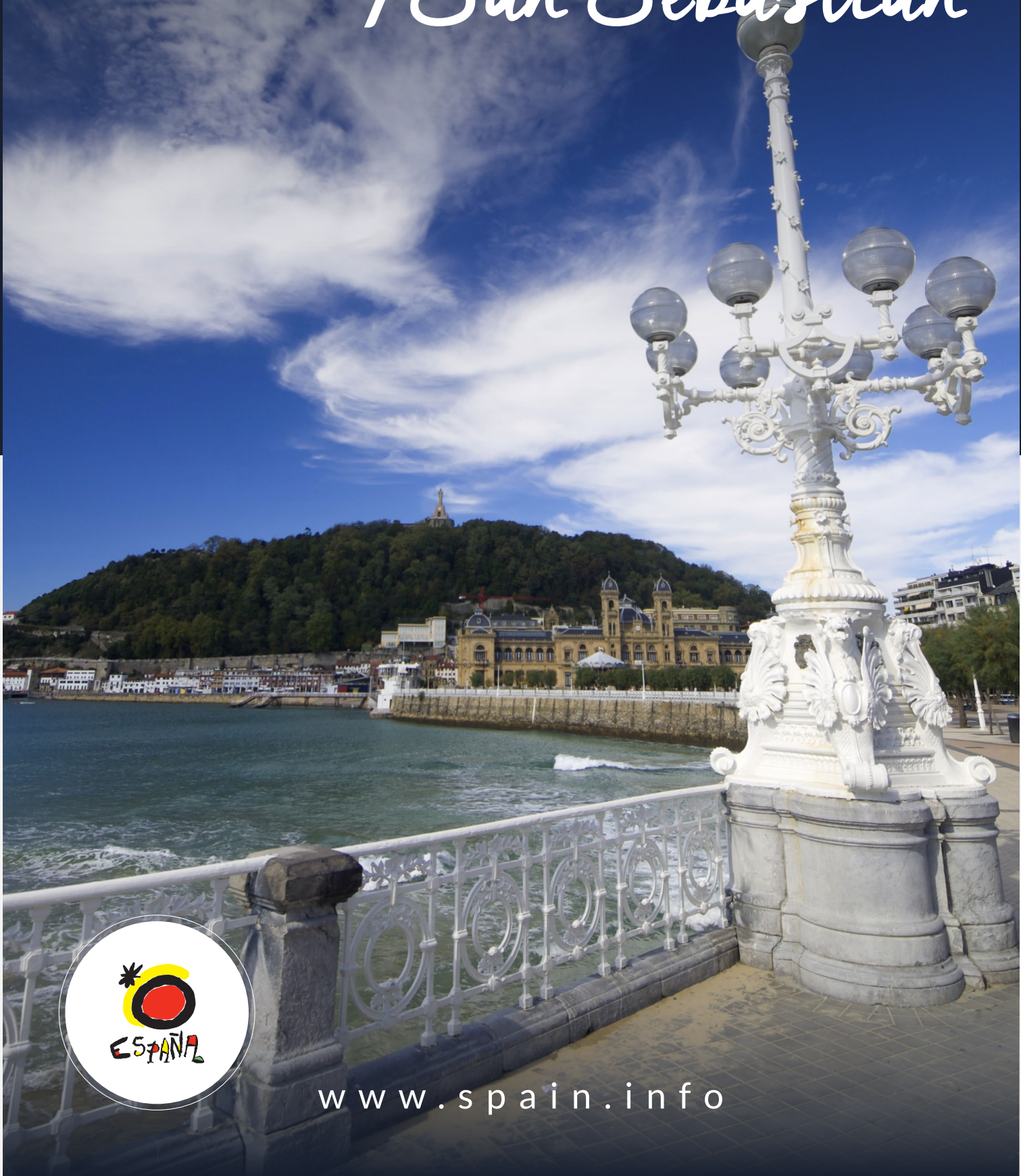


# Donostia / San Sebastián



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'PINTXO'

Ministry of Industry and Tourism  
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Back cover: *Wind Comb Sculpture*  
 Photo: *pabkov/123rf.com*

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# INTRODUCTION

**Gastronomy, art, beaches, culture...** You can enjoy all this and more in **San Sebastián** (in Basque, **Donostia**), one of the most spectacular cities in Green Spain, which comprises the whole Cantabrian coastline.

If you're a **foodie**, this is the place for you. Its numerous Michelin-starred eateries and the richness of its traditional cuisine make this one of the leading cities in Basque cuisine. But if there's one thing Donostia/San Sebastián is famous for, it must be its *pintxos*: delicious mini bites that encompass everything from traditional food to more sophisticated creations. You'll want to try them all!

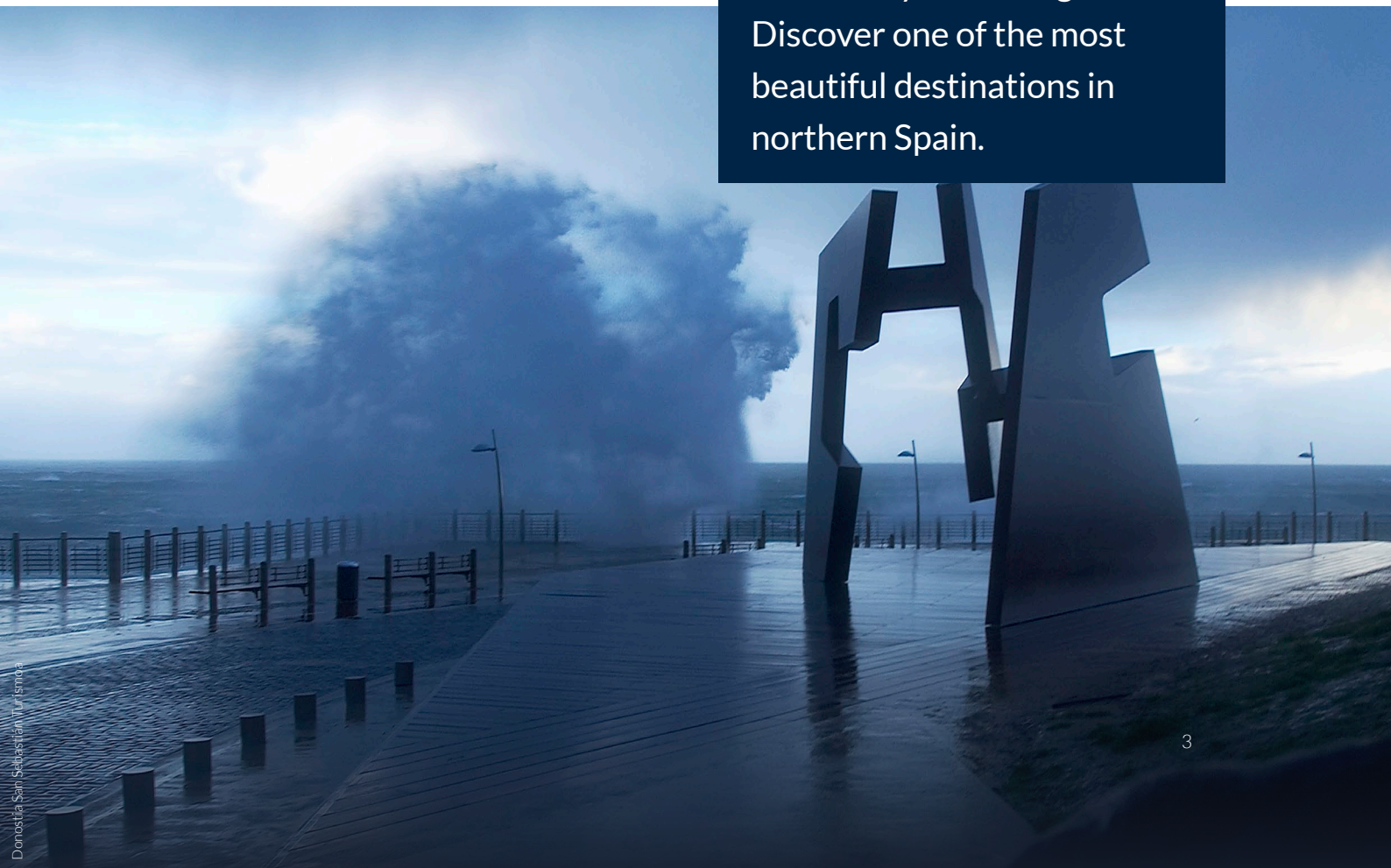
Donostia/San Sebastián is also synonymous with **culture**. Its architectural heritage combines traditional and avant-garde styles. In each neighbourhood you will experience a different atmosphere and you can mix with the locals who are always willing to help.

Its white sandy **beaches** are the perfect place for sunbathing and long walks along the shore. As they are all different you can enjoy a distinct experience at each of them. **Nature** surrounds the city and you can enjoy its beauty from atop any of its mountains.

The famous **San Sebastián International Film Festival**, which takes place every September, is another reason to visit this city.

▼ OTEIZA'S "EMPTY CONSTRUCTION" SCULPTURE

What are you waiting for?  
Discover one of the most  
beautiful destinations in  
northern Spain.







▲ SEAFRONT PROMENADE  
PLAYA DE LA CONCHA  
© Donostia San Sebastian Turismoa

# EXPERIENCE DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN NEIGHBOURHOOD BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

Discover the personality of each neighbourhood in the city, linked in part to the nature of its three magnificent beaches.

## CENTRE – OLD TOWN: TRADITION, "PINTXOS" AND SHOPPING

The Concha Promenade borders the beach of the same name, which is one of the city's symbols. Explore it on foot or by bike and lean on its beautiful railings as you enjoy the views of the bay.

After your walk, the old quarter awaits, offering you the chance to recharge your batteries. Walk through stone streets and practise the art of *"txikiteo"*, which involves moving from bar to bar drinking *"txikitos"* (small glasses of wine) and sampling delicious *"pintxos"* (a variation of tapas, usually skewered onto a piece of bread). Take a few minutes to visit the bustling **Plaza de la Constitución**, which is the setting for many local festivities, such as **La Tamborrada** Drum Festival.

Stroll through the romantic area, with buildings from the *Belle Epoque* movement and pedestrianised areas

with trees. You can admire **Buen Pastor Cathedral**, **Teatro Victoria Eugenia Theatre** and the **City Hall**, which is a stunning building that played host to the city's casino until gambling was prohibited in 1924.



▲ BASILICA OF SANTA MARÍA DEL CORO



## GROS: A YOUNG, SURFING ATMOSPHERE

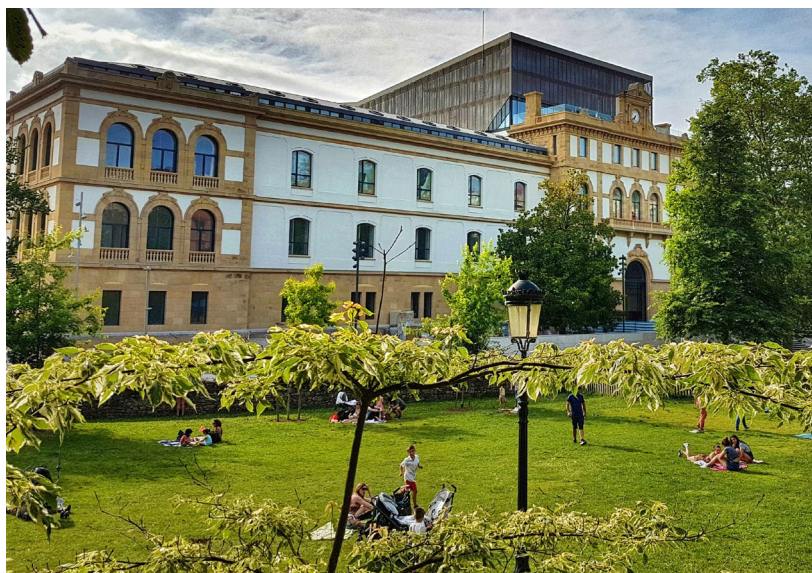
If you enjoy sports and nature, you're in the right place. This cosmopolitan, dynamic and young district next to **Zurriola Beach** sees surfers pass by with their boards in between its numerous terraces and small, charming shops. Make sure you try a surfing lesson!

Enjoy nature by heading up **Mount Ullía**, the most important hiking area in Donostia/San Sebastián and which hosts a section of the Camino de Santiago, UNESCO World Heritage.

Fancy a little culture? Visit some art galleries, **Kursaal Congress Centre** and the **Tabakalera** (International Centre for Contemporary Culture).

## ONDARRETA – IGELDO: DONOSTIA/ SAN SEBASTIÁN WITH CHILDREN

**Monte Igeldo Mountain** and the gardens of **Miramar Palace** flank one of the most symbolic, family-friendly beaches in the city: **Ondarreta**. At the western end of the beach you will come across the **Wind Comb**, a famous sculpture by Eduardo Chillida. The fusion between the ferocity of the sea and the strength of the iron structures will render you speechless. You can also take in a spectacular sunset here.



▶ ZURRIOLA PLAYA DE GROS BEACH

▶ TABAKALERA

© San Sebastián Turismo & Convention Bureau

▶ WIND COMB SCULPTURE

© San Sebastián Turismo & Convention Bureau



At the other end of Ondarreta Beach are the **Miramar Gardens**, governed by the spectacular, English-style Miramar Palace from which you can view the Bay of San Sebastián in all its glory. Stroll along its gravel paths, surrounded by flowers, that descend to the sea.

To see one of the best views of the city, take the funicular railway to **Mount Igeldo** and, once there, spend a day out at the amusement park with the family.

The **Antiguo** neighbourhood that surrounds the beach has several *pintxo* bar and restaurant areas.

## AMARA - ANOETA: PEACE AND QUIET ON THE BANKS OF THE URUMEA RIVER

Enjoy a relaxing walk or bike ride along the **Paseo de Francia**, on the banks of the **Urumea** River, which is dotted with stylish, small palaces. Situated at the entrance to the city, this residential neighbourhood filled with hotels has excellent links with the centre.

On your walk you can visit **Anoeta Stadium** and the **Real Sociedad Museum**, both of which pertain to Donostia/San Sebastián's hundred-year-old football team.

## SANTA CLARA ISLAND

In the centre of the Bay of La Concha you will find **Santa Clara Island**. It can be accessed by motorboat or, if you dare, by swimming. To the west of the island there is a bar with a terrace so you can enjoy the view.





# FIVE MUST-SEE MUSEUMS

## ▲ SAN TELMO MUSEOA

History, science, sculptures... Culture awaits in Donostia/San Sebastián's museums. These are some of our recommendations.

### SAN TELMO MUSEOA

Admire the Renaissance cloisters of this magnificent 16th-century building nestled in the city's Old quarter. Inside, you will find collections related to ethnology, the Fine Arts and archaeology, with work by El Greco, Rubens, Fortuny, Sorolla and Zuloaga, amongst others.

### BASQUE MARITIME MUSEUM

Housed in the Consulate House-Tower, in an 18th-century building nestled in the port, this museum will show you the history of Basques and the sea.

### EUREKA! ZIENTZIA MUSEOA

Discover science's fun side with more than 170 experimental modules. In the Animalia room you can observe different animals in their ecosystems. In the Logik room, you will explore robotics through Lego materials. And in the digital Planetarium, you can find out more about astronomy through immersive cinema.

### CASA DE LA HISTORIA

Take a look back at the history of Donostia/San Sebastián in Mota Castle at the top of Monte Urgull Hill.

### SAN SEBASTIÁN AQUARIUM MUSEUM

This is the second most visited museum in the Basque Country after the Guggenheim in Bilbao. Its facilities house over 40 species of fish, including five species of sharks.

## ▼ SAN SEBASTIÁN AQUARIUM MUSEUM





# FOOD

If you will be visiting between January and April, make the most of the “**txotx**” tradition: cider establishments open their doors to offer seasonal cider accompanied by traditional menus.

However, one of the area's most typical activities is going out for “**pintxos**”. The capital of Gipuzkoa Province is paradise for fans of this informal style of gastronomy. You can get these culinary miniatures anywhere in the city, but especially in the Old Town. You'll have more fun if you move from place to place, trying their traditional specialities as you go. There are also more sophisticated options available as reduced versions of haute cuisine. Colours to delight everyone.

Do you enjoy **avant-garde dining**? Donostia/San Sebastián and its surrounding areas can offer you this experience with chefs like Andoni Luis Aduriz, Pedro Subijana, Juan Mari Arzak and Martín Berasategui. It is one of the

world's cities with the most Michelin Stars per square metre.

If you are a foodie, you will also find a large number of activities available to you. These range from cooking classes and ham cutting lessons to visits to wineries and markets.

One of the secrets to San Sebastian’s renowned gastronomy is its high quality prime ingredients. You can find a wide selection of seasonal products in its **city markets**, such as **La Bretxa** and **San Martín**. Some of the city's most renowned chefs visit these markets daily to select the meat and fish they will serve in their restaurants.

Dining is a pleasure  
anywhere in Donostia/San  
Sebastián.

## DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN THROUGH THE SEASONS

Donostia/San Sebastián's activity calendar offers events all year round.

### SUMMER

If you are visiting the city during the week of 15 August, you will hear the cannon shot that opens the **Semana Grande Festival**. The city prepares for a celebration, allowing you to enjoy great concerts, troupes, exhibitions and

fireworks, amongst many other events.

You can enjoy *jazz*'s biggest names during the second fortnight in July. **Donostia Jazzaldía International Festival** livens up beaches, theatres, squares and auditoriums throughout the city.



## AUTUMN

September is the month of festivals, from **Fiestas vascas**, with their famous Bandera de la Concha “trainera” boat races to the city's most cosmopolitan event **Zinemaldia San Sebastián International Film Festival**, the stars of which stay at the historic Hotel María Cristina. If you book far enough in advance you can attend the galas and screenings.

At the end of October, Donostia/San Sebastián is host to another festival: the **Horror and Fantastic Film Week**.

## WINTER

On 20 January, the city celebrates the day of its patron saint to the rhythm of drums. Feel the thrill at **La Tamborrada Drum Festival** while more than 125 companies bring life to the streets with song and dance.

If you would like to discover the latest innovations on the art scene, head to any of the shows hosted during the **Dferia Performing Arts Festival** in March.

## SPRING

In May, Donostia/San Sebastián's parks and the trees in its pedestrianised areas come into bloom. Amongst the vibrant colours you can enjoy the outdoor gigs of **Musika Parkean** in the city parks, or dance to an Argentinian rhythm at the **Tango Festival**.

Still in May, you can normally enjoy the Bolsillo Theatre Festival, featuring music, fun plays and magic in many locations in the centre.



© Donostia San Sebastián Turismo



TAMBORRADA



# EXPERIENCE NATURE

Donostia/San Sebastián also offers you many opportunities to experience nature up close.

Sign up for a guided tour of **Artikutza Nature Reserve**, which is a forest haven that becomes a symphony of colours in autumn.

**Mount Igeldo** offers you one of the most spectacular views of the Bay of La Concha. You can go up in a funicular railway and visit the amusement park.

In addition to an excellent view, **Urgull Hill** affords you the opportunity to see the **Casa de la Historia** and the remains of the wall and canons that stand as witnesses to the city's military past.

An old vantage point for viewing whales, **Monte Ulía Hill** is the city's most important hiking area. You can go for a picnic and stop at the visitor centre.





# THE HIDDEN CITY

If you have time and you want to discover some of Donostia/San Sebastián's best-kept secrets, here are some of its lesser known corners.

▲ **MARÍA CRISTINA BRIDGE**  
© Donostia San Sebastián Turismoa

## PARKS AND GARDENS

Walk over María Cristina Bridge, which is the most elegant of those that cross the Urumea River, and wander the trails through **Cristina Enea Park**. Discover the exotic nature of its trees and the swans and peacocks that populate this oasis of serenity in the heart of the city.

The **Hidden Gardens of Miraconcha** go unnoticed between La Concha and the Paseo de Miraconcha, but we suggest you to take a seat on a bench and enjoy the views.

If you head up Urgull Hill, take walk through the **Cementerio de los Ingleses Cemetery**, which is one of the city's most mysterious corners.

Opposite the City Hall are the **Alderdi Eder Gardens**. These are typical on postcards of Donostia/San Sebastián with their flowers and tamarinds.

## MONUMENTS

When walking through Donostia/San Sebastián you will come across unique places. Admire the good taste of the architectural styles from the end of the 19th century by viewing **Aiete Palace**,

in the neighbourhood of the same name. Visit its rooms where distinguished royal figures and members of the nobility once lived. You'll love strolling through its gardens, designed with bridges, ponds and a large meadow that opens out towards the sea.

Another recommended spot is **San Vicente Church**, considered the oldest temple in the city, which is a fine example of the Basque Gothic style.

Head to the **Comb of the Wind** by Eduardo Chillida and the **Construcción Vacía** (Empty Construction) by Jorge Oteiza and discover two contemporary art sculptures that challenge the force of the sea.

## VIEWPOINTS

One of the best places to see the city and its sunsets is from its hills. Head up to the panoramic terraces of **Mount Igeldo** to enjoy the most complete and renowned view of Donostia/San Sebastián.

For an almost 360-degree view, head to the **viewpoints on Urgull Hill**: Mota Castle, Batería de las Damas and Baluarte del Mirador.

# ENJOY DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN'S NIGHTLIFE

Donostia/San Sebastián's nightlife is shared across three zones, each with its own character. You can go for drinks in the lively **Old Town**, which is the busiest district, with bars to suit all tastes.

Behind Buen Pastor Cathedral, the street Calle **Reyes Católicos** is the most chic area in the city, with modern

establishments and edgier music venues. On this pedestrianised street you can enjoy a cocktail while sitting on one of its varied terraces.

If you are looking for a quieter setting, in the **Gros district** you will find bars and pubs where you can enjoy a relaxed chat and a drink.

## WHAT CAN YOU VISIT NEAR DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN?

The Basque Country has so much to offer. Here are some ways you can get to know the Basque Country while you're in Donostia/San Sebastián.

### BASQUE COAST

Travel the 60 kilometres of Gipuzkoa coastline and head to its wild cliffs that overlook the Cantabrian Sea. Visit its small fishing towns and take a dip at the beach, then sample their seafaring gastronomy. Or visit the Basque Coast Geopark, which covers the area between the Cantabrian Sea and the Basque Mountains, comprised of the municipal areas of Mutriku, Deba and Zumaia.



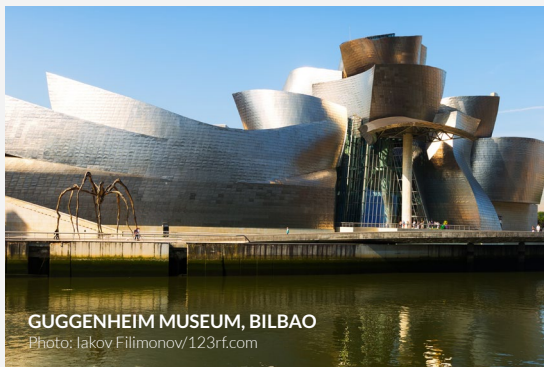
PLAYA DE ALGORRI BEACH  
ZUMAIA



## HONDARRIBIA-FUENTERRABÍA (GIPUZKOA)

Wander through its historic centre, which is a unique collection of palaces and stately homes that demonstrate its military past. Take a tour of the lively La Marina district.

## BILBAO



Visit the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, which is the work of the architect Frank Gehry. Defined as the best building from the second half of the 20th century, it is the flagship of Bilbao's conversion. Once in this town you can try a few "**pintxos**" in its old quarter.

## VITORIA-GASTEIZ

Its historic quarter, which was declared a Monumental Site, has maintained its medieval roots. After wandering its streets, visit Santa María Cathedral, which inspired Ken Follet to write *World Without End*, the second part of *The Pillars of the Earth*. The capital of the Basque Country is also known for its green areas.

## RIOJA ALAVESA

Visit some of its wineries nestled in cosy towns. Some of these are hundreds of years old while others boast more avant-garde architecture, having been designed by famed architects. You can enjoy a wine tasting session or purchase wine.

## BALENCIAGA MUSEUM



Dedicated to the great fashion designer from Getaria, you can visit this museum in an annexe of Aldamar Palace on a hill at the highest point in his hometown.

## SAGARDOETXEA CIDER MUSEUM

In Astigarraga you will be shown every ritual related to cider and provided with explanations about its preparation process.

## CHILLIDA LEKU MUSEUM

When in the surroundings of Hernani you can contemplate the pieces by the San Sebastián native sculptor, Eduardo Chillida (1924-2002), which combine with nature in an old country house renovated by the author. In its 11 hectares, you can admire around 40 original sculptures.

# HOW TO GET THERE

Donostia/San Sebastián is a city that can be easily accessed as it is well-connected with the rest of the world via all forms of transport.

## TRAIN

Donostia/San Sebastián Railway Station connects the capital of Gipuzkoa Province with a large number of Spanish cities, including Madrid and Barcelona. It can also be accessed from international destinations like Paris and Lisbon.

## PLANE

Within roughly 100 kilometres you will find four international airports. San Sebastián Airport, in Hondarribia (20 km away from the city), offers connections with national and international cities. There is a bus that links Donostia/San Sebastián with this airport in around 25 minutes. Bilbao and Vitoria Airports, 100 kilometres away, offer flights across Europe. Biarritz Airport, where French and international companies operate, is 40 kilometres away.

## CAR

You can use the following roads to get here: the national A-1 road (Madrid-Irún), the AP-8 (Bilbao-Irún) and A-63 (Paris-Irún) motorways, and the AP-15 dual carriageway (Pamplona-San Sebastián).

# GETTING AROUND DONOSTIA/SAN SEBASTIÁN

Donostia/San Sebastián has several public transport options allowing you to get around easily.

## BUS

The fleet of city buses owned by the company Dbus offers quick connections with any point in the city. You can check out the lines available on its website. There is also a tourist bus with fifteen stops, all of which are near must-see spots in the city.

## COMMUTER TRAIN

You can use the commuter trains that leave Donostia Station to visit nearby places.

## BIKE

With more than 30 kilometres of bike lanes, San Sebastián is the perfect city for cycling. There are various companies that offer bicycle rental.

## BASQUE, A SEPARATE LANGUAGE

Basque, together with Castilian, is one of the two official languages of the Basque Country. Basque is said to be the oldest living language in Europe and its origins are still a mystery.

When visiting Donostia/San Sebastián, you will see signs in both Spanish and Basque.





San Sebastián Airport



## MORE INFORMATION:

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