

From iron to titanium

IRON River

Industrial
and Mining Tourism in
Western Bizkaia



For more sustainable
and responsible
tourism



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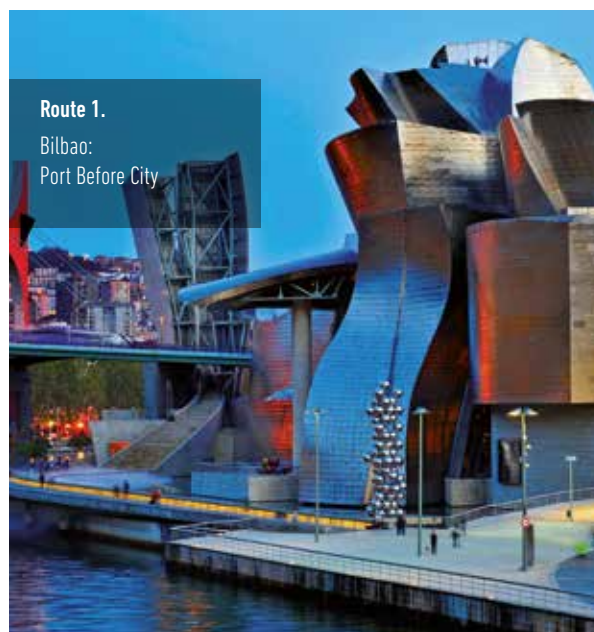
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BILBAO

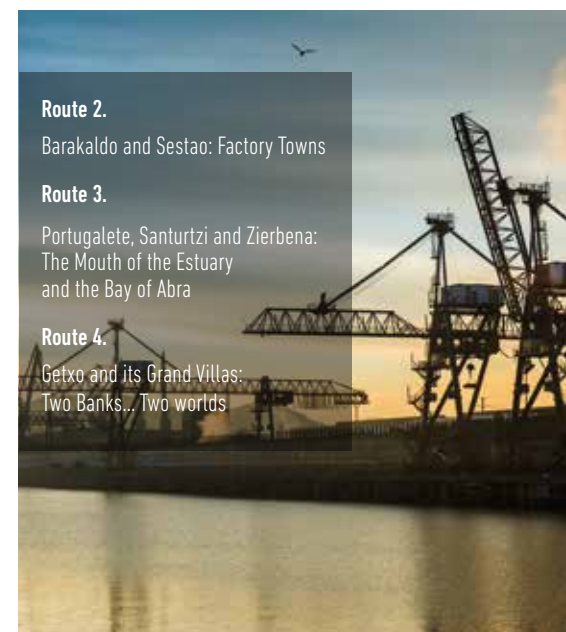
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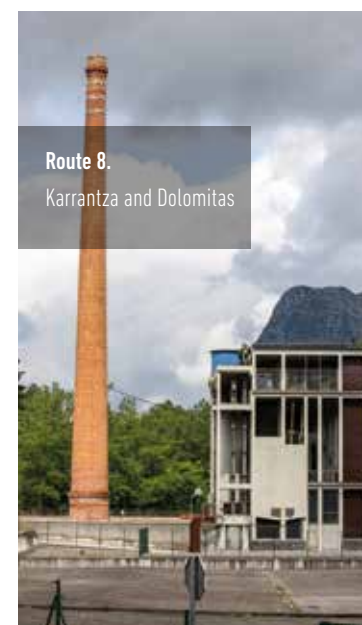
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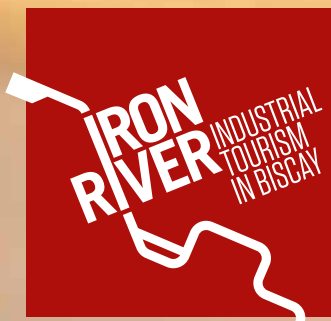
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From IRON to TITANIUM

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The area surrounding the Nervión-Ibaizabal estuary was home to one of the largest concentrations of industrial activity in Europe, contributing to building the current hallmarks of Bizkaia and Basque identity.

The industrial heritage on both sides of the estuary, combined with the heritage in the mining area and Enkarterri, bears silent witness to what was in its day a setting of intense industrial and mining activity.

The adaptation of the estuary for navigability was the biggest enterprise undertaken in Bizkaia in the last fourth of the 19th century.

The needs generated by iron ore exports required channelling and dredging the riverbed and eliminating the dangerous sandbar that formed at the inlet, since removed thanks to the Iron Jetty in Portugaleta.

The industrial development of the estuary couldn't be explained without the industrial bourgeois class, who lived in luxurious villas in Getxo, and the thousands of working families who lived along the left bank of the river.

Led by companies like Euskalduna and La Naval, the shipbuilding industry turned the estuary into the backbone of Bizkaia with the trade of goods and raw materials.

Left bank of the estuary at La Naval

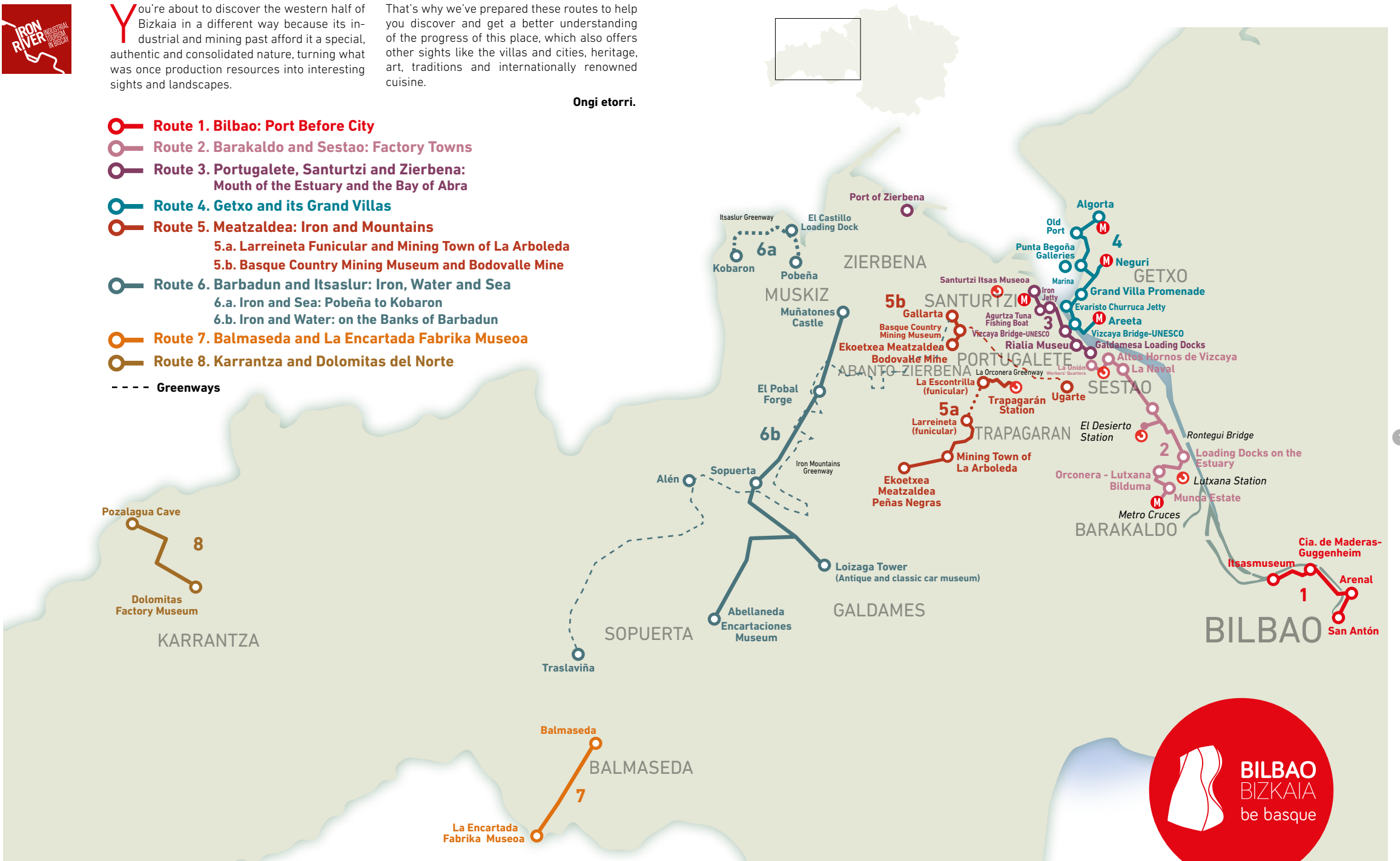


You're about to discover the western half of Bizkaia in a different way because its industrial and mining past afford it a special, authentic and consolidated nature, turning what was once production resources into interesting sights and landscapes.

That's why we've prepared these routes to help you discover and get a better understanding of the progress of this place, which also offers other sights like the villas and cities, heritage, art, traditions and internationally renowned cuisine.

Ongi etorri.

- Route 1. Bilbao: Port Before City**
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Route 1. Bilbao. Port Before City



A port and industrial past and a transformative present

After the great industrial crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, Bilbao shed its industrial and port skin to become a modern service-oriented city.

Despite the urban and economic transformation that Bilbao underwent, with the Guggenheim Museum exemplifying this, the areas around the estuary maintained their port and industrial essence, with the presence of heritage components passed on from that period.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

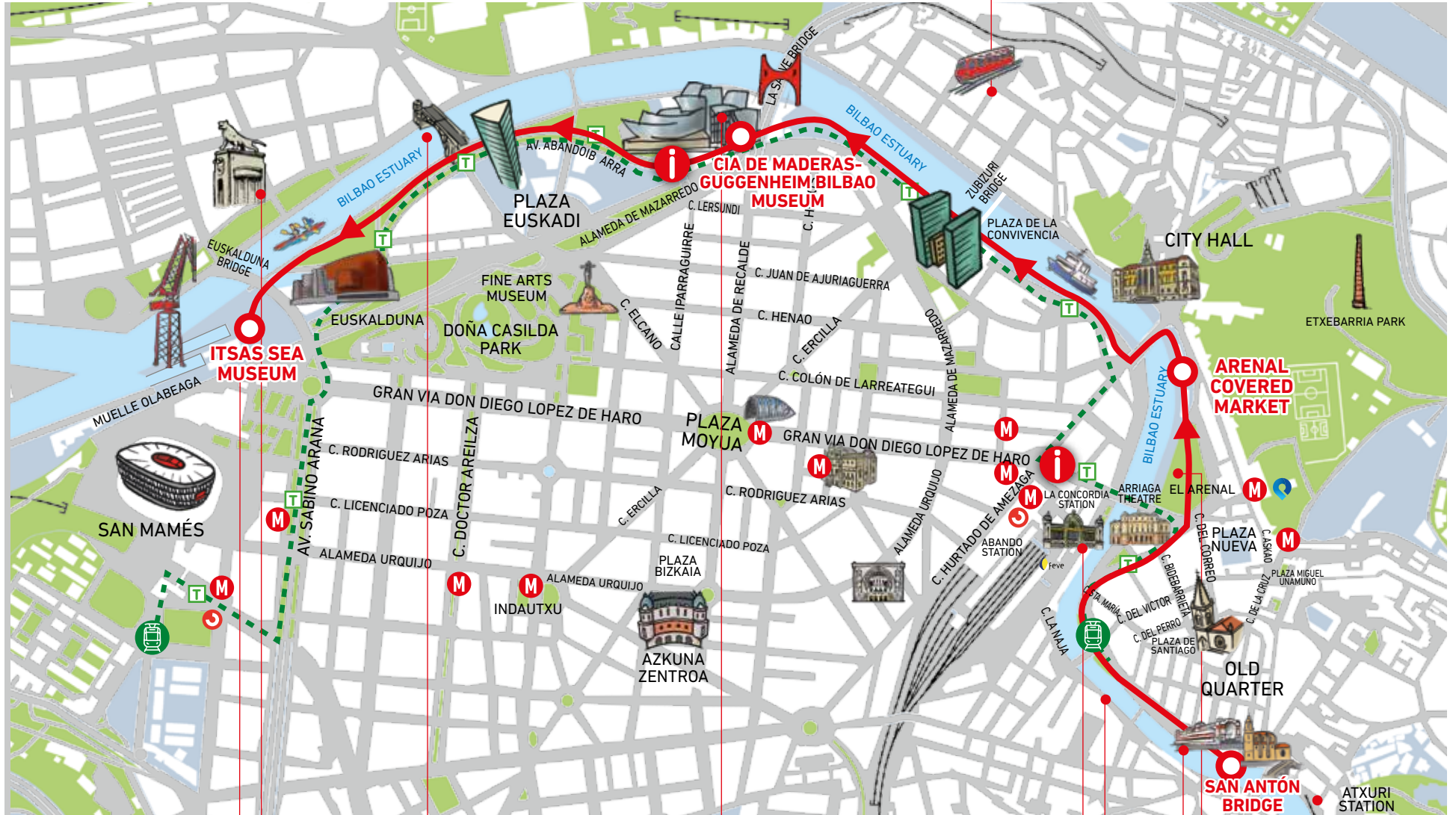
We highly recommend walking along the estuary from the **San Antón** bridge, the start of the estuary flow, to the **Olabeaga** neighbourhood.



San Antón bridge

The estuary was Bilbao's High Street, the major thoroughfare toward which its most important buildings' doors open: **Arriaga Theatre, the City Hall, the University of Deusto and more.** You can cross from one side to the other using one of the various bridges.

If you prefer, you can do the same route by bike or tram. You can visit all the old port's loading docks, which are now friendly public spaces.



ARTXANDA FUNICULAR

Connecting the city of Bilbao with the top of Artxanda, and beautiful panoramic views, since 1915.

ITSAS SEA MUSEUM, DOCKS AND THE CAROLA CRANE OF THE EUSKALDUNA SHIPYARD

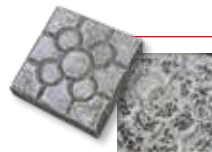
The seagoing and port past of the Nervión-Ibaizabal estuary at the Itsas Sea Museum, nestled in a port setting that recalls the importance shipbuilding had in Bizkaia.

DEUSTO TIGER

An industrial building converted for residential use with an imposing 9 metre tiger sculpture on its tower.

DEUSTO BRIDGE

Drawbridge that when open allowed ships to pass to the centre of town.



GUGGENHEIM BILBAO MUSEUM

Place where the beautiful Norwegian Compañía de Maderas was located.

BILBAO PAVING STONES

An icon of Bilbao and Bizkaia, made with iron shavings from Altos Hornos de Vizcaya.

CONCORDIA STATION

One of the 7 train stations Bilbao had.

LA CERES FLOUR FACTORY

The first building with a concrete structure in Spain.

EL ARENAL

A strategic Cantabrian port from time immemorial, Bilbao had an expansive dock area like this one for goods to be loaded and unloaded.

LA RIBERA MARKET

Bilbao's shopping area since the 15th century.



Route 1. Bilbao. Port Before City



This route starts on the **San Antón Bridge**, the gateway to the old quarter. If you look up, you'll see the modern neighbourhood of **Miribilla**, located on top of what was once an underground and open-pit mining operation. The name of the neighbourhood comes from 'Mira a Villa'.



Concordia Station

Its port loading docks

10 It is well-known that Bilbao was a port before it was a town. The current loading docks of **Urazurrutia, Marzana, La Merced, Ripa, Arenal, Uribitarte, Olabeaga**, now converted into friendly public spaces, commemorate the years in which these areas were a melting pot of lives, full of the hustle and bustle of loading and unloading freight.

Its bridges crossing the estuary

It's impossible to imagine the Nervión-Ibaizabal estuary without its bridges. Not in vain, the coat of arms of Bilbao bears the founding bridge, the **San Antón** bridge, the only point connecting the two banks of the estuary for centuries. Today, 14 bridges cross the estuary and another three are slated to open in the coming years.

Its train stations

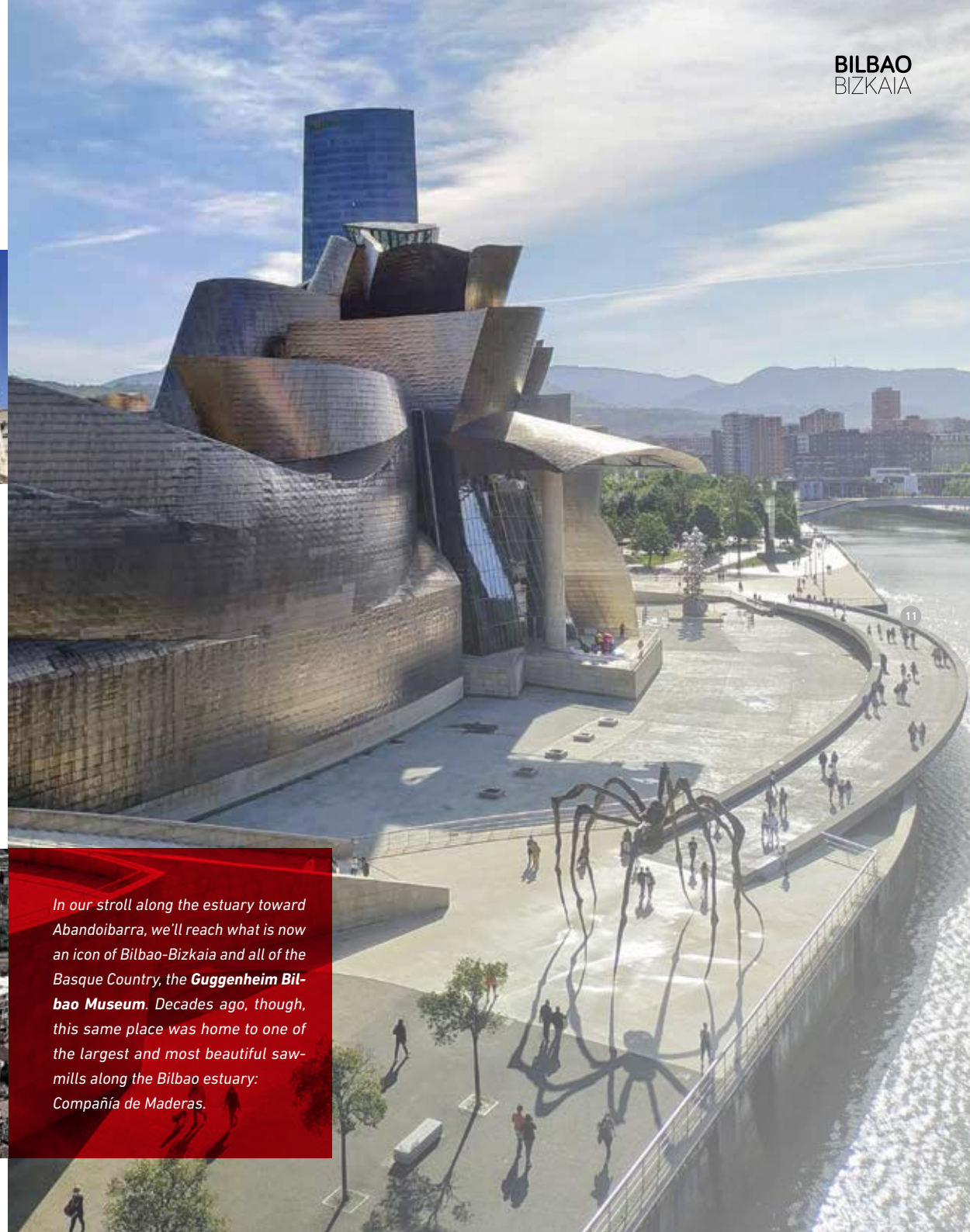
Industrial and mining activity are pivotal to Bilbao and Bizkaia. And in order for those businesses to be conducted, the estuary and the railroads were an essential means of transport for goods and people. In the early 20th century, travellers could choose from seven stations in Bilbao to start or end their rail journey. This is a sum not surpassed in any other city on the Iberian Peninsula.



Arenal Covered Market



Compañía de Maderas Sawmill



In our stroll along the estuary toward Abandoibarra, we'll reach what is now an icon of Bilbao-Bizkaia and all of the Basque Country, the **Guggenheim Bilbao Museum**. Decades ago, though, this same place was home to one of the largest and most beautiful sawmills along the Bilbao estuary: *Compañía de Maderas*.



Route 1. Bilbao. Port Before City



A GOOD IDEA

Stroll, food and drink on the Olabeaga dock

On today's updated Olabeaga dock, there are some renovated bars and establishments where you can enjoy fish and seafood or have a drink in an unbeatable ambiance.



The Deusto Tiger

Over the last few years, this peculiar manufacturing building has become one of the most popular symbols of Bilbao's industrial past thanks to its most distinguishing and personalising feature: the imposing, nine metre-long **concrete tiger** on the turret.



Deusto Tiger



Diques Secos

Euskalduna Shipyard - Itsas Sea Museum

In 1900, **Compañía Euskalduna de Construcción y Reparación de Buques** was founded. The company set up in an area with a long history of seafaring, near Olabeaga, using the facilities where the company **Diques Secos** was founded in 1868. Today, only some parts of the shipyard remain, like its over 150-year-old dry docks, remains of the Pump House and the **Carola crane**. All of this is part of the **Itsas Sea Museum Bilbao**. The docks are home to the museum's collection of ships, among them the Gánguil Portu, the first ship built for Altos Hornos de Vizcaya, in addition to the barge where Athletic Club de Bilbao celebrates its titles.



Itsas Sea Museum



Itsas Sea Museum and Euskalduna Palace

Zorrotzaurre: The Channel and the Deusto Riverside

In the 1920s, the need to create a new route for the estuary at Deusto was considered. After 18 years of work, between 1950 and 1968 construction to widen the channel was stopped due to the poor condition of the soil. In 2018, the area known as **Zorrotzaurre** was converted into an island with its focus on urban regeneration for new uses, attempting to maintain its industrial nature by reusing some of its industrial buildings.



Zorrotzaurre



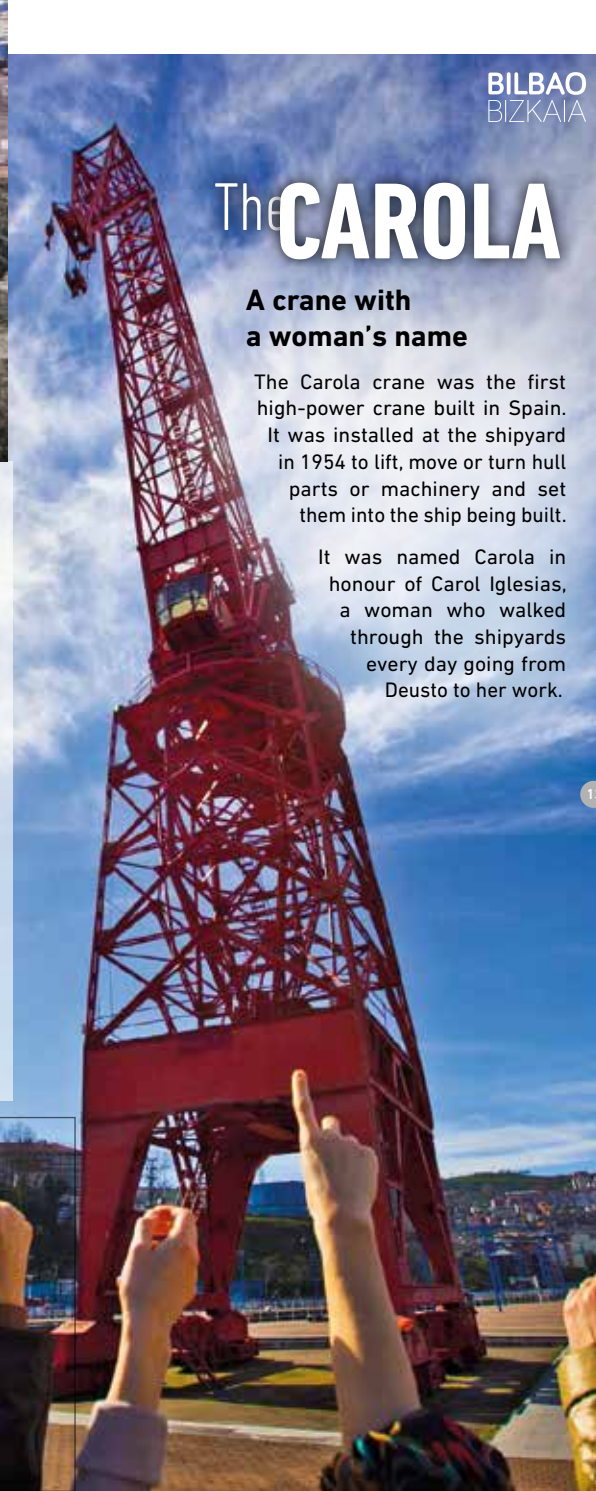
BILBAO
BIZKAIA

The CAROLA

A crane with a woman's name

The Carola crane was the first high-power crane built in Spain. It was installed at the shipyard in 1954 to lift, move or turn hull parts or machinery and set them into the ship being built.

It was named Carola in honour of Carol Iglesias, a woman who walked through the shipyards every day going from Deusto to her work.





Route 2: Barakaldo and Sestao Factory Towns



Barakaldo and Sestao were key components in the history of industrialisation in Bizkaia. The markings of its manufacturing past imbue the buildings and surroundings, symbols of a bygone era.

On Barakaldo's industrial **In the Footsteps of Iron Route**, you'll discover the city's urban, architectural, industrial and economic development.

Sestao along the workers' route **"The Iron Labyrinth: 5 kilometres of Labour History"** allows you to discover first-hand experience of the birth of industrial Sestao: housing issues, labour disputes, the role of factories, urban spaces, and more. Material heritage is on display as reflected by memories, people, time and history.



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WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

You'll be able to get to Barakaldo both on metro line 2, which will take you to the Munoa Estate, and on Cercanías Renfe lines C1 and C2, at the Lutxana and Desierto-Barakaldo stops, to do the In the Footsteps of Iron Workers' Route, which will take you to emblematic places like the estuary's iron ore loading docks, the Orconera-Lutxana Moveable Industrial Heritage Warehouse and the Ilgner building.

Cercanías Renfe line C1 will take you to the Sestao and La Iberia stations. From the old First Aid Station, now the tourism office, you'll start the Iron Labyrinth Workers' Route, a walking route that will take you to unique places like the old workers' quarters and Altos Hornos de Vizcaya's Blast Furnace No. 1.



Munoa Estate

Munoa Estate

The **Munoa Estate** is a bourgeois manor located in Barakaldo, reformed in the French style by architect Ricardo Bastida. The mansion is surrounded by an English garden with renowned botanical wealth, stunning hundred-year-old woods and ornamental components. From there you'll be able to see the estuary from Bilbao to the bay.

Lutxana Train Station. La Robla Railway

It was built by **Compañía del Ferrocarril Hullero de La Robla a Valmaseda** in 1902 as the line's last stop. One of the idiosyncrasies of the station is that it has used a variety of widths: narrow gauge and Iberian gauge.

This circumstance and its strategic location made this station a key intermodal point both for passenger and goods traffic bound for/departing the major industries on the left bank of the estuary like Sefanitro and Altos Hornos de Vizcaya.



Lutxana Station

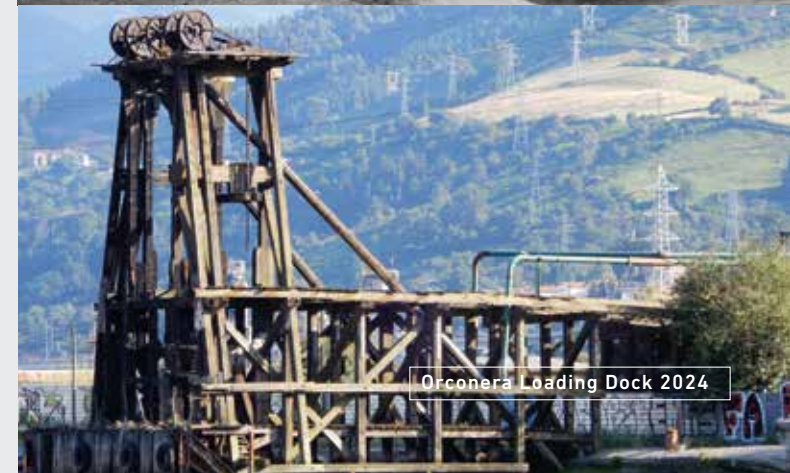
Iron Ore Loading Docks on the Estuary

The loading docks on the estuary are the final link in the chain of a complex transport system that took valuable iron ore from mines to the ships, to then be exported to European countries.

The loading docks in **Barakaldo** are the best set of loading docks still standing on **the Nervión-Ibaizabal estuary** and they comprise a landscape of highly valuable heritage.



Orconera Loading Dock 1885



Orconera Loading Dock 2024



Route 2: Barakaldo and Sestao



Once you've visited Munoa Mansion and its gardens, take calle Pio Baroja to calle Andikollano, where you'll find 12 of the 31 homes from the "Home of the Future" low-cost housing coop. These homes were built by an initiative of AHV (Altos Hornos de Vizcaya) workers.

At the intersection with calle Luchana Mining, you'll find **Orconera-Lutxana Industria Bilduma**, the new headquarters of the Basque government's moveable industrial heritage warehouse.

This same street also connects with the **Portu Dock**, which will take you back to the estuary and the iron ore loading docks.



Orconera-Lutxana Bilduma

Orconera Lutxana Bilduma is the Basque government's moveable industrial heritage warehouse. It is the second largest collection of industrial heritage in Spain. This spectacular collection is sure to draw in visitors and teach them the industrial history of the Basque Country.



Ilgner Building



Ilgner Building

Ilgner Building

It is the only remaining **Altos Hornos de Vizcaya** (AHV) building dedicated to production left in Barakaldo.

Built in 1927, it is currently the headquarters of BIC Bizkaia Ezkerraldea (Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial de la Margen Izquierda S.A.).

"La Unión" Workers' Quarters

Lack of housing during industrialisation was critical. There was so much need for housing for all the people arriving at the same time that it became a top social issue.

The cheap homes made by **La Unión** Group in 1922 were designed by the architect Santos Zunzunegui. These homes are a jewel of our heritage, so the possibility of visiting number 38 is, undoubtedly, a magnificent opportunity to understand and learn about the living conditions of working families in the 20th century.



La Unión Homes



BILBAO BIZKAIA

Altos Hornos De Vizcaya Blast Furnace No. 1

Blast Furnace No. 1 is the most important legacy remaining of the emblematic Altos Hornos de Vizcaya, the largest iron and steel business in southern Europe and the largest company in Spain for a good part of the 20th century.

In 2005, the Basque government declared this industrial landmark a **Cultural Asset, classified as a Monument**. Since then, public institutions have been working to recover and enhance it.

Blast Furnace No. 1



Route 3. Portugalete, Santurtzi and Zierbena

The Mouth of the Estuary and the Bay of Abra



This route starts in Portugalete, the town where some of the most recognised and iconic pieces of Bizkaia's industrial heritage can be found, including Vizcaya Bridge, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the spectacular work of engineering, the iron jetty, and Rialia, a museum displaying a significant collection for visitors to better understand the industrial and seafaring past of Bizkaia.

From here, you'll go to Santurtzi and its maritime museum as well as the Agurtza Tuna Fishing Boat.

You'll wrap up this seafaring-themed day with a visit to Zierbena, a fishing port with a long-standing tradition.



Rialia

Estuary Motorboat Ferries

The need for large ships to sail into the centre of Bilbao made connecting the two sides of the estuary quite difficult. To remedy this, there are announcements for rowboats taking people from one side of the Nervión-Ibaizabal estuary to the other dating back to the 15th century. These rowboats were replaced by motorboats powered by gasoline engines, hence the name 'gasolinos'.



Gasolino motorboat ferry

There is only one line still regularly running: the one connecting Portugalete to the Las Arenas neighbourhood in Getxo.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

You can start this route by walking between Portugalete and Santurtzi.



Portugalete

But there are other means of transport available to see the points of interest for Bizkaia's industrial past and its conversion to its current state. You can use the metro line 2 connecting these two towns or take one of the tour boats along the estuary to its mouth.



Portugalete Workers' Route

Like Barakaldo and Sestao, Portugalete has an industrial workers' route. The route has informational panels at various points telling the industrial and seagoing history of the town.



Portugalete Workers' Route



Visit the Old Quarter of Portugalete

The Old Quarter of Portugalete continues to be a beautiful, emblematic space that maintains its Medieval essence. You'll find monuments from the various periods and styles like the Salazar Tower or the birthplace of Victor Chávarri who also has a monument from the early 20th century.

Rialia

The Rialia Museum of Industry is in a privileged location, a vantage point that allows you to understand our seafaring and industrial history.

After a recent renovation, the museum recovers and shares our industrial and seagoing past and pays homage to the men and women who made that development possible.



Rialia



Route 3, Portugalete, Santurtzi and Zierbena



A GOOD IDEA

The bridge from above

It's a great idea to go up to the pedestrian walkway on the tall part of the bridge for the splendid panoramic views of the mouth of the estuary.

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Bizkaia Bridge, from Portugalete



BILBAO BIZKAIA

Vizcaya Bridge

This bridge connects the towns of **Portugalete** and **Getxo**, located on opposite sides of the Bilbao Estuary at a point close to the mouth.

It is a toll transporter bridge, invented, designed and built by private initiative between 1887 and 1893.

The **Vizcaya Bridge** is considered an engineering work of art. It was the first transporter bridge in the world and one of the most outstanding constructions of 19th century iron architecture. This giant was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** on 12 July 2006, the first recognition for a Basque monument and the first industrial site to receive this title in Spain.



Santurtzi Itsas Museoa

A GOOD IDEA

'Fresh sardines' in Santurtzi



There's nothing better on this route than taking a break to taste the grilled sardines in the port of Santurtzi and, if you've got time, visiting the **Santurtzi Itsas Museoa**.

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Zierbena offers the opportunity to take a dip before having a meal or snack



This place maintains its charm and seafaring flavour, with fishing and leisure boats moored in the port and traditional restaurants and grills surrounding it, emitting a delicious aroma of grilled fish.



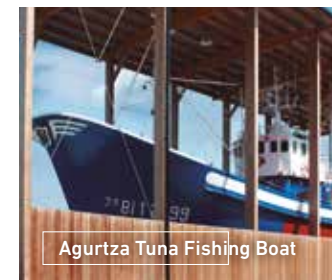
Iron Jetty (Portugalete)

Iron Jetty

The industrialisation of the Basque Country was made possible by two key circumstances: on the one hand, the presence in **Meatzaldea** of a low phosphor iron ore, which is ideal for making steel using the Bessemer process, and, on the other, the **construction of the iron jetty/dyke** in Portugalete by engineer Evaristo de Churruga.

Santurtzi Itsas Museoa and Agurtza Tuna Fishing Boat

Santurtzi has been one of the ports of Bizkaia with the most boats dedicated to inshore fishing. The **Santurtzi Itsas Museoa** tells the story of Santurtzi's connection to the sea in all manners: professional, social, cultural and recreational. The experience pairs perfectly with a trip to the beautiful **Agurtza Tuna Fishing Boat**, one of the last traditional wooden fishing boats on our coasts.



Agurtza Tuna Fishing Boat



Route 4: Getxo and its Grand Villas

Two Banks... Two Worlds



The industrial revolution didn't just change the appearance of Bilbao and the working-class towns along the estuary and the mining area, it also brought great wealth with it. The bourgeoisie searched for a new place to live and flaunt their power.

So, in the late 19th century, the right bank became one of the most important residential areas on the Iberian Peninsula: the Las Arenas and Neguri neighbourhoods in Getxo. There, numerous villas and palaces were built with large gardens. The bourgeoisie and the working class: two sides of the same world.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

22 If you're coming from Bilbao, take metro line 1 to the Areeta stop. Start your visit at the foot of the Vizcaya Bridge and then take **Evaristo Churruga promenade** to **Las Arenas** beach, where the beautiful wharf begins, which connects with the **Marqués de Arriluze promenade** as you gaze at the **Grand Villas** until you reach the **Punta Begoña Galleries**.



Getxo

Here you can stop at the **Getxo Marina** for some refreshments. Next, you'll take the metro at Neguri station, or, if you've reached the **Old Port of Algorta**, go up to the town to get the metro at the Algorta stop.



Engineer Evaristo de Churruga

Bilbao, Bizkaia and the Basque Country as a whole owe a great debt to the engineer **Evaristo de Churruga**. As the head of the Bilbao Port Works Board starting in 1877, this audacious engineer led the work necessary to channel the estuary, one of the major engineering feats undertaken in the history of Bizkaia.



Bilbao and the other towns along the estuary couldn't be imagined without their navigability over the course of history, a heritage to be preserved.



Monument to E. de Churruga

The Grand Villas

Named a **Cultural Asset and classified as a Monumental Ensemble in 2001**, the **Grand Villa Promenade** invites visitors to discover some of the buildings that best represent the

bourgeois architecture of Getxo, built between the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, the golden age of the Las Arenas and Neguri neighbourhoods.



Grand villas in Getxo

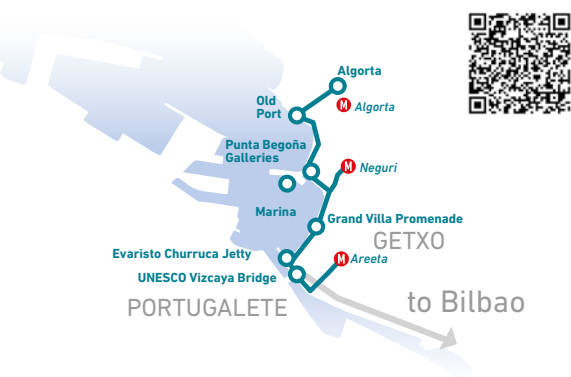


Arriluze lighthouse



Ereaga Beach

Punta Begoña Galleries



Punta Begoña Galleries



Punta Begoña Galleries

The **Punta Begoña Galleries** belonged to the enterprising Horacio Echevarrieta, whose presence was such that from them, he could enjoy views of **Neguri**, the port and even the iron mines he owned on the other side of the estuary.

He created a row of balconies on the ocean accessed from his own home, as dedicated to work as it was to play.

When business went bad, these galleries were emptied and used as artillery batteries in the Spanish Civil War, which caused damage and severe wear, with parts of the complex like the old mansion and a large swath of the garden being lost. Luckily, the galleries are still able to be visited and they are protected given their heritage value and the beautiful form they had of emblematically dominating the cliff.



Old Port of Algorta

As a purely marine structure, it offers a set of traditional homes full of bars, restaurants and great ambiance not to be missed. You can't say no to a pintxo or a txakoli at sunset.





Route 5: Meatzaldea: Iron and Mountains

5.a. Larreineta Funicular and the Mining Town of La Arboleda



The end of nearly all mining operations in the last two centuries has left the populations of the area with a particular personality and identity on display today in their traditions and customs.

But there is something else that this past left behind: a truly unique recovered landscape that surprises everyone who visits it, including a piece like the Larreineta funicular, which is essential to be used and enjoyed.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

If you're coming from Bilbao without a private vehicle, the best thing to do is take Cercanías Renfe line C2 to **Trapagarán**. Take the promenade from the station to N-634 and go up Avenida 1 de mayo until you reach the intersection with calle Axular, which ends at calle Jose Rufino Olaso. That street will take you to calle Funikular, where the funicular station to the **town of Larreineta** is located.



Once in **Larreineta**, walk to **La Arboleda** or take the electric shuttle bus.

The Larreineta Funicular railway

The **Larreineta Funicular** railway was inaugurated in 1926 to connect the mining town of **La Arboleda** with **San Salvador del Valle** (now called **Trapagarán**). Now a 10 minute ride, the distance before the construction of the funicular was an hour and a half, so this train became an essential component in the lives of the miners who lived in La Arboleda. Named a **Cultural Asset under the Monument category**, its historical value and social function are remarkable, and so are the adaptation of the design done on it to serve to transport not just people, but also iron ore and vehicles.



Going up by funicular

This peculiar funicular railway is comparable to a motorised continuous cable 'inclined plane', like those used to transport iron. Its historical value and design are remarkable and have made it a symbol of identity of the area's mining past.



La Arboleda



Route 5: Meatzaldea: Iron and Mountains

5.a. Larreineta Funicular and the Mining Town of La Arboleda



La Arboleda

In addition to the mining town, La Arboleda offers a spectacular natural setting and views. When the mining operations ceased, the groundwater seeped through and today, the pits of the mines in the area, the Hostión, Blondis and Parkotxa pits, have become fantastic lakes around which you can take a stroll and enjoy nature.

Mining Town of La Arboleda

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At the beginning of the 20th century, the area of **Meatzaldea**, comprised of the towns of Trapagarán, Ortuella, Abanto-Zierbena and Muskiz, became home to one of the major mining operations in Europe. Declared a monument in 2002, the mining town of **La Arboleda** is one of the most complete tangible remains of the intensive mining activity in this area. It is an evocative space, awakening in its visitors the echoes of that frenetic professional, social and radical activity of the early 20th century. Today, La Arboleda is doubtlessly the most representative neighbourhood of the mining past of Bizkaia.



La Arboleda

A GOOD IDEA



Peñas Negras Labyrinth

To round out the trip to both La Arboleda and the Basque Country Mining Museum, we invite you to head to **Ekoetxea Meatzaldea**. It's an environmental information centre where you can learn the keys of the transformation of the environment due to human industrial activity from an environmental perspective. It has **two headquarters**: the one in Gallarta, at the bottom of the Bodovalle Mine, and the one in Peñas Negras, close to the mining town of La Arboleda, where you'll be able to embark on this route through a place that was drastically changed by human beings as a result of mining operations.

A GOOD IDEA

Local cuisine

The **Enkarterri** area has truly exciting, local cuisine.

Although we'll discuss the putxeras of the railway workers on the La Robla train, in **La Arboleda**, you shouldn't miss the excellent **bean stew with its 'sacraments'**.

Elsa cheesemakers in the La Arboleda neighbourhood is renowned. There you'll be able to buy **fresh cows' milk cheeses**.

Karrantzana sheep's milk cheeses are also from this area.



Meatzalde Goikoa Parkea Sculpture Park

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In the spectacular environment of La Arboleda, you'll find **Meatzalde Goikoa Parkea / Sculpture Park**.



There, you'll find works by well-known artists like Nestor Basterretxea, Iñigo Arregi, Guillermo Olmo, Karmelo Gañan, Jose Antonio Legorburu, Mariemi Otaola, Victor Arrizabalaga and Alex Morlotetz.



Route 5: Meatzaldea: Iron and Mountains

5.b. Basque Country Mining Museum and Bodovalle Mine



Bodovalle was the second largest iron mine in Europe with 50 km of excavated tunnels. Operations ended in 1983 and it closed definitively a decade later.

Paradoxically, the last remaining building was expropriated and the town of Gallarta and its slaughterhouse were then turned into what is now the Basque Country Mining Museum, opened in 2001, by the families of former miners.



Although they were not duly recognised, women also contributed to the rise in mining. They were known as 'morrocotudas'.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

Given its location, it's best to go in a private vehicle, which will allow you to combine this route with one of the previous routes like la Arboleda or to visit Zierbena to have a swim and eat some fish and seafood.

The Mining Museum and the mine are close to one another, so you can walk this route.

Basque Country Mining Museum

The **Basque Country Mining Museum** – located in the old slaughterhouse of the neighbourhood of Gallarta, at the feet of the startling worksite of the **Concha II Mine** – describes the history of mining in the Basque Country to a wider audience with a spectacular collection of parts, tools, machinery and documentation that was gathered over years in the mountains and factories by volunteer former miners from the Cultural Association of the Mining Museum. The Museum also has a themed space dedicated to the 'Passionflower', Dolores Ibarruri, a political leader born in 1895 in the working class Peñucas neighbourhood of Gallarta, in Abanto.

Next to the Basque Country Mining Museum stands the Concha II mine, also called **Bodovalle**, the largest open-pit mining operation in the Basque Country, declared a monument in 2011, with amazing dimensions: a hole in the shape of an inverted cone with a 700 metre perimeter, 350 m diameter and 150 m depth, whose bottom is at 37 m below sea level.



BILBAO BIZKAIA



This 4 km greenway connects **Barakaldo** with **La Orconera** (Ortuella). It is a bike lane that runs along the route of the old Orconera mining railway from **Retuerto** in Barakaldo to the **La Arboleda** mines in Trapagaran.

Along the trail, you'll find consecutive lighted tunnels and rest areas. You'll also be able to enjoy magnificent views of the **Somorrostro** Valley.



Route 5: Meatzaldea: Iron and Mountains

5.b. Basque Country Mining Museum and Bodovalle Mine



Book cover
That Old Gallarta by:
Marta Zaldibar,
Ricardo Santamaría and
José María García Lucio.



225 families to move to extract iron ore from the subsoil.

This spectacular scar from the industrial period has profoundly transformed the landscape. It was **declared a monument in 2011** and has amazing dimensions: a hole in the shape of an inverted cone with a 700 metre perimeter, 350 m diameter and 150 m depth, whose bottom is at 37 m below sea level.

In 1983, operations ceased after excavating 14 million cubic metres of earth and producing 2 million tonnes of carbonates in its final years. The mine closed in 1993. It became the second largest iron operation in Europe. We can now see a magical landscape where we can recreate stories from the area's mining past.

Bodovalle Open-Pit Mine (Concha II)

Next to the **Basque Country Mining Museum**, lies the **Concha II** mine also called the **Bodovalle Mine** or Concha 2.

It was the largest open-pit mining operation in the Basque Country. Between 1968 and 1983, 14 million cubic metres of material were excavated. Thus, the mining company that owned the land decided to **tear down the old town of Gallarta** forcing over



Bodovalle



Route 6. Barbadun and Itsasur: Iron, Water and Sea

6.a. Iron and the Sea: Pobeña to Kobaron Greenway



When it passes through Muskiz, on the border with Cantabria, the Way of St. James coincides with one of the most beautiful coastal areas of Bizkaia.

On this part of the Way, you'll find the beautiful spot on the Itsasur Greenway, which is now a pleasant stroll along what was once the iron ore loading docks.



Itsasur



Itsasur Greenway and Pobeña-Kobaron Mining Reserve

The **Itsasur Greenway** follows the old mining routes that provided service to the largest mining operations in the area.

This area is, without a doubt, one of the most telling of mining in Bizkaia and the furious mining labour the territory was subject to from the mid-19th century on.





Route 6. Barbadun and Itsasur: Iron, Water and Sea

6.b. Iron and Water: on the Banks of the Barbadun river



Abellaneda Council House

The next stop is in neighbouring **Sopuerta**. The **Abellaneda Council House**, home to the **Encartaciones Museum**, which collects, analyses and shares the region's historical, artistic and ethnographic heritage. Among many other objects at the museum, you'll find machinery, paintings and equipment from the period of industrialisation in Bizkaia.



Abellaneda



El Pobal Forge

El Pobal Forge

In the heart of the mining area of Bizkaia, on the banks of the Barbadun river, lies **El Pobal Forge**. In operation from the 16th century, it is a hydraulic factory that worked with iron ore to turn it into metal and make all kinds of tools. It was built by a factional family that dominated the region from **Muñatones Castle**, the Salazar family, and was in operation until 1965.



Muñatones Castle

El Pobal is a living museum with demonstrations, guided tours and a varied programme aimed at all kinds of audiences to show two of the most important preindustrial activities in Bizkaia: iron manufacturing and milling.

The result of a long construction process, which spanned the 14th and 15th centuries, in the context of the War of the Bands, which devastated the Basque Country. It is one of the most remarkable components of Bizkaia's architectural heritage, so it was declared a **Monumental Ensemble**, recognised for its exceptional historical value and how well the ruins have been preserved.



Muñatones Castle



Iron Mountains Greenway

The **Iron Mountains Greenway** is an old 28 km train route running nearly parallel to the Barbadun river, connecting **Traslaviña** and **Gallarta**. Now a trail for cycling and walking, the route passes over gentle hills and through wide curves providing a level of comfort and ease throughout. Over the course of the route, in this incredible landscape, you can visit a large number of old mining operations that will take you back to a time when in addition to transporting iron ore to the port and steel mills in Bilbao, its rails handled the regular flow of passenger trains.



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SOPUERTA

Antique and classic car museum (Loizaga Tower)

The castle of Concejuelo, known as **Loizaga Tower**, houses an exceptional collection of classic and antique cars considered unique in the world for having most Rolls-Royce models, among other cars.



Loizaga Tower



Traslaviña (Artzentales)

Gallarta



Route 7. Balmaseda and La Encartada Fabrika Museoa

A living treasure unlike anything of its kind

In Balmaseda, you can visit the Balmaseda History Museum, the Easter Procession Museum and the Church of San Severino.

It is close to the La Encartada Fabrika Museoa



BILBAO



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WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

This route is perfect for doing at your own pace, using **Balmaseda** as your point of reference.

That's why we recommend using a private vehicle, so you can take short walks to view the landscape and see a variety of the places of interest we recommend.

It is a route that can fill an entire day, so it's worthwhile to stop for lunch in the area. The local speciality is **bean stew cooked in the famous putxeras**, pots where machinists on the Bilbao-La Robla (León) line would cook.



Balmaseda

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Balmaseda and La Encartada Fabrika Museoa

The route begins in Bizkaia's first town: **Balmaseda**. This is where the **La Encartada Factory** was founded in 1892 by 'indianos'. It was in operation for 100 years. It worked wool to make products out of that material (berets, scarves, hats, etc.). Today, the factory has been turned into a **museum** with a first-rate collection of machinery in excellent condition.



Putxera in Balmaseda

Putxeras were old pots in which railway workers cooked over coal. Today, they are still used to cook the delicious bean stew with its 'sacraments' and secret ingredients.

These striking vessels are taken out during celebrations, but if you don't happen to be here on one, order some delicious beans at any restaurant in the area.





Route 8. Karrantza and Dolomitas del Norte Caves, Adventure and Dolmitas



Heading into the Karrantza Valley, we recommend some more experiences that will be interesting for your route through Bizkaia's industrial heritage. Although some of the proposals stray away from the main theme, they are worth the trip once you're in the area.



WE RECOMMEND GOING BY

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While you can go by train from Abando station, since the places you'll visit are a bit far from one another, taking a private vehicle is the easiest option.

There are three ways: by the Cadagua Corridor, through Muskiz-Sopuerta or, the most recommendable, along the coast.

Take the A-8 toward Santander, exit at Colindres and then take the N-629 to Burgos-Logroño. Once you reach Gibaja, you'll find a detour on the left that reads Carranza (C-630).



Pozalagua Auditorium

Dolomitas Museum

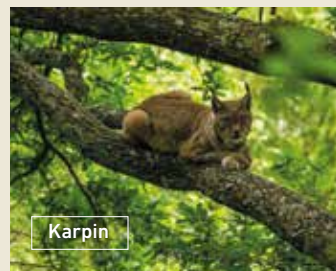
Founded in 1947, **Dolomitas del Norte, S.A.** was dedicated to obtaining basic refractory materials for the ladle furnaces used in industry in Bizkaia, mainly by Altos Hornos de Vizcaya.

The raw material was dolomite, a mineral brought down from the area of Pozalagua via cable car. During extraction, the **Pozalagua** cave was found with its singularly peculiar stalactites.



bbk Karpin Fauna

It is located in the neighbourhood of Biañez. The animals here belong to **55 different species**. Here you'll find animals injured on illegal hunting trips as well as those that cannot survive in the wild and were given up by individual or institutions.



Karpin

It is also a **theme park** where they teach the evolution of species with near exact replicas of the great sauria in a fun, practical and educational way. A very interesting adventure to enjoy with the whole family.



Dolomitas Museum



Karrantza Valley

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Pozalagua

Spectacular discovery of the cave with the largest concentration of peculiar stalactites in the world making up beautiful, remarkable figures.

You can visit the inside and the outside is a natural auditorium resulting from the mining operation. Today open-air festivals are held there.



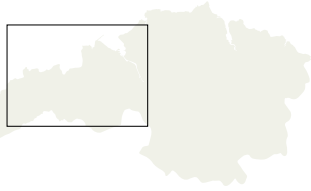
Pozalagua Cave



MUSEUMS and informational spaces

One of the best ways to discover the entire tangle of a city or region's heritage is through its museums.

So, here we've got the most interesting **MUSEUMS** and **informational spaces** related to the area's industrial heritage. Learn more and plan your visit with the QR codes.



Pozalagua Cave

Former Dolomitas Factory Museum

KARRANTZA



Cultural route of the Council of Europe
Itinéraire culturel du Conseil de l'Europe



El Pobal Forge



Loizaga Tower
(Antique and classic car museum)



La Encartada Fabrika Museoa

BALMASEDA



SOPUERTA



GALDAMES

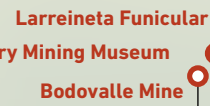


MUSKIZ

Santurtzi Itsas Museoa and Agurtza Tuna Fishing Boat



Larreina Funicular
Basque Country Mining Museum
Bodovalle Mine



SANTURTZI

GETXO

Grand Villa Promenade



PORTUGALETE

SESTAO

BARAKALDO

BILBAO

BIZKAIA BRIDGE UNESCO

RIALIA MUSEUM



ALTOS HORNOS DE VIZCAYA

ILGNER BUILDING



ROTEGUI BRIDGE

ORCONERA LUTXANA BILDUMA



ITSAS SEA MUSEUM



GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

ITSAS SEA MUSEUM

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM





TOP IRON RIVER

We call them TOP because they are the most interesting sites on your route through Bizkaia's Industrial Heritage. By visiting these sites, you'll find a variety of adventure experiences, culinary offerings and places of interest to enjoy. We have marked them as essential. Pencil them into your itinerary and tell people about them when you get home.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

It is an iconic image of the industrial restructuring of Bilbao Bizkaia and its top-level access to contemporary architecture.



ITSAS SEA MUSEUM

A museum located in the space previously occupied by the Euskalduna shipyard, with a long history that connected and continues to connect the territory of Bizkaia and the sea. The red La Carola crane awaits on its exterior esplanade.



LOADING DOCKS ON THE ESTUARY

Complex wooden and metal structures still standing on the banks of the estuary. They are giant sculpture reminders of the loading of iron ore onto ships.



SESTAO BLAST FURNACE

A way to get a closer look at what was once Bizkaia's key engine for industrial progress that has also been a hallmark of the landscape and humanity on the left bank of the estuary.



VIZCAYA BRIDGE

Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the bridge has become the most well-known of all of Bizkaia's Industrial Heritage, in addition to being the most common way to get from one side of the estuary to the other.



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GRAND VILLAS OF GETXO PROMENADE

Where you can appreciate the homes of the bourgeoisie that founded the industrial operations in the area on a beautiful promenade along the right bank of the estuary.



BASQUE COUNTRY MINING MUSEUM

It's an essential stop to learn about the historical trajectory of Bizkaia's mining past.



MINING TOWN OF LA ARBOLEDA

Peculiar, representative, traditional town populated in the past by miners and now also home to leisure activities and restaurants known especially for their beans.

EL POBAL FORGE

A facility open to the public recreating one of the old water-powered forges. Its golden age was in the late 17th century and it was in operation until 1965. The machinery on display is from the 19th century.



LA ENCARTADA FABRIKA-MUSEOA

Berets and other wool products were produced in this factory, which has been preserved practically in its natural state. A visit is highly recommended.



TOURISM BILBAO
www.bilbaoturismo.net

BIZKAIA TOURISM
www.visitbiscay.eus

BASQUE COUNTRY TOURISM
www.turismo.euskadi.eus

TOURIST OFFICES

BILBAO

TOURISM BILBAO

- Plaza Circular, 1 Edificio Terminus · 944 795 760
- Alameda de Mazarredo 66 (Next to the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum)
- Airport 944 031 444

BIZKAIA

BAKIO

946 193 395 · www.bakio.eus

BALMASEDA - ENKARTUR

946 802 976 · www.visitenkarterri.com

BERMEO

946 179 154 · www.bizbermeo.eus

DURANGO

946 033 938 · www.turismodurango.net

ELORRIO

946 820 164 · www.elorrioturismo.eus

GERNIKA-LUMO

946 255 892 · www.gernikainfo.eus

GETXO

944 910 800 · www.gebo.eus/turismo
TIP - Tourism Information Point
March to December 615 75 62 90

GORLIZ

946 774 348 · www.visitgorliz.eus

KARRANTZA-HARANA

946 806 928 · www.karrantza.org

LEKEITIO

946 844 017 · www.lekeitioturismo.eus

MUNDAKA

946 177 201 · www.mundakatourismo.com

ONDARROA

946 831 951 · www.ondarroa.eus

ORDUÑA

945 384 384 · www.ordunaturismo.com

OROZKO

946 122 695 · www.gorbeiaeuskadi.com

PLENTZIA

946 774 199 · www.visitplentzia.com

PORTUGALETE

944 729 314 · www.portugalete.org

SANTURTZI

944 839 494 · www.visitsanturtzi.eus

SESTAO

944 070 985 · www.sestao.eus

SOPELA

944 065 519 · https://turismo.sopela.eus/

ZIERBENA (La Arena)

662 547 468 · www.zierbena.net
(open seasonally)

TRANSPORT

AIRPORT

Bilbao-Leiu · 913 211 000 (AENA)
www.aena.es/en/bilbao.html

CRUISE AND FERRY

Ferry Bilbao-Portsmouth 902 108 147
www.brittany-ferries.es

TRAINS

RENFE. Abando Indalecio Prieto Station
Plaza Circular, 2
ADIF customer service 912 432 343
RENFE Bilbao customer service 944 879 222
RENFE customer service 912 320 320
www.renfe.com / www.adif.es

EUSKOTREN

Customer service 944 333 333
www.euskotren.eus · 944 019 900

FEVE. Concordia Station

Calle de Bailén 2

BIUSES

Bilbao Intermodal (Bus Station)
Calle Gurtubai 1 · 944 395 077
www.bilbaointermodal.eus

Bilbobus (Municipal buses)

946 855 000 / 944 790 981
www.bilbao.eus/bilbobus

Bizkaibus (Coaches and buses, province and airport)
946 125 555 · www.bizkaia.eus

METRO BILBAO

946 855 000 · www.metrobilbao.eus

TRAM

944 333 333 · www.euskotren.eus

TAXIS

Radio Taxi Bilbao
944 448 888 · www.taxibilbao.com

Tele Taxi

944 102 121 · www.teletaxibilbao.com

Radio Taxi Nervión

944 269 026 · www.radiotaxinervion.com

In Getxo:

BIZKAITAXI

www.bizkaitaxi.eus / 94 491 53 53

GETXOBIZI

www.nextbike.es / 900 29 35 51

BICYCLE HIRE

Bilbaobizi
946 564 905 · www.bilbaobizi.bilbao.eus

INFORMATION

EMERGENCIES 112

INFORMATION 010
(for calls within the Bilbao area)

944 010 010 (for calls outside
of the Bilbao area)

CONSULAR OFFICE

944 706 426

CITIZEN INFORMATION BILBAO CITY COUNCIL

944 204 200

GENERAL TRAFFIC AND ROAD INFORMATION

011

LOST AND FOUND

944 204 981 / 944 205 000

MUSEUMS IN BILBAO

GUGGENHEIM BILBAO MUSEUM

www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus · 944 359 000

FINE ART MUSEUM

www.bilbaomuseoa.eus · 944 396 060

SACRED ART MUSEUM

www.eleizmuseoa.com · 944 320 125

ITSAS SEA MUSEUM BILBAO

www.itsasmuseum.eus · 946 085 500

EASTER PROCESSION MUSEUM

www.museodepasosbilbao.com · 944 150 433

BILBAO BULLFIGHTING MUSEUM

www.bilbao.bmfforos.com · 944 448 698

BASQUE COUNTRY MUSEUM

www.euskalmuseoa.eus · 944 155 423

REPRODUCTIONS MUSEUM

www.bilbokoberreginmuseoa.eus/es · 946 790 255

ATHLETIC CLUB MUSEUM

www.sanmames.athletic-club.eus/museo · 944 661 100

BASQUE LANGUAGE INFORMATION CENTRE

www.euskarenebea.eus · 944 028 081

ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus · 944 040 990

MUSEUMS IN BIZKAIA

ON THE COAST

ARRANTZALEEN MUSEOA (Fishing Museum)

Bermeo · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus · 946 881 171

PLASENTIA DE BUTRÓN MUSEUM

Plentzia · www.museoplentzia.org · 94 677 37 25

RIALIA MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY

Portugalete · www.portugalete.org/es-ES/Rialia · 944 729 200

SANTURTZI ITSAS MUSEOA

www.visitsanturtzi.eus · 944 839 494

AGURTA SHIP AND MUSEUM

www.visitsanturtzi.eus · 944 839 494

BIZKAIA BRIDGE

Las Arenas (Gebo) / Portugalete

www.puente-colgante.com · 944 801 012

PUNTA BEGOÑA GALLERIES

Gebo · www.puntabegonagetxe.eus

URDAIBAI BIRD CENTRE

Gautegiz-Arteaga · www.birdcenter.org · 699 839 202

EKOETXEA URDAIBAI

Busturia · www.ekoetxea.eus · 946 051 275

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Bakio · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus/txakolingunea · 946 028 513

SANTA CATALINA LIGHTHOUSE

Lekeitio · www.lekeitioturismo.eus/en · 946 844 017

INLAND

SIMÓN BOLÍVAR MUSEUM

Zierba-Bolibar · www.simonbolivarmuseoa.com · 946 164 114

DURANGO ART AND HISTORY MUSEUM

Durango · www.durangomuseoa.eus · 946 030 020

ENCARTACIONES MUSEUM

Sopuerta · www.enkartermuseoa.eus · 946 504 488

EL POBAL FORGE

Muskiz · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus · 629 271 516

BASQUE PEOPLE MUSEUM

Gernika-Lumo · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus · 946 255 451

GERNIKA PEACE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Gernika-Lumo · www.museodelapaz.org · 946 270 213

GERNIKA ASSEMBLY HOUSE

Gernika-Lumo · www.gernika-lumo.eus · 946 270 200

BASONDO

Wild bird refuge in Urdaibai, Kortezubi

www.basondo.com · 946 254 436

**JOSÉ LUIS GOTI BASQUE MUSEUM ON THE HISTORY OF
MEDICINE AND SCIENCES**

Leioa · www.ehu.eus · 946 012 000

OROZKO MUSEUM

Orozko · www.orozkomuseoa.eus · 946 339 823

BASQUE COUNTRY MINING MUSEUM

Gallarta · www.meatzaldea.eus · 946 363 682

BALMASEDA HISTORY MUSEUM

Balmaseda · www.visitenkarterri.com · 946 802 976

LA ENCARTADA FABRIKA MUSEOA

Balmaseda · www.bizkaikoa.bizkaia.eus · 946 800 778

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Elorrio · www.visitelorrio.com · 946 820 164

LOIZAGA TOWER, ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC CAR MUSEUM

Galdames · www.torreloizaga.com · 672 248 759

IRON BELT HISTORY MUSEUM

Berango · www.cinturondehierro.eus · 946 682 143

ANTZASTI MUSEUM

Dima · Artau Auzoa, 35, 48141,

www.antzasti.eus · 628 32 22 75

ORDUÑA MUSEUM / ORDUÑA HIRIA MUSEOA

Orduña - orduñahiria.org · 635 751436

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www.bbkkarpinfauna.eus

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HONTZA MUSEUM FOUNDATION.

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Mungia · Caserío Landetxo Goikoa Baserría

www.izenaduba.com · 946 740 061

KONTZEJU ZAHARRA INFORMATION CENTRE

Karrantza · www.visitenkarterri.com · 946 806 928

KONTZEJU ZAHARRA INFORMATION CENTRE

Markina Xemein · www.learribaiturismo.com/en/do/detail/
kontzeju-zaharra · 618 595 593

MUÑATONES CASTLE

Muskiz · www.visitenkarterri.com · 629 271 516

ANGURRETA HARROBIA ART SPACE

Mañaria · angurreta@gmail.com

NATURAL SPACES

URDAIBAI BIOSPHERE RESERVE

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946 870 402 (Ihobe) · www.ekoetxea.eus

GORBEIA NATURAL PARK

946 122 695

www.gorbeiaeuskadi.com

URKIOLA NATURAL PARK

946 814 155 · www.urkiola.net

ARMANÓN NATURAL PARK

946 560 079 · www.visitenkarterri.com

POZALAGUA CAVE

www.cuevadepozalagua.eus

SANTIMAMIÑE CAVE

santimamiñe.com

OMA FOREST

www.bizkaia.eus/es/web/bosque-oma-basoa

Itsas Sea Museum: Launching of Alfonso XII



European Route
of Industrial Heritage

Cultural route
of the Council of Europe
Itinerario cultural
de Consejo de Europa



bilbaoturismo.net
visitbiscay.eus



EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY

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More information
about Iron River:



Download
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