

Summer in the Basque Country

june - july



By: BASQVIUM food, culture & luxury experiences

Summer 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, but the sunny warm weather, longer days, together with the biggest outdoors festivals season, makes summer the perfect time to explore and enjoy the destination.



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As the days get longer, Summer welcomes a very special celebration- the night of Saint John concurring the Summer Solstice.

It is an ancient celebration linked to multiple purifying beliefs, but also a night of witches and magic, that is celebrated in almost all towns and neighborhoods, around a bonfire to mark the beginning of summer and drive away the evil spirits.

Tradition says that you must write on a piece of paper two wishes for the future and something that we want to leave behind in our lives, then burn the paper in that bonfire and jump on the fire, at least 3 times, to ensure a year of luck and health.

And after this traditional night, Summer Festival Season starts all over the Basque Country, beginning with Saint John´s Day the 24th of June, with special mention to the pilgrimage to one of the most spectacular natural sites in the country - San Juan de Gaztelugatxe.

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Every June 24, St. Juan of Gaztelugatxe celebrates the festivity of the Saint who gives its name, with a pilgrimage to which the neighbours of Bermeo village come with devotion, although also hundreds of people come walking from the rest of the nearby towns and even of distant places of the Basque Country, all attracted by the singular beauty of the landscape.

The interest of the whole is shared by the impressive islet, on top of which rises the religious building, which is reached after overcoming a narrow path with 231 steep steps - and the temple itself. Once there, those who come to the pilgrimage should ring the chapel bell three times while they make a wish.

Henceforth this festivity, you could find traditional festivals in every corner, every week of Summer, with special mention to the capital cities main festivals.

Iruñea – Pamplona opens the festive season, with San Fermin Festival and its famous Running of the Bulls!

Every 6th of July at 12:00 a.m. the Festival starts with the “txupinazo” (rocket) from the balcony of the City Hall.

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From this moment, till the 14th of July, it celebrates 8 days of non-stop fiesta.

To be one more in the Festival, you should wear all in white, with a red scarf.

Every day at 8:00 in the morning starts the most

famous event of San Fermin – The Running of the Bulls!

After signing 3 times in front of San Fermin praying card, 6 wild bulls guided by other 6 leading ox run among a crowd till the Bull Ring.

With a 875 meter itinerary through the narrow streets of the Old Quarters, the running lasts only around two minutes if no accident happen.

[Here you can check a video of the 5th Running Day on 2019.](#)



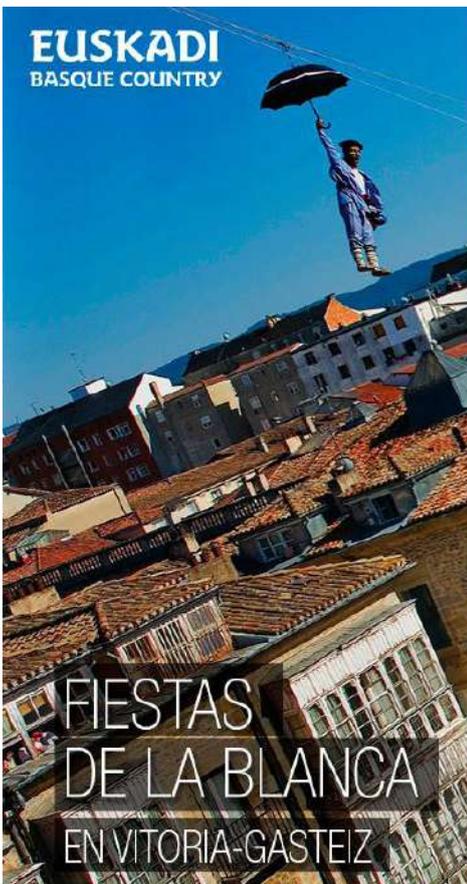
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And the other four capital follow the festive season, starting with the city of Baiona - Bayonne in the French Basque Country, which we can consider a replica of the San Fermin Festivals, with people even wearing in white with red scarfs.



Every year 26th of July at 22:00 Festival starts, when the Lion King (main carácter of the Festival) throws the City's Keys from the balcony of the City Hall. Lasting till 30th of July Running of Bulls are present too like in Pamplona.

The baton is picked up by the administrative capital city of the Basque Country - Vitoria-Gasteiz - at the beginning of August, followed by San Sebastian and Bilbao.



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For music lovers it is the time to enjoy the biggest music festivals of the year, like [Azkena Rock](#) in Vitoria Gasteiz (postponed to 2022), [Getxo Jazz](#) (30 June - 04 July), [BBK Live in Bilbao](#) (postponed to 2022), [Vitoria Jazz Festival](#) (15 - 18 July), [Jazzaldia](#) in San Sebastian (21 - 25 July) or [Bay Of Biscay Festival](#) in Bermeo (postponed to 2022).

Summer is also harvesting time for many of the products that were sown during the Spring, like the famous green peppers from Gernika, different types of red peppers, Ibarra chillies and tomatoes, all of them distinguished by Basque Quality Label.



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And the King of the seasonal fishes is undoubtedly Tuna, one of the most appreciated delicacies in the Basque gastronomy.

Still using traditional and sustainable techniques, Tunas are captured one by one with long rods.

Once the boat is over the fish bank the water sprinklers are turned on to hide the rods. A real spectacle to see alive!



This tuna then will be sold fresh in the markets to prepare traditional dishes like Marmitako – stew of Tuna, potatoes, tomato and peppers.



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And it is still time for other species like sardines, anchovies or Meckerel, that last from the Spring season. Perfect time to enjoy the Fish Grills in many of our ports!



In July also finishes the season of the processing of the delicious Idiziabal cheese, obtained from Sheep autochthonous Latxa race; therefore, it is the last moment to visit one of the farms to see this process alive.

On the other hand, if you are keen on sports, it is the time for “Estropadak” the very popular Basque Rowing Competition.



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As many of the traditional Basque Sports, this speciality comes from a working activity. More concretely from our fishermen boats competition to reach first to the fish banks or Whales, what gave way to bets between the boats.

The season last from July to September, ending with the spectacular Concha race in San Sebastian, that attracts thousand of supporters to the most important race of the season.

Certainly, Basques where renowned internationally as one of the best Whale Hunters. But now instead of hunting them (the last capture of a whale was in 1901), during the summer season we organize boat trips through the Bay of Biscay to see whales and dolphins. One of the most exciting activities for families!



Good weather invites to do more outdoor activities, specially water sports, horseback riding and mountain trekking.

As you can see, Summer is full of traditions and perfect time to enjoy The Land of the Basques, although is the tourist peak season, specially in cities like San Sebastian and beach resort areas.

And to celebrate that Summer has come with longer and warmer days, here you can watch a beautiful video of the coast of the Basque Country shot from a drone.

We wait for you!

[Short video of "Euskadi, Basque Country"](#)



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TRADITIONS AND FESTIVITIES CALENDAR

18 - 29.06.2021

Great Week of the Pintxo of Alava. Pintxo Contest and Tasting Ordizia
Europa Palace. Vitoria - Gasteiz

Night of 23.06.2021

Saint John´s Bonfires. Night of purifying beliefs, witches and magic
All over the Country

23 - 30.06.2021

Saint John´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Leioa, Muskiz, Laguardia, Pasaia, Eibar, Arrasate

25.06.2021

Saint Pelayo´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Zarautz

25.06 - 04.07.2021

Saint Peter´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Sestao, Lekeitio, Ermua, Mundaka, Mungia, Pasaia, Orio

30.06.2021

Alarde San Marcial. Parade remembering Spanish and French wars
Irun

01.07.2021

Virgin of the Guide Festivity Parade
Portugalete

02.07.2021

Saint Elizabeth´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Berriz, Zaldibar & Zumarraga

04.07.2021

Saint Valentín of Berriotxoa Festival. Patron of Biscay
Amoroto, Elorrio

06 - 14.07.2021

Saint Fermin´s Festival
Pamplona

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10 - 11.07.2021

Medieval Market
Labastida

10 - 16.07.2021

Saint Cristobal ´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Arrieta, Berriz, Busturia, Erandio, Igorre, Añana

10 - 18.07.2021

Sea Bream Festival “Made on the Orio style”
Orio

17 - 25.07.2021

Saint Marina ´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Arakaldo, Ibarangelu, Otxandio, Urduliz, Asteasu, Bergara

22.07.2021

Maria Magdalena Festivity. Pilgrimage to La Arboleda Cave and
Sailing Parade to Izaro Island
La Arboleda, Elantxobe, Mutriku, Plentzia, Arrigorriaga, Bermeo

25.07.2021

Paella conquest – Gastronomical Festival
Getxo

25.07.2021

Santiago Apostle Festivity. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities.
Ermua, Gorniz, Ispaster, Oyon

25.07.2021

Blusas Day. Gangs in traditional dressing celebration
Vitoria – Gasteiz

26.07.2021

Cider Day. Tasting of local cider. Exhibition of local craftsman and
Basque traditional sports
Astigarraga

26.07.2021 - 01.08.2021

Festivals of Bayonne. Basque French version of the San Fermin
Festivals, with bullfighting and Running of the Bulls
Bayonne (French Basque Country)

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26 - 30.07.2021

Saint Anne ´s Festival. Culture, Gastronomy & Leisure activities
Berango, Busturia (Axpe), Etxebarri, Sopuerta, Mendaro, Ordizia.

31.07.2021

Saint Ignatius Festival. Patron of Biscay and Gipuzkoa
Getxo, Azpeitia, Zierbena, Andoain, Altzo.

[Short video of the Sailing Parade of Carmen Virgin in Santurtzi.](#)



CULTURAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Until 27.06.2021

“Cardón Cardinal” video exhibit by Patricia Esquivias
Artium Museum (Vitoria - Gasteiz)

Until 30.06.2021

Lorategitik: Basque Country's Art History
Artium Museum (Vitoria - Gasteiz)

Until 19.09.2021

The Roaring Twenties Exhibit
Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

04.06.2021

A walk through the history of musical theater
Campos Elíseos Theatre

04 - 05.06.2021

“The seven deadly sins” satirical cabaret
Arriaga Theatre

05.06.2021

Tribute to Frozen live show
Campos Elíseos Theatre

06.06.2021

Hollywood, the musical
Campos Elíseos Theatre

10.06.2021

“Erwartung (The Wait)” Opera by Ausrine Stundyte
Arriaga Theatre

16.06.2021

Talk: Neuroscience in the Inter War Period Past and Present “Leaving The conflict behind” with Dr David Eagleman, neuroscientist at Stanford University
Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

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18.06.2021

Sofía Ellar in Concert
BBK Hall (Bilbao)

24.06 - 24.10.2021

Cecilia Bengolea. Animations in Water
Guggenheim Bilbao Museum

28.06 - 03.07.2021

“Bilboko Kalealdia” - Street shows, contemporary dance, circus and puppets
Bilbao

30.06 - 04.04.2021

Getxo Jazz International Festival with The Cuban Jazz Syndicate, Chano Domínguez & Martirio and others
Getxo

03.07.2021

XII Japan Weekend Bilbao
Bilbao Exhibition Centre

15 - 18.07.2021

Vitoria Jazz International Festival
Vitoria - Gasteiz

21 - 25.07.2021

San Sebastian Heineken Jazzaldia
San Sebastián

SPORT ACTIVITY CALENDAR

23.06.2021

San Sebastian Horse Race
San Sebastian

04.07.2021

San Sebastian Horse Race
San Sebastian

16.07.2021

San Sebastian Horse Race
San Sebastian

07 - 14.07.2021

San Fermin Basque Hand Ball Double Tournament
Pamplona

09 - 11.07.2021

The mountain race "Ehunmilak". 168 kms through Gipuzkoan
Mountains
Gipuzkoa

10.07.2021

Basque Rowing Summer League 3rd Race
San Sebastian

17.07.2021

Basque Rowing Race - Orioko XXXI Estropadak
Orio

Nearly every weekend

Basque Rural Circuit of Getxo
Getxo



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