

Autumn in the Basque Country

september - october



By: BASQVIUM food, culture & luxury experiences

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Euskal Herria, The Land of the Basques in the local language, is a fascinating destination which comprises a relatively small piece of land and 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 also fuelled the debate on whether the Basques can boast the oldest European culture.

Anytime is a good time to visit The Land of the Basques, especially in Autumn, when temperatures are still mild and our forest exhibits an incredible palette of colours, together with multiple food markets and cultural activities along the country, it is the right season to experience and enjoy the destination calmly.

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Autumn begins with one of the most relevant and international events of the year – this year marks the 74th edition of [San Sebastian International Film Festival](#). Together with Cannes, Venice and Berlin, form the club of most important Film Festivals in Europe. This is the perfect occasion to meet famous Hollywood and European film stars and to watch more than 200 films along the city.



In the Guggenheim Museum, during the whole year you can find a special program of exhibitions and numerous cultural activities, main celebrations occur during the month of October, like the official anniversary gala and diverse events of light, colour and music indoors and outdoors.

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Related to Haute Cuisine, from October 5 to 7, the **“Gastronomika”** Congress will turn the city of San Sebastian into the Gourmet Capital hosting the best of Basque, Spanish and world cuisine. One of the most important gastronomic events in the world and this year's special edition commemorating 50 years of the New Basque Cuisine.



Music is very present with the return of the Opera season, Symphonic Orchestra's concerts or some international music events such as the [BIME BILBAO 2026 \(27 - 30 october\)](#) or the [Sopela Kosta Fest \(18 - 20 september\)](#).



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On the other hand, after the main festive summer season, in Autumn, we can still find some important festivities, like Saint Fausto Festivals in the villages of Basauri and Durango, Saint Severino in Balmaseda or Saint Michael and Saint Pilar's spread out in different villages.

And it's worth mentioning "Maritxu Kajoi" day in the village of Arrasate, where every first Friday of October its inhabitants dress in black smart suits and dresses to honour the miracle of Maritxu Virgin, when in a crowded town square, from the source from which water always flowed, litres and litres of wine began to sprout!

With these last festivities of October, the main season that started in April turns to the end.

Related to Gastronomy, Autumn is a very remarkable season from the Haute Cuisine to traditional food markets in addition to being Wine Harvest time in Rioja and Txakoli white wine areas.

At the same time, Autumn is the main season for **Street Food Markets**, full of all the seasonal vegetables and fruits, highlighting the one called Urriko Azken Astelehena celebrating in the historical village of Gernika on the last Monday of October.

In the orchards the different varieties of beans are collected, together with aubergines, pumpkins, leeks, carrots, lettuce, onions, squash and all kinds of cabbage (cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, etc).

But if there is a top product that nature gives us these days, these are mushrooms, fungi and truffles, found in multiple varieties all along our mountains.

The right time to taste these delicatessens is now.

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Fruits such as grapes, apples, pomegranate and some others like blackberries, blueberries and redcurrants come in Autumn, last ones used mainly to make jams. Also, the best moment of the year to enjoy tasting all kinds of nuts such as walnuts or chestnuts.

And undoubtedly among fruits, the main protagonist is the grape. Between September and October, the most important time of the year reaches the Vineyard areas of Rioja and Txakoli, with the **Wine Harvest**.



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It is a process that can last between 30 and 40 days, which means that the collection can arrive well in November. Although this year the wine harvest is coming earlier than ever due to warm temperatures.

The process is still done in the traditional way in many of the Vineyards, in which the collected fruit are deposited in wicker baskets that usually have a capacity between 15 and 20 kilos.

Once collected the grape is taken directly to the wineries to begin the process of making red, white and rose wines, following the characteristics of each of them.

Around this season many Festivals are held in all the villages to celebrate the beginning of the harvest, with the first symbolic stepping of the grapes.



And many activities organized by the Wineries, in which visitors can take part in some tasks, such as the winemaking process.

Harvest time is an exceptional moment to learn about the way of life that identifies the people of La Rioja.

A way of knowing their customs and history that have been maintained throughout the years, reaching to the present day being a reference product not only in the Basque Country and Spain, but worldwide.

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It is also the time for harvesting apples which are very appreciated, preserved to produce the local Cider – Euskal Sagardoa, that could be tasted with the beginning of the new year.

It is worth mentioning the protection of this product in the Gipuzkoa jurisdiction, which already in the 11th century, prohibited the introduction of foreign cider, until the local one was consumed. The laws have defended the apple tree, the apple orchard and the cider trade for centuries. Considering apple orchards as a collective wealth in all Basque municipalities.

Last year 3,2 million litres were produced in the Basque Country and this year it seems that the production will decrease but the quality is going to be excellent.

Today there are 100 cider makers in the Basque Country that offer the chance to eat at the cider house and a chance to try the “txotx” experience, which consists of tasting cider from different barrels with a traditional cider menu. In the cider houses, the season starts in January and ends in mid-May, but some cider houses nowadays open all year round.

As far as fish are concerned, Mackerel, Mullet, Conger, Sardines, Gilthead and Octopus, among others, live their best season in Autumn.

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Related to the traditional Basque Sports, this is the time for the Jai Alai World Tour Final Series. Considered as the fastest ball game in the world, it is a real spectacle to see a game alive! And in October the 4,5 Hand Ball Championship starts with the classification round.

The season of the best football is still on, and you can enjoy them in the 3 stadiums: San Mames "*The Cathedral*" in Bilbao, famous for its electric atmosphere, Reale Arena in San Sebastián, home of Real Sociedad, located in Gipuzkoa, and, Mendizorroza in Vitoria- Gasteiz, home to Alavés, and the major basketball league also starts in september in Bilbao and Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Related to the roots of the Basque culture, autumn comes with one of the main cultural expressions - Bertsolartiza (Basque poetry), the art of improvising sung verses in the Basque language without any music. To find the absolute best improviser, there is a massive national tournament called the *Great Bertsolari Championship*.



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During the first part and almost the whole season, the weather is still good enough to enjoy our mountain range and forest dyed in the beautiful colours of Autumn. That's why still some mountain trekking and mountain bike competitions are held at this time of the year.

As you can see, Autumn is full of traditions and a perfect time to enjoy The Land of the Basques, far from the tourist peak season and a perfect time also to enjoy our seasonal dishes!



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TRADITIONS AND FESTIVITIES CALENDAR

25.09 - 03.10.2026

San Miguel Patron Saint Festival - Iurreta, Arrasate, Bergara, Eibar, and Lazkao

26.09.2026

Artzai eguna (Shepard's day)- Atxondo

27.09.2026

Sagar Uzta (Apple Harvest Festival & Cider Pressing) - Astigarraga

During October

Activities related to the grape harvest or the winemaking process
Different wineries in the Rioja and Txakoli areas.

02.10.2026

Maritxu Kajoi festivity
Arrasate

03.10.2026

BIONEKARABA. Organic products fair - Vitoria - Gasteiz

Fête du Gâteau Basque (Basque Cake Festival) - Camboles-Bains

Kantauri Fest - Zierbena port

Fêtes d'Isturits (Traditional local village festivities) - Isturits

05.10.2026

First Monday of October Fair (the historic agricultural and livestock market) - Gernika Lumo

07.10.2026

Festivities of the Virgin of Rosario - Oñati, Itsasondo and Gainza

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09-18.10.2026

San Fausto Festivals (one of the most crowded autumn festivities.)
- Basauri and Durango

11-10.10.2026

Pastore Lore - Ascain

Basque Country Shepherd's Cheese Championship) - Idiazabal

Day of the Virgin Begoña - Bilbao

18.10.2026

Apple Day. Exhibition and sale *Arrasate* - *Mondragón*

Nafarroa oinez (annual festival celebrating and supporting Basque-language)- Pamplona

33rd Valdegovía Potato Fair - Valdegovía

23.10.2026

San Severino Festivals and its iconic bean stew contest -
Balmaseda

25.10.2026

Ardiki Eguna (Aralar Shepherd Cheese and Mondeju Contest) -
Zaldibia

Piment d'Espelette Festival- Espelette

Belauntza Fair - Belauntza

26.10.2026

Last Monday of October Market), the major agricultural, craft, and gastronomic fair - Gernika-Lumo

28.10.2026

Mycology Fair - Zarautz

31.10.2026

Tolosa Goxua - Sale of cakes and other sweets -Tolosa

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Every Weekend

Livestock and local products fair (Different places)

Flower market every sunday in Bilbao



[Short video of the gastronomic market of the last Monday of October in Gernika.](#)

CULTURAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

18 - 26.09.2026

Zinemaldia 2025 - [Festival de San Sebastián.](#) One of the most important Film Festivals in the world
San Sebastian

18 - 20.09.2026

Sopela Kosta Fest - Festival of music, culture and sports competitions
Sopela

02.10.2026

Dani Martin concert - BEC Barakaldo

Ramoncín concert at Sala Jimmy Jazz - Vitoria-Gasteiz

Latin American Film and Culture Festival - Festival Biarritz
Amérique Latine - Biarritz

05-07.10.2026

San Sebastian Gastronomika (International haute cuisine summit commemorating the 50th anniversary of Basque New Cuisine)- San Sebastián

09.10.2026

Europe band concert - Bilbao Arena Miribilla

11.10.2026

Teenage Fanclub concert at Kafe Antzokia - Bilbao

17.10.2026

Melendi concert - BEC, Barakaldo

Sergio Dalma concert - Buesa Arena , Vitoria-Gasteiz

22 - 31.10.2026

SANTURZINE (Santurtzi International Short Film Festival) - Santurtzi

27-30.10.2026

BIME Bilbao the major international music industry, innovation, and live showcase gathering at the Euskalduna Palace and venues across Bilbao

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21.09-31.10.2026

Temporary exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, and the San Telmo Museum in San Sebastián

Every sunday Bertsolaritza Championship at different places around Basque Country (until december 20)

SPORT ACTIVITY CALENDAR

27.09.2026

Gorbeia Suzien Skyrace - Zeanuri

02.10.2026

Saski Baskonia vs. Olimpia Milano
(Euroleague, Vitoria-Gasteiz)

03.10.2026

San Sebastián Rural Kutxa Half Marathon - San
Sebastián

04.10.2026

Athletic Club vs. RCD Mallorca LaLiga- Bilbao

Deportivo Alavés vs. Elche CF LaLiga - Vitoria-Gasteiz

Real Sociedad vs. Rayo Vallecano LaLiga - San Sebastián

Saski Baskonia vs. Bàsquet Girona Liga ACB - Vitoria-
Gasteiz

Zumaia Flysch Trail - Zumaia

09.10.2026

Saski Baskonia vs. Beşiktaş - Euroleague - Vitoria-Gasteiz

11.10.2026

Saski Baskonia vs. Joventut Badalona Liga ACB - Vitoria-
Gasteiz

10 km Swimming Crossing - San Sebastián

13.10.2026

Saski Baskonia vs. Dubai Basketball Euroleague - Vitoria-Gasteiz

17.10.2026

Bilbao Night Marathon - Bilbao

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21.10.2026

Athletic Club vs. Qarabağ FK UEFA Champions League - Bilbao

25.10.2026

Athletic Club vs. Getafe CF LaLiga - Bilbao

Real Sociedad vs. Sevilla FC LaLiga - San Sebastián

27.10.2026

Saski Baskonia vs. Real Madrid Baloncesto Euroleague - Vitoria-Gasteiz

Basque Pelota and Jai Alai

Weekends of September and October 2026 :Key playoff and classification matches of the Four and Half Championship (Eskupilota) in major frontons across the Basque Country.

Nearly every weekend

Professional Jai Alai (cesta punta) matches in Biscayan and Guipuzcoan frontons, alongside recurring exhibitions of Herri Kirolak (Basque rural sports)



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