

# *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.







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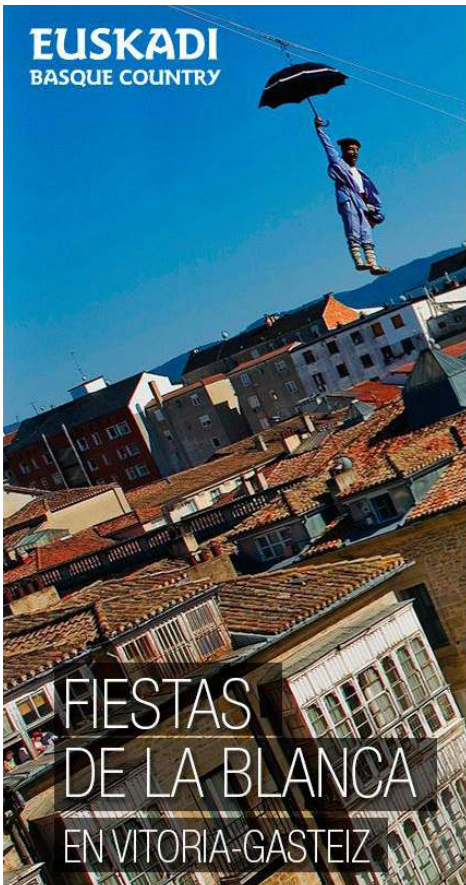
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And the other four capital follow the festive season, starting with the city of Baiona - Bayonne in the French Basque Country, which we can consider a replica of the San Fermin Festivals, with people even wearing in white with red scarfs.



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, Gorliz, 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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