

Winter in the Basque Country

February - March



By: BASQVIUM food, culture & luxury experiences

Winter in the Basque Country

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Euskal Herria, The Land of the Basques in the local language, is a fascinating destination which comprises in a relatively small piece of land a great diversity of sceneries from the ocean to the mountain range and from modern cities to countryside and vineyards.

Nestled in a mountainous corner of Atlantic Europe, the land of the Basques is still wrapped in a mystery and legend story.

The origin of this people is uncertain, whose language – Euskera - is said to be the oldest living language in Europe and unrelated to any other spoken in Europe, or indeed the world. Euskera's mysterious origins have fuelled too the debate about, whether the Basques can boast the oldest European culture.

Anytime is a good time to visit The Land of the Basques, even in winter when the cold comes and snow settles on the mountains.



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In the rural tradition of the Basque Country, winter meant the end of the harvest and the coming back of the animal flocks to the farm houses.

Only fishermen dare to go into the sea, when the Cantabric Sea allowed, as in winter there is a wide range of fish in season, being hake one of the most valued.



After Christmas with the coalman Olentzero as the protagonist, with the entry of the new year and moving into winter, the months of February and March come with new festivities full of meaning for the Basques.

Despite winter invites to stay at home for longer hours, several important festivals are celebrated; from Saint Blaise, a festival with special relevance in Abadiño; to the Carnivals between February and March, which in the case of the “Maskaradak” of the French Basque Country begin in January and last until April.

As we get closer to the high point of the winter, it is celebrated the return and rebirth of the Light and the first visible signs of Life with the festival of February.

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In many countries of the European continent and Isles, this time of the year is much related with the Irish Goddess Brigid, even in its modern form of St. Brigid.

However, in the Basque Country the attention is focused on Saint Agathe, patroness of the Basque Country, in honour of whom a very famous pilgrimage and procession is organized.

In the rural environment, in February, the benefits of the November slaughter were scarce. The Carnival or “Inauteria” was the last chance of the winter so that the young people could make a charity collection whose benefits were used to make a great banquet.

As in most of Europe, in the territory of the Basques, there was a need for food, and the festivities were used to eat after having performed rites and songs.

And although the origin of this situation does not exist today, many of these traditions are revived in our Carnivals, which comprises a great mixture of tradition and mythology.

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Related to gastronomy, winter is time for some of the most valued and well-known typical dishes too, with preference for stews, as they warm up and are full of flavour, like *Porrusalda*, made from potatoes, leeks, pumpkin and carrots or the delicious kidney beans, made with love, over a low heat, accompanied always by meat such as ribs, blood sausage, chorizo and pickled green chillies.

But let's not forget about seasonal vegetables, like Artichokes, Endives and Brussels sprouts that can be prepared in countless ways; a wide range of fish in season (Hake, Mackerel, Sea Bream, Sea Bass) to make typical winter creams and soups, to finish with typical winter dessert like *Intxaursalsa*, a type of custard made with walnuts or carnival fritters, made with stale bread, milk and cinnamon.



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And of course after September Harvest, with the beginning of the new year comes time to uncork our delicious Cider – Euskal Sagardoa and Txakoli White Wine.

The first historical reference to Sagardoa (Cider in Basque, that literally means apple wine), dates from more than 1.000 years ago in the surrounding area of San Sebastian.

Nowadays this area still contains the majority of the Cider Houses of the Basque Region, where you can taste the Cider directly from big oak barrels, following the traditional rule of “txotx”.

Perfect time to visit one of the traditional Cider Houses, with their typical menu composed by cod omelette, fried cod with peppers, grilled beef steak and cheese, nuts and quice.

On the other hand, Txakoli or Txakolina is a fruity and sometimes slightly sparkling, young white wine produced in the Basque Country.

Originally, txakoli was home-made in Baserris, which are Basque Farm Houses, but nowadays it competes in quality among the best white wines.



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And if you are keen on sports, the Football League goes on with the regular season with three Basque teams playing La Liga: Athletic of Bilbao, Real Sociedad, and Alavés. That means, every week we will find the chance to see high level matches in our cities. Winter season also is the right time for bike and running competitions.

Related to the traditional Basque sports, this is the season for Basque Hand Ball Double Championship.

And winter also brings us the opportunity find the biggest waves for surfing and for mountain lovers to step the snow in solitary footpaths.

As you can see, winter is full of traditions and perfect time to enjoy The Land of the Basques, far away from the crowds of peak tourist season time.

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We wait for you!



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TRADITIONS AND FESTIVITIES CALENDAR

03.02.2022

Saint Blaise Festival - Religious Tradition in Bilbao and Agriculture,
Traditional Products and Rural Sports Show in Abadiño
Bilbao, Abadiño, Laudio

04-05.02.2022

Saint Agathe Eve - singing procession and pilgrimage to the Saint
Agathe hermitage
All over the country

11.02.2022

Sixth Performance for Maskaradak
Urdiñabe - Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

12.02.2022

"Uztaberri eguna" Riojan Wine Festival
Lapuebla de Labarca

17.02.2022

Seventh Performance for Maskaradak
Muskildi – Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

19.02.2022

Boilermakers Parade as prelude of the Carnivals
San Sebastian Old Quarters

From 24.02.2022 to 01.03.2022

Basque Carnival Festivals, with special mention to Bilbao, San
Sebastian, Tolosa, Mundaka and Lekeitio
All over the country

25.02.2022

Eighth Performance for Maskaradak
Eskiula - Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

From 27.02.2022 to 01.03.2022

Famous Rural & Ethnic Carnivals of Lantz declared as a cultural
interest festival
Lantz

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01.03.2022

Sunday of "Piñata" last Carnival Parade
San Sebastian, Tolosa

04-06.03.2022

Gustoko Trade Show - Quality Food Local Products exhibit and
tasting
Bilbao Exhibition Center

04.03.2022

Ninth Performance for Maskaradak
Altzuruku - Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

06.-12.03.2022

Pilgrimage to the Castle of San Javier named as "Javierada". Old
Navarre Tradition dating back to nineteenth century
Javier (Navarre)

10.03.2022

Tenth Performance for Maskaradak
Idauze - Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

From 12.03.2022 to 21.03.2021

Week of Pintxo
Pamplona

18.03.2022

Eleventh Performance for Maskaradak
Lakarri - Zuberoa (French Basque Country)

CULTURAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

From 04.02.2022 to 29.05.2022

“Bodies for a moment” - Ion Munduate
Artium Museoa - Vitoria - Gasteiz

From 04.02.2022 to 27.03.2022

She Recalibrates - Aura Satz
Artium Museoa - Vitoria - Gasteiz

08.02.2022

Orquesta Sinfónica Euskadi. Beethoven + Bartok - Concert
Vitoria - Gasteiz

From 08.02.2022

“Zeru bat, hamaika bide” artistic practices in the Basque Country
between 1977 and 2002
Artium Museoa - Vitoria - Gasteiz

09.02.2022

“From fauvism to surrealism” opening talk of the exhibition
Guggenheim Museum - Bilbao

11-12.02.2022

Magicians
Teatro Campos Elíseos - Bilbao

15.02.2022

BOS Creative Proccess with Isabel Urrutia
Guggenheim Museum - Bilbao

18.02.2022

Mikel Erentxun - concert
Kafe Antzokia - Bilbao

20.02.2022

Bilbao Municipal Band “Glosas cercanas”
Euskalduna - Bilbao

20.02.2022

Visit to the cementery of Santa Isabel
Vitoria - Gasteiz

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23.02.2022

Jean Dubuffet - opening talk of the exhibition
Guggenheim Museum - Bilbao

26.02.2022

Berlin philharmonic - Live broadcasting of concerts
Guggenheim Museum - Bilbao

26.02.2022

XIV Japan Weekend Bilbao
Bilbao Exhibition Centre

From 28.02.2022 to 07.03.2022

Zinegoak 2022 - Film festival
Bilbao

05.03.2022

Pantomima Full - Humour
Teatro Campos Elíseos - Bilbao

05.03.2022

Bertso saioa - Irati Majuelo and Miren Artetxe
San Telmo Museum - San Sebastian

10.03.2022

Orquesta Sinfónica Euskadi. Berlioz + Beethoven - Concert
San Sebastian

10.03.2022

Orquesta Sinfónica Bilbao - Concert
Euskalduna - Bilbao

10.03.2022

"Kasilda, bukatzen ez den sua" Theatre
Teatro Principal - San Sebastian

14.03.2022

Orquesta Sinfónica Euskadi. Berlioz + Beethoven - Concert
Vitoria - Gasteiz

21.03.2022

Orquesta Sinfónica Bilbao - Concert
Euskalduna - Bilbao

SPORT ACTIVITY PROGRAM

03.02.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - Real Madrid
San Mames- Bilbao

03.02.2022

Real Sociedad - Betis
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

04.02.2022

Baskonia - Olympiacos
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

06.02.2022

Bilbao Basket - Manresa
Bilbao Arena - Bilbao

07.02.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - RCD Espanyol
San Mames- Bilbao

10.02.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - Valencia C.F.
San Mames- Bilbao

13.02.2022

Real Sociedad - Granada
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

13.02.2022

Alavés - Valencia C.F.
Mendizorrotza - Vitoria Gasteiz

13.02.2022

Baskonia - Real Betis
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

20.02.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - Real Sociedad
San Mames- Bilbao

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24.02.2022

Real Sociedad - RB Leipzig
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

24.02.2022

Baskonia - UNICS
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

27.02.2022

Real Sociedad - Osasuna
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

02.03.2022

Real Sociedad - R.C.D. Mallorca
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

06.03.2022

Alavés - Sevilla
Mendizorrotza - Vitoria Gasteiz

06.03.2022

Bilbao Basket - Joventut
Bilbao Arena - Bilbao

06.03.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - Levante
San Mames- Bilbao

08.03.2022

Baskonia - Anadolu Efes
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

13.03.2022

Real Sociedad - Alavés
Reale Arena - San Sebastian

16.03.2022

Baskonia - Barça
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

18.03.2022

Baskonia - Alba Berlin
Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

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20.03.2022

Alavés - Granada

Mendizorrotza - Vitoria Gasteiz

20.03.2022

Athletic Club Bilbao - Getafe

San Mames- Bilbao

20.03.2022

Baskonia - Breogán

Fernando Buesa Arena- Vitoria Gasteiz

Nearly every weekend

Basque Rural Sports Exhibitions

Different locations



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