km.	10 min.
4. VALLE DE KARRANTZA	44,5 km.	60 min.	9. BARAKALDO	8,5 km.	20 min.
5. GALDAMES	15,5 km.	25 min.	10. BILBAO		



The Balmaseda beret factory La Encartada supplied head coverings for half the Basque Country for a century using wool imported from Australia. Australasian sheep had softer wool.



— The Santurtzi Itsasoa Museum and the fishing visitor's centre in the tuna fishing boat Agurtza are two of santurtzi's marine surprises

— In the foothills of the Salvada sierra, **Orduña is a town** with a protected old quarter. The A-625 and the A-624 lead us to **Artziniega**, another town named Historic Monumental Site which looks like film set. We retake the same A-624 towards Balmaseda to discover **the Encartaciones or Enkarterri** area, a little-known part of Bizkaia.

Its capital is **Balmaseda**. This is the location for the beret factory La Encartada, which is now an industrial museum with its own beret shop. The old part of the town is reached by means of a medieval bridge. After visiting the church of San Severino, with its asymmetric façade and beautiful Gothic windows, we take the BI-630 to head into the

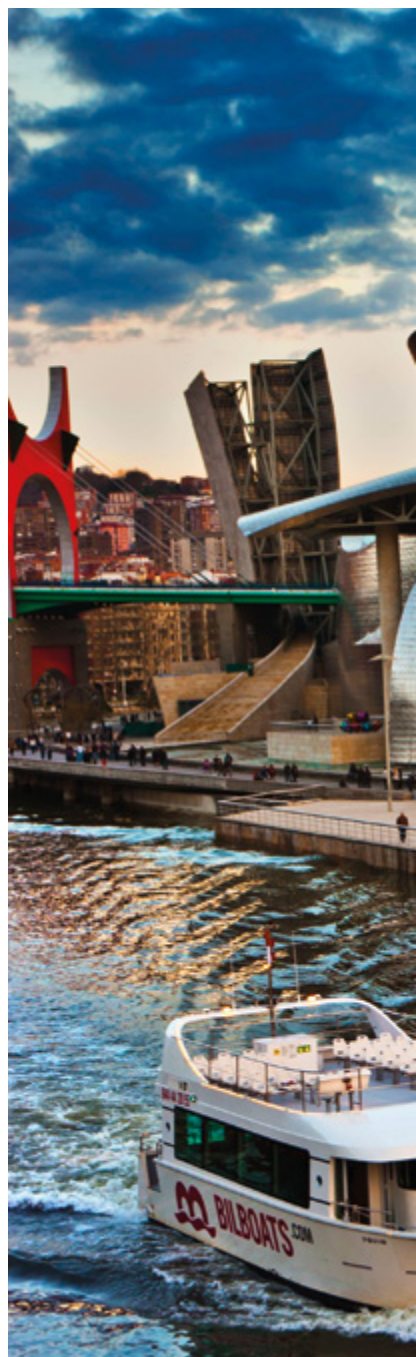
Karrantza Valley. The tourist office is located in **Ambasaguas**. A couple of kilometres later we take the BI-4679 on the right, which climbs up to the town of Ranero. We're heading to a special place, the **cave of Pozalagua**, the soul of the **Armañon Nature Reserve**, discovered by coincidence and housing a large number of eccentric stalactites »

» which make it a unique phenomenon. We head back towards Balmaseda and turn off at the neighbourhood of Traslaviña, in **Artzentales**, in the direction of **Sopuerta**. There are many neighbourhoods spread out among the greenery. Just before reaching the town of Mercadillo, we take the small road that leads to the neighbourhood of Arce and then to Concejuelo-Loizaga, where there is a 16th century tower which has been turned into a vintage car museum where the Rolls Royces are the highlight.

Now we're heading towards the sea. Travelling from Sopuerta along the BI-2701 we pass through El Pobal, a 16th century ironworks, and reach La Arena beach shared by **Zierbena** and **Muskiz**, unique in the

Basque Country for its collection of dunes, salt marshes and its waves, which are big favourites with surfers. The Pobeña neighbourhood is very popular with people out for a stroll, to enjoy a snack or to follow the **Itsasur Green Way**.

The N-634 and then the BI-3791 lead us first to **Santurtzi** (trying the sardines in such a seafaring place is a must) and then to **Portugalete**. There we'll take a good look at the Bizkaia Bridge and the bars in the old quarter. We retake the A-8 motorway towards Bilbao as far as exit 124, where we link up with the N-634 which will take us to the **Aguinaga Museum**, a treasure trove for car lovers and Mercedes-Benz enthusiasts. It's only a dozen kilometres along the N-634 from there to **Bilbao**. •





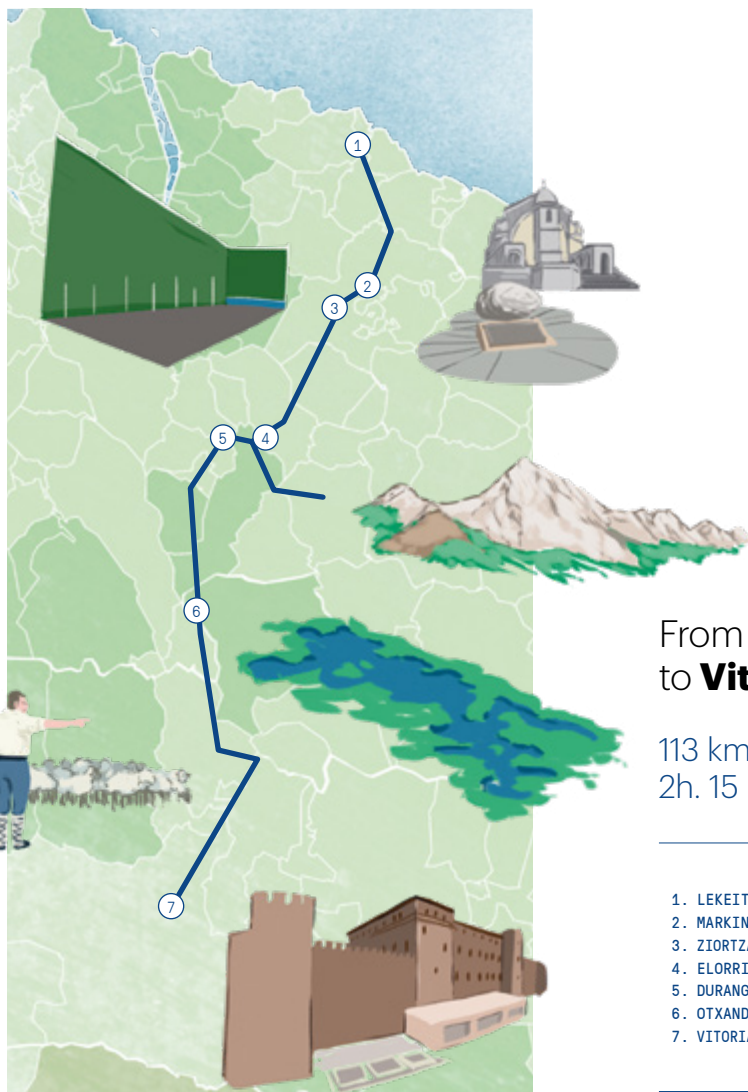
Wandering the streets in Bilbao

The best panoramic view of Bilbao is from the Artxanda viewpoint, the ideal place to plan your visit. Below your feet you'll see the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, that beautiful mass of titanium plates, the Euskalduna Conference Centre, recognisable by its corten steel façade, and the Museo Marítimo Ría de Bilbao (Bilbao River Maritime Museum). Going for pintxos in the old part is a must, as is a visit to the Ribera Market and the Azkuna Zentroa arts complex, where a busy cultural programme is always in full swing.

TRAVELLING AROUND MAGIC EUSKADI



On today's menu: magic Euskadi. We'll leave the rugged coast of Bizkaia and head inland to discover a land of contrasts. One of immense inland seas, dryland farms and legendary enclaves.



From **Lekeitio**
to **Vitoria-Gasteiz**

113 km
2h. 15 min. approx.

1. LEKEITIO	16,5 km.	20 min.
2. MARKINA-XEMEIN	3 km.	3 min.
3. ZIORTZA-BOLIBAR	18 km.	20 min.
4. ELORRIO	10 km.	12 min.
5. DURANGO	33 km.	37 min.
6. OTXANDIO	32,5 km.	43 min.
7. VITORIA-GASTEIZ		



The ancestors of Simón Bolívar

were born in **Ziortza-Bolibar** and nowadays the town houses a museum about Bolívar and Basque life during the era his family lived here.

Durango, history and mystery

Like Gernika, Durango also suffered bombardments during the Spanish Civil War. Its historical town centre is pedestrianised. We must walk until we arrive at the reproduction of the Mikeldi idol or go into the Kurutzesantu Museum which houses the mysterious Gothic cross of Kurutziaga. It is mysterious due to its representations of sin and salvation, and it is mysterious because we do not know its true function.

———— We leave Lekeitio along the BI-2405 towards Berriatua until we join the BI-633. This road will take us to **Markina-Xemein**, a town known for its love of the cesta-punta form of Basque pelota. It's a very beautiful town with a medieval past which is still present in its streets and tower houses. Just after leaving Markina-Xemein, we take the BI-2224 towards **Ziortza-Bolibar**, the prologue to a story of mysteries and legends. To discover them we must reach the monastery of the ancient **collegiate church of Zenarruza**, either by car along the »



» BI-4401, or on foot along the stone path which starts from the town. Its location is connected to a strange legend. Inside the Gothic temple with a Renaissance cloister, it is worth stopping before the high altarpiece, a sculptural wonder full of lively colours and gold. We return to the BI-633 and continue towards **Durango, prior to**

Trabakua Pass. Durango possesses a unique treasure: the gigantic wooden door in one of the flanks of the church of Santa María de Uribarri. The giant limestone walls enclosing Durango to the south are the Anboto mountain range. Tradition has it that Mari, the female divinity of Basque mythology, lives in one of the caves there.

We head to the heart of the mountains via **Urkiola Pass**, with inclines reaching 14%. The BI-623 will take us to the heart of **Urkiola Nature Reserve**, a wild space that is worth taking the time to discover. After parking the car next to the **Sanctuary of Urkiola**, we'll devote some time to discovering the church and the Baroque tower,



walking around the mysterious stone and strolling through the beech and ash trees as far as the Three Crosses viewpoint.

We continue south, once again on the BI-623.

Otxandio is a noble town surprising for the size of its Baroque church, its large pelota court and its very fine petanque court (petanque is deeply

rooted in the Basque Country). The town was very important historically as an agricultural and cattle centre.

We carry on along the BI-623 until we find the Urrunaga reservoir which will guide us to the gates of the Alavan Plain.

The Ullibarri-Gamboa reservoir lies close to the former. It is so immense it even has beaches flying

——— **The church of San Miguel de Arretxinaga, in Markina-Xemein, houses three large stones that look like menhirs**

the blue flag. You can also go birdwatching at the **Mendixur Ornithological Park** or simply go for a stroll or take a bicycle ride along the paths surrounding it. **Vitoria-Gasteiz** is just a stone's throw away and we'll reach it by the A-3002 which takes us more or less as far as the doors of the Cathedral of Santa María. •

A close-up photograph of a blue electric car's charging port. A blue charging cable is plugged into the port. The car's body is highly reflective, showing distorted reflections of the surrounding environment. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

The ———
e — Basque
Route ———

Travel around the Basque Country by electric vehicle

Do you like to travel by car or motorbike and explore destinations while behind the wheels or whizzing along in the open air?

Are you looking to discover the Basque Country responsibly while leaving the smallest carbon footprint possible?

The e-Basque Route is the best choice for your next trip to the Basque Country. As the first national tourist road route designed for electric vehicles, it has a network of electric charging points fitted out that will allow you to visit and explore the entire Basque Country along the 950 km route in a comfortable and more sustainable way.

The Basque Country is a destination committed to ethical and responsible tourism, a place where gastronomy is culture, and culture is identity. The Basque Country welcomes visitors with open arms and minds, respecting beliefs, cultures and identities. In return, it asks visitors to respect their culture as well as their neighbours. And to look after the land and sea, so that they remain picturesque for the region and its people.



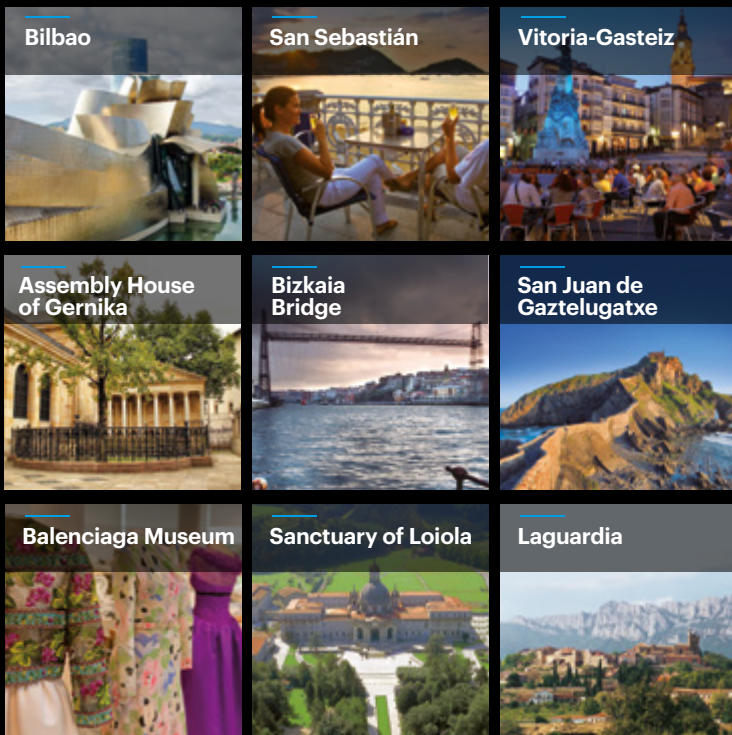
All information related to The e-Basque Route can be accessed via this QR code.



And find out more about accommodation in the Basque Country equipped with electric charging stations, by using the other QR code.

The 10 Essentials

There are many reasons why Basque Country is an essential destination. You are going to 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.



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EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY

Euskadi, bien común

EUSKO JAURLARITZA



GOBIERNO VASCO

TURISMO, MERKATARITZA
ETA KONTSUMO SAILA

DEPARTAMENTO DE TURISMO,
COMERCIO Y CONSUMO

