

Route 3: Arteaga/Bird Centre/Laida-Laga Nature in freedom

In Gautegiz Arteaga, a town in the district of Busturialde-Urdaibai, nature is free. This is an area of exceptional natural wealth thanks to the huge ecological diversity, the rural landscapes further inland, the wetlands, the extensive sandy areas opposite the estuary where it is located.

A stop to enjoy the beaches of this area is a must; thanks to its privileged setting, it is possible to enjoy the impressive views offered by Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve. The beaches are also perfect for lovers of water sports such as surfing, sailing or kayaking. Nature in its purest form, this is the main tourist attraction here.

Bilbao
(Terminus)



A3513 - Bizkaibus



To get to the town, from the Terminus station in Bilbao, catch the **Bizkaibus line A3513 Bizkaibus** (Bilbao-Hosp. Galdakao-Gernika Lumo-Ea-Lekeitio) which will take you to Arteaga, departing every two hours. If you get off at Zelaieta (next to the Town Hall), we recommend two very special visits. A short walk will take you to the **Urdaibai Bird Centre**, a huge living museum of nature, the perfect place if you are interested in birds and their migration patterns. It is a unique wetlands observatory dedicated to research and scientific dissemination, where you can follow an ornithological circuit and watch the different species which cohabit the centre.

The Busturialde-Urdaibai district is the most important wetland region of the Basque Country. Orueta lagoon, opposite the Urdaibai Bird Centre, has become the favourite habitat of the waterbirds of Bizkaia after its restoration as a wetland zone. By restoring its connection to the tidal waters, the lagoon was naturally regenerated and has gradually become the home to typical species of the area.



Arteaga Castle

The other place to visit in Arteaga is the **castle**, one of the most important constructions in the district, and it is reached on foot. Eugenia de Montijo converted her ancestors' tower house into a castle after her son, Prince Imperial of France was declared «vizcaíno de origen» (a native of Bizcay). The result was the neo-Gothic building which today is used as a hotel and occupies a privileged location in the Urdaibai Reserve.

We end this trip with a visit to two of the most characteristic beaches along the coast of Bizkaia, Laida and Laga. Catch Bizkaibus **A3526** (does not run on holidays) at the stop, Zelaieta, where you got off the **A3513**, and this will take you to **Laida**. There are two very different areas, one on the interior of the estuary (ideal for children) and the other open to the sea. This is the largest beach on the Mundaka estuary, and is perfect for kayaking, sailing, surfing, windsurfing and long-boarding thanks to the excellent long and gentle waves. If you climb the dune which has formed between the two zones, you will have an excellent view of the isle of Izaro and the mouth of the estuary.

Laga is the last stop on this route. This beach, one of the wildest along the Basque coast, far from any buildings and urban development, is perfect for surfing as it is open to the Cantabrian sea. Natural landscapes in their purest form.

From Laga, to return to Bilbao take the **A3526** bus and change in Arteaga to the **A3513**.



Bird Centre



Laga