

*Winter in the Basque Country*  
*February - March*



By: BASQVIUM food, culture & luxury experiences

## Winter in the Basque Country BASQVIUM

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.

And although 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 with whose benefits they were given 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 and nuts.

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

### 03.02.2023

San Blas - Religious tradition in Bilbao and agricultural exhibition, traditional products and rural sports in Abadiño  
*Bilbao, Abadiño, Laudio*

### 04-05.02.2023

Eve of St. Agatha - sung procession and pilgrimage to the hermitage of St. Agatha  
*All around the country*

### 04-05.02.2023

Caldereros parade as a prelude to carnivals  
*Donostia - San Sebastián old quarters*

### 05.02.2023

Third performance of Maskaradak  
*Mendikota (French Basque Country)*

### 09-11.02.2023

Umbra Light Festival  
*Vitoria - Gasteiz*

### 11.02.2023

"Uztaberri eguna" Rioja Wine Festival  
*Lapuebla de Labarca*

### 11.02.2023

Fourth performance of Maskaradak  
*Gamere (French Basque Country)*

### Desde 17.02.2023 hasta 25.02.2023

Basque Carnivals, with special mention to Bilbao, San Sebastian, Tolosa, Mundaka and Lekeitio.  
*All around the country*

### 19-21.02.2023

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

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**19.02.2023**

Fifth performance of Maskaradak  
*Ürrüstoi (French Basque Country)*

**24-26.02.2023**

Basquetxok  
*Balmaseda*

**25.02.2023**

Sixth performance of Maskaradak  
*Altzürükü (French Basque Country)*

**04.03.2023**

Seventh performance of Maskaradak  
*Muskildi (French Basque Country)*

**11.03.2023**

Eighth performance of Maskaradak  
*Idauze Mendi (French Basque Country)*

**11.03.2023**

Pilgrimage to the Castle of San Javier called "Javierada". Ancient Navarre tradition of the 19th century  
*Javier (Navarre)*

**17-19.03.2023**

San Jose festivities  
*Deusto, Bakio, Amurrio, Güeñes*

**19.03.2023**

Txakoli Day  
*Bakio*

**19.03.2023**

Oil Fair  
*Rioja Alavesa*

**19.03.2023**

Ninth performance of Maskaradak  
*Zalgize (French Basque Country)*

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[Short video of tMaskaradak](#)

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## CULTURAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

**From September 2022 until June 2023**

Musekintza Festival

*Balmaseda, Muskiz, Bilbao, Gernika, Bermeo y Kortezubi*

**01-04.02.2023**

Tendencias Creativas Bilbao - Fair

*Bilbao Exhibition Centre*

**02-04.02.2023**

Sexberdinak - Theatre

*Tanttaka Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**03.02.2023**

Corta el cable rojo - Humoristic Theatre

*Campos Elíseos Theatre - Bilbao*

**03.02.2023**

Ignatius Farray - Monologue

*Campos Elíseos Theatre - Bilbao*

**04.02.2023**

Despistaos + Merino - Concert

*Kafe Antzokia - Bilbao*

**08.02.2023**

Inauguración de la exposición Joan Miró.

*Guggenheim Museum - Bilbao*

**08.02.2023**

Euskadiko Orkestra Sinfonikoa - Concert

*Euskalduna Palace - Bilbao*

**10.02.2023**

Sara Azurza - Concert

*Imanol Larzabal - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**10.02.2023**

Los santos inocentes - Theatre

*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

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**11.02.2023**

Surfing Euskadi - Exhibition  
*Itsasmuseum - Bilbao*

**14.02.2023**

Historia del Museo y del Convento - Exhibition  
*San Telmo Museum - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**16-19.02.2023**

Iker Galartza + Zuhaitz Gurrutxaga - Theatre  
*Principal Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**17.02.2023**

Eñaut Elorrieta - Concert  
*Victoria Eugenia Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**18.02.2023**

Mellizo Doble - Theatre  
*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**21.02.2023**

Coloma Bertran 4tet - Jazz Concert  
*Jesús Guridi Conservatory - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**22.02.2023**

Euskadiko Orkestra Sinfonikoa - Concert  
*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**23-26.02.2023**

El Guardiaespaldas - Theatre  
*Victoria Eugenia Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**25.02.2023**

Ismael Serrano - Concert  
*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**26.02.2023**

Ordinaren Magia - Euskadiko Orkestra + Txan Magoa - Magic Theatre  
*Federico García Lorca Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

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**From 03.03.2023**

Flamenco and acoustic concert series  
*Sala BBK- Bilbao*

**03.03.2023**

Natalia Lacunza - Concert  
*Victoria Eugenia Theatre- Donostia-San Sebastián*

**04.03.2023**

Fito & Fitipaldis - Concert  
*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**04.03.2023**

Olatz Salvador - Concert  
*Victoria Eugenia Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**05-06.03.2023**

Pantomima Full - Humour  
*Campos Elíseos Theatre - Bilbao*

**07-27.03.2023**

Festival Loraldia  
*Bilbao*

**12-13.03.2023**

Nunca he estado en Dublín - Theatre  
*Principal Theatre - Donostia-San Sebastián*

**14.03.2023**

Jorge Loza - Monologue  
*Lakua Civic Center - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**16.03.2023**

Orquesta Sinfónica de Euskadi - Concert  
*Principal Theatre - Vitoria Gasteiz*

**18.03.2023**

Gatibu - Concert  
*Bilbao Arena - Bilbao*

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## SPORT ACTIVITY PROGRAM

**03.02.2023**

Athletic Club Bilbao - Cádiz CF  
*San Mames - Bilbao*

**03.02.2023**

Saski Baskonia - Panathinaikos  
*Buesa Arena - Vitoria-Gasteiz*

**04.02.2023**

Alavés - SD Eibar  
*Mendizorrotza - Vitoria - Gasteiz*

**05.02.2023**

Saski Baskonia - Casademont Zaragoza  
*Buesa Arena - Vitoria-Gasteiz*

**05.02.2023**

Real Sociedad - Real Valladolid  
*Reale Arena - San Sebastian*

**11.02.2023**

Bilbao Basket - Coviran Granada  
*Bilbao Arena - Bilbao*

**18.02.2023**

Real Sociedad - RC Celta  
*Reale Arena - San Sebastian*

**19.02.2023**

Alavés - UD Ibiza  
*Mendizorrotza - Vitoria - Gasteiz*

**26.02.2023**

Alavés - FC Cartagena  
*Mendizorrotza - Vitoria - Gasteiz*

**26.02.2023**

Athletic Club Bilbao - Girona FC  
*San Mames - Bilbao*

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**01.03.2023**

Osasuna - Athletic Club  
*El Sadar - Iruña*

**05.03.2023**

Saski Baskonia - Coviran Granada  
*Buesa Arena - Vitoria-Gasteiz*

**05.03.2023**

Real Sociedad - Cádiz CF  
*Reale Arena - San Sebastian*

**10.03.2023**

Saski Baskonia - AS Monaco  
*Buesa Arena - Vitoria-Gasteiz*

**12.03.2023**

Alavés - CD Lugo  
*Mendizorrotza - Vitoria - Gasteiz*

**12.03.2023**

Athletic Club Bilbao - FC Barcelona  
*San Mames - Bilbao*

**19.03.2023**

Bilbao Basket - Bàsquet Girona  
*Bilbao Arena - Bilbao*

**19.03.2023**

Real Sociedad - Elche CF  
*Reale Arena - San Sebastian*

**Casi todos los fines de semana**

Deporte Rural Vasco  
*Diferentes localizaciones*





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