

Donostia
San Sebastián

TRAVEL LOG



TAMBIÉN YO, COMO DONOSTIARRA, QUIERO HACER UN HOMENAJE A DONOSTI, ESTE HOMENAJE SERÁ EL PEINE DEL VIENTO, QUE PEINARÁ EL NOROESTE ANTES DE ENTRAR EN NUESTRA CIUDAD. ESTE PROYECTO INCLUYE EL ARREGLO DEL FINAL DEL PASEO DEL TENIS, LO HARIAMOS EL ARQUITECTO PEÑA GANCHEGUI Y YO. NUESTRO DESEO ES EL DE CREAR UN LUGAR DE CONTEMPLACIÓN DE LA MAR; ESPERO QUE JE NOS PERMITA REALIZARLO.

I too, as a Donostiarra, want to pay homage to Donosti. this homage will be the Wind Comb, which will comb the north-west before it enters our city. this project includes work on the final part of the Tennis Club promenade; the architect Peña Ganchegui and myself would do it. our wish is to create a place to contemplate the sea; i hope we will be allowed to do it.

Speech given on
the occasion of the homage to the sculptor
in San Sebastián. Circa 1968
Eduardo Chillida Archive

Foreword

GURERA
A new way of understanding tourism in Donostia*.

Donostia is a city open to the world that seeks balanced growth while preserving its essence and fostering coexistence between residents and visitors.

Gurera promotes a new way of understanding tourism: more sustainable, closer and more inclusive, creating a more authentic connection between the city and its visitors.



***Donostia**, the Basque name of the city, used by its residents

AN OPEN AND WELCOMING CITY FOR SUSTAINABLE, RESPECTFUL AND QUALITY TOURISM

Donostia / San Sebastián is a city that invites you to stroll through its streets, to discover natural spaces, to enter its museums, its bars... The men and women of Donostia are friendly people. We love our city and invite you to visit it, to enjoy and get to know it, its corners, its culture and its traditions, sustainably and respectfully.

We like tourists who respect the way we do things, who keep the streets, parks and beaches clean, who show consideration towards our local shops and activity. That's why we propose an array of sustainable activities and options for our visitors.

Did you know...?

- 20.3% of Donostia / San Sebastián's urban areas are green spaces.
- We have 21m^2 of green space per inhabitant (double the average value recommended by the WHO).
- We have 25 beautiful parks and more than 250,000 trees.
- You can enjoy 80 km of bike lanes.
- It takes around 15-20 minutes to walk between the main parts of the city, all on the flat.
- In San Sebastián, the quality of the tap water, the bathing water and the air are excellent.

More INFO

A sustainable green destination

DONOSTIA / SAN SEBASTIÁN, A THEATRE FOR THE 5 SENSES

Act 1: THE CITY

Act 2: THE CAST

Act 3: THE MOTIVES

Act 4: THE ENDING





Act 1

The City

Open to the sea and surrounded by mountains, San Sebastián captures the attention for its landscape, its cultural life and its traditions.

Donostia/San Sebastián is a city concentrated into little more than 60 km^2, where its 186,000 inhabitants take full advantage of the opportunities offered by its landscape and its culture. Opportunities also taken advantage of by those it welcomes throughout the year and which make a small city like Donostia a lively place with infrastructures and a cultural activity on a par with those of the big cities.

Not just a great place to live in, but also to come and enjoy the landscape, gastronomy, culture, nature, peace and quiet, tendencies...

Because San Sebastián is much more than just La Concha and the Film Festival, the most first and foremost examples of what the city has to offer. It is also its beaches, its restaurants, the sports practiced by its locals, its festivals, its streets and its character.

This is a city with an unbeatable panoply of foodie options. Not only for being the second city with most Michelin stars per m^2 in the world, but also for its immense variety of bars, restaurants, societies and markets. Innovative restaurants contast with private locales with decades of tradition and long-established pintxo bars.

In Donostia you can do all sorts of sports, a situation favoured by its privileged geographic location and its endless natural resources. The city is perfect for walking or running along its seaside promenades, doing water sports (surfing, canoeing, yachting, swimming...) and outdoor activities including hillwalking, biking and rock climbing in the surrounding hills and mountains.



You can also watch or participate in more traditional sports, such as Basque pelota or rowing.

This city, which was born as a fishing village, developed until becoming a commercial hub and military stronghold against Napoleon's troops. It was destroyed in 1813 by English and Portuguese armies and, years later, was reborn as a city offering services and tourism thanks to the members of the royal court who chose San Sebastián as their holiday destination. Queen María Cristina designated the Miramar Palace as her summer home in 1893.

Its majestic buildings and eclectic nature, reflecting the tastes of the royalty and bourgeoisie of the day, lend the city a stately air and an elegance that has kept abreast with the different times.

Few cities witness as many festivals as San Sebastián does every year. Jazz, literature, cinema (of all kinds), gastronomy... all forms of art and culture have their place in the city's festivals, in its museums and its calendar of events.

For all these reasons, and for so many more just waiting for the visitor to discover them, it's obvious that Donostia is a city well worth getting to know.

Travel advice and tips

Maps and brochures

More INFO

Maps/Guides

The Landscape



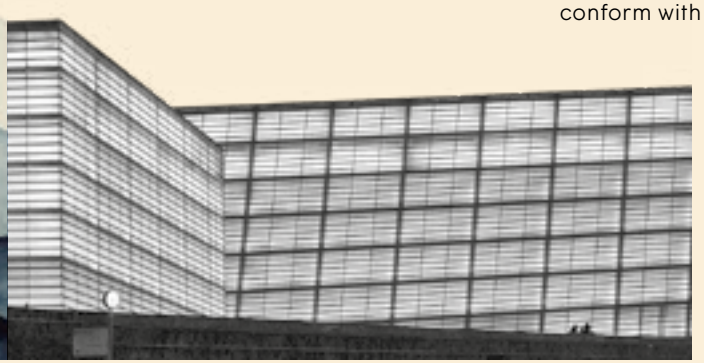
Few are those who would dare to question San Sebastián's idyllic landscape: the green of its surrounding mountains, the turquoise of the Urumea river's more shallow areas, the intense indigo of its bay. Its orderly layout, with the exception of an old town where you can lose yourself for hours amidst the churches and little streets leading out onto a port as ancient as the city itself, where the waves break with inordinate strength, particularly on days of stormy seas. The same sea that batters into the walls of the Paseo Nuevo promenade every year turns the Concha into a lake with southerly winds. The bridges of different styles which connect the neighbourhoods of a city divided by a river that rises with every tide. Gros, Egia, Amara, the Centre. Each area has its own personality and life, carpeting the sides of the surrounding hills and valleys the further they are from the centre, blending in with the landscape.

More INFO

Photographs and videos

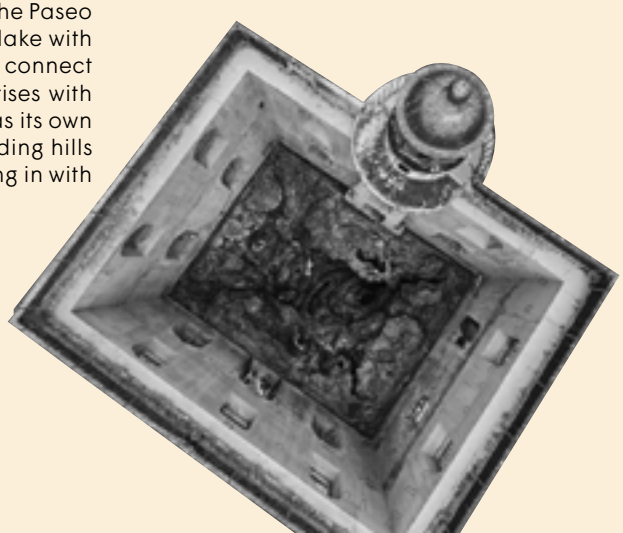
The Architecture

The buildings, the layout of its streets, its parks and avenues... lend San Sebastián a special elegance, legacy of the royal and middle-class tourists of the 19th century. Particularly important in Donostia are the architectural styles and the appearance of every building. Whether we're talking about Belle Époque, rationalist or contemporary architecture, the details of the city design have been taken great care of for centuries and can still be found in the new constructions, thus ensuring that they conform with the neighbourhood in which they stand.



The Sculptures

The works of some of the most important contemporary sculptors can be found in strategic parts of the city, making for an almost magical air. Directly on the seafront is Chillida's *Peine del Viento*, or Wind Comb, standing in the far north-west corner of Ondarreta Beach; on the Paseo Nuevo promenade, beside the port, is *Construcción Vacía*, by Jorge Oteiza; and, on the opposite side, at the farthest end of the three beaches, at the foot of Mount Ulia, is the Dove of Peace, by Nestor Basterretxea. The latest sculpture introduced to the city is the work of acclaimed artist Cristina Iglesias: Hondalea. An ode to the defence of ecological causes and conservation of the environment in the shape of the reconstruction of Basque geology occupying the entire lighthouse building on Santa Clara Island.



More INFO

Discovering the architecture

The Districts

Igeldo

An ancient funicular railway dating back to 1912 and the city's best panoramic views.



Antiguo

Real neighbourhood life in Donostia's earliest settlement.



Aiete

Strolling around its parks and mansions makes you feel as if you belonged to 19th century royalty.



Miramón

Can an untamed forest exist here in the city? Indeed it can, right here.



Old Town

Narrow paved streets and buildings packed with history alongside a never-ending string of traditional bars and restaurants.



Gros

The in district for surfers and the bars currently in vogue.





Egia

Hub of the city's cultural, artistic and alternative life.



Centre

The best shops, whether you're looking for exclusive artisan products or the leading international brands.







Amara

The perfect spot for football aficionados, home to the temple of the local team: Reale Arena.



Riberas

Make your way upstream along the Urumea river, running, strolling or by bike, while observing the different architectural styles of the six bridges spanning it.

More INFO

District by district

The top 10

San Sebastián is an authentic city where visitors mingle with the locals while enjoying the same places. Its beaches, its bars, its hills, every corner has its history and a thousand ways of enjoying it.

1_An hour-long stroll along the waterfront
You can visit the city from end to end while appreciating the urban landscape, the beach, nature, and some of the best works by Basque sculptors like Chillida, Oteiza and Basterretxea.





2_Belle Époque Architecture
San Sebastián is an architectural work of art that tells the city's story. Particularly worthy of note are the Belle Époque constructions rubbing shoulders with classic constructions and avant-garde buildings.

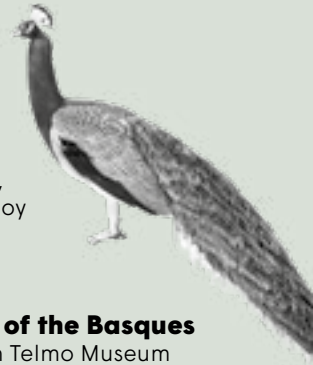
3_Its 4 beaches
The unparalleled beauty of La Concha and its railings are the city's symbol. However, its other beaches will surprise you too, from the surfers' favourite (the Zurriola), to the one most popular with families (Ondarreta), not to forget the little beach on Santa Clara Island, home of the artistic installation by Cristina Iglesias, Hondalea. All hobbies and water sports have their place on the city's beaches.





4_The real San Sebastián, its districts
The Old Town is where it all happens; concentrated in only a very few metres are a Gothic church, a Baroque basilica, a convent transformed into a museum and a myriad of pintxo bars and societies... But if it's a close look at local life you're after, don't miss the chance to discover other districts like Gros, Egia, Antiguo, Aiete-Miramón, Amara and Antiguo-Igeldo.

5_Nature, parks and gardens
Donostia blends in perfectly with the nature surrounding it. The district of Ategorrieta carpets the sides of Mount Ulia, the Old Town extends to Mount Urgull and Mount Igeldo has its own neighbourhood, going by the same name. A city set deep in nature, whose most urban area is home to parks and woods in which to enjoy the greenery and water without leaving the city: the Cristina Enea and Aiete parks...





6_A voyage to the country of the Basques
Delve into Basque culture at San Telmo Museum and discover the secrets of Euskera, Europe's oldest language. All housed in a former Dominican convent extended with an avant-garde building enjoying international renown.

7_Set sail for the port
Donostia's history is that of a city born and developed around its port. A port that has provided shelter for generations of whale hunters and fishermen. All of these stories can be found in the Maritime Museum and the Aquarium, both of which are situated right there in the port.





8_San Sebastián's best viewpoints
Climb any of the three hills – Igeldo, Urgull or Ulia – embracing San Sebastián to admire the beauty of the Basque coast in its full splendour.

9_Pintxos
The most widespread and beloved of all gastronomic habits in Donostia is "going for pintxos". It is the expression of tradition and innovation visible in the magnificent spreads displayed by restaurants and bars in all districts of the city.



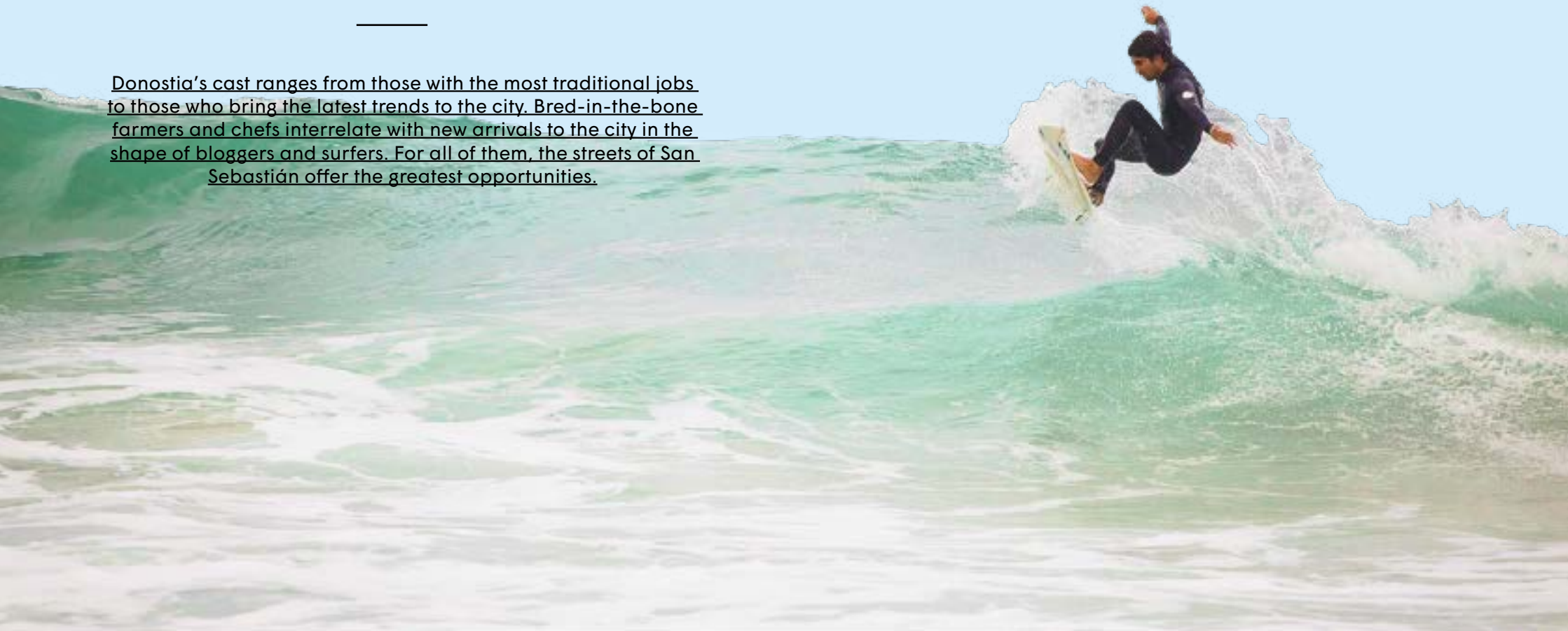


10_Made in San Sebastián
None of your copy and paste merchandising. In Donostia, the best souvenir is a bottle of Txakoli wine, a fine Idiazabal cheese, a surfboard made in Donostia, an item of local art... or an exclusive garment from one of the local fashion boutiques.

Act 2

The cast: the people of San Sebastián, or donostiarras

Donostia's cast ranges from those with the most traditional jobs to those who bring the latest trends to the city. Bred-in-the-bone farmers and chefs interrelate with new arrivals to the city in the shape of bloggers and surfers. For all of them, the streets of San Sebastián offer the greatest opportunities.



Itziar Ayestaran

Surfer

"The Zurriola is an urban beach in the city centre, very well connected and with waves for all levels."



I started surfing 7 years ago. I remember that, when I was younger, the local girls didn't surf here – either for fun or professionally – meaning that there were no references. I took the plunge at the age of 40 and I loved it straight away.

Living and working here, across from the Zurriola, the surf beach par excellence, you can get into the water whenever you want. When I have a break between shifts, I grab my board and head for the beach. Those 30 minutes make me feel alive. You relax, let off steam and have fun surfing with others. For the time you're in the water, it's just you with your board and the waves, but out of it... on the sand, there's an extensive, close-knit community.

Gros has lots of schools very near the beach offering travel packages, accommodation, classes and leisure activities. And in fact it comes as no surprise: the Zurriola is an urban beach in the city centre, very well connected and with waves for all levels.

Tomas Imaz

Baserritarra*

"Thanks to the gastronomy in this city we are able to work with different very highly acclaimed restaurants as our customers, who make the most of our seasonal produce to create their mouth-watering menus."



Working the land has a magical feel to it. It involves a great deal of sacrifice and hard work, but the rewards are endless. Being part of the human food chain is very important and that's why we put all our love and affection into everything we do. From sowing time until selling our wares at the markets.

Our farmhouse and fields are in Zubieta, a village on the outskirts of San Sebastián. And on the other hand, we have two sales outlets for our produce: at the San Martín and Gros markets.

Thanks to the gastronomy in this city we are able to work with different very highly acclaimed restaurants as our customers, who make the most of our seasonal produce to create their mouth-watering menus.

*A person who lives and works in a traditional Basque farmhouse.

Borja Argüelles

Chef

"I am lucky to have been born in a city where gastronomy is part of our culture."

I am lucky to have been born in a city where gastronomy is part of our culture; I started out in a traditional family-run restaurant where I learned about values and respect for gastronomy.

We have all types of eateries in all possible categories right here in the city. On the one hand, we have traditional cuisine, strongly rooted in gastronomic societies, cider houses...

And on the other those where you can eat pintxos and tapas or have a tipple, known locally as *chiquiteo*. Normal bars, where people go every day. This is partly what I do: I work in a small restaurant with a proposal somewhat different to the classic tapas bar: we don't have a stove, everything is cured, cooked at low temperature or salted.

And lastly, avant-garde cuisine, being one of the places in the world with most Michelin stars per inhabitant, where some of the great figures of world gastronomy preside over the kitchens: Juan Mari Arzak, Pedro Subijana...



Iosune Andonegui

Architect

"I think the way we do things in Donostia, and throughout the Basque Country, is inspirational: the love of doing things well, the dedication, the precision, the perfectionism..."

The combination of traditional materials and classic methods results in buildings that evolve with time.

I think the way we do things in Donostia, and throughout the Basque Country, is inspirational: the love of doing things well, the dedication, the precision, the perfectionism... although food is highly present and is what this culture is best known for, you can see it in all disciplines and of course, in architecture too.

The Basque Country is known for its landscape of many contrasts. Enormous mountains, treacherous cliffs... The architecture of the Basque Country is highly sensitive to that nature: these are discreet interventions, which have no intention of stealing the limelight from the surroundings. But which enable us to enjoy them: an open or enclosed balcony, a picture window... features to guarantee that you enjoy the sight.



Aran García-Lekue

Scientist/researcher



"I have seen how, over these years, the city has become a city of science, an international reference and centre of attraction for researchers from all over the world."

I'm a physicist and researcher in nanoscience at the Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC). After working in England and the USA, I came to Donostia more than 10 years ago, attracted by the scientific and research opportunities offered to me locally... I have seen how, over these years, the city has become a city of science, an international reference and centre of attraction for researchers from all over the world. Today there are more than 5,000 of us dedicated to research in Donostia, all from different countries, and every year we receive hundreds of visitors at our centres.

The innovative science carried out here is undoubtedly what attracts researchers; however, Donostia also offers endless possibilities for enjoying life outside the laboratory and the office. A city in which you can walk or bike anywhere, full of foodie and cultural offers, with the beach right on your doorstep.

I'm delighted to have chosen Donostia, or that the city has chosen me... I work with leading researchers, in a scientifically motivating environment, and whenever I can I end my day in the sea. It goes without saying that Donostia offers a perfect combination of life and science.

Fernando Ibarreta

A benchmark in the world of sport

"Swimming in the Concha is very popular among the locals of Donostia. There are several groups of elderly people who never fail: they meet every day at 12 for their midday swim (no matter what the weather)."

Swimming in the Concha is very typical among the locals of Donostia. There are people who swim in the bay every day, either first thing in the morning or in the late afternoon, when the sun goes down.

Here, in the club facilities, we have swimmers every day, as well as people who come to do other water sports. There are several groups of elderly people who never fail: they meet every day at 12 for their midday swim (no matter what the weather). They then have a shower, get themselves ready and head off for a snack.

Swimming in La Concha in winter is marvellous, when you're all alone and you can enjoy the water in peace. Plus, the fact that there's hardly anyone swimming means that the water is much cleaner than usual. But you have to be prepared: a swim in water with a temperature of around 12 degrees, usually as low as it gets in the coldest months, can be bad for you: you have to take it gradually.

Those who swim every day say that once you're used to it, you'll find that after 12 or 13 minutes your body no longer feels the cold... and that when you come out, even if it is chilly, the sensation is very pleasant.



Act 3

The Motives

There are as many reasons for living in San Sebastián as there are days in the year. The motivation to participate in leisure and everyday life is to be found in everything Donostia has to offer.



For its ancient language and history

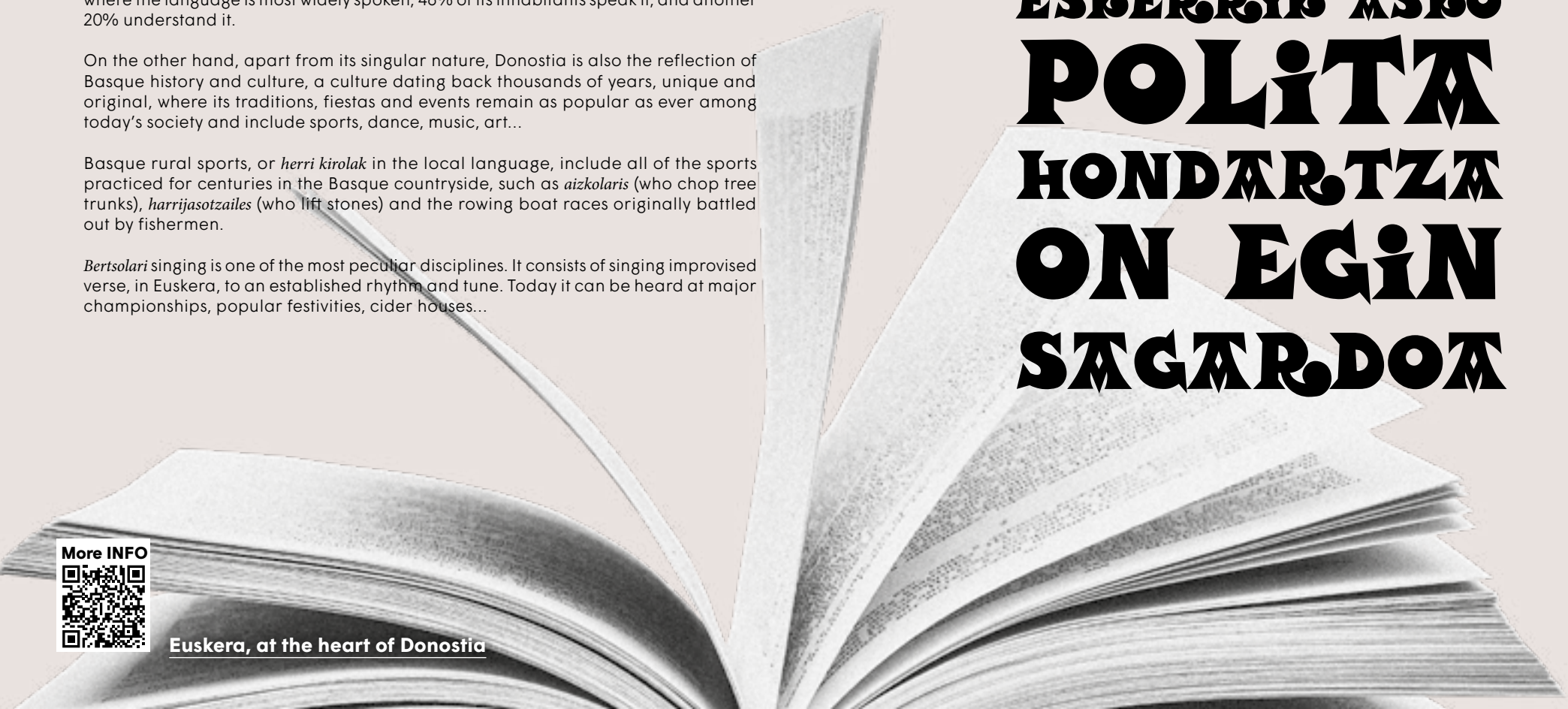
Even today its origin is unknown, it is Europe's oldest language and, according to the linguists, it is genetically self-standing, in other words, it has no relationship with any other known language. We're talking about Euskera. The language of the Basque Country, which is spoken on both sides of the Pyrenees and which coexists with French and Spanish in the Basque territory. Today there are around a million Basque speakers and Donostia is the Basque capital where the language is most widely spoken; 46% of its inhabitants speak it, and another 20% understand it.

On the other hand, apart from its singular nature, Donostia is also the reflection of Basque history and culture, a culture dating back thousands of years, unique and original, where its traditions, fiestas and events remain as popular as ever among today's society and include sports, dance, music, art...

Basque rural sports, or *herri kirolak* in the local language, include all of the sports practiced for centuries in the Basque countryside, such as *aizkolaris* (who chop tree trunks), *harrijasotzailes* (who lift stones) and the rowing boat races originally battled out by fishermen.

Bertsolari singing is one of the most peculiar disciplines. It consists of singing improvised verse, in Euskera, to an established rhythm and tune. Today it can be heard at major championships, popular festivities, cider houses...

KAIXO AGUR ESKERRIK ASKO POLITA HONDARTZA ON EGIN SAGARDOA



More INFO

Euskera, at the heart of Donostia



For its cultural activity

Cinema, music and the performing arts choose San Sebastián as the stage for revealing their new features and trends. The city dons its festive garb, with more than 10 festivals a year. Among many others are the Jazzaldia (the International Jazz Festival), at which the big names in the field of international music, such as Liza Minnelli, Bobby McFerrin and B.B. King have performed since 1996 on many of the stages to be found in some of the most unusual corners of the city to delight the audience.

And the festival par excellence: San Sebastián International Film Festival, whose red carpets have welcomed no more and no less than Alfred Hitchcock, Audrey Hepburn and Francis Ford Coppola, to mention but three of the festival's most iconic visitors.

More INFO



For its exceptional gastronomy

Donostia is a meeting place for foodie lovers. Every year, as they have done for decades, experts in gastronomy, all kinds of chefs, foodies and lovers of fine dining make the pilgrimage to San Sebastián to tuck into menus by some of the world's greatest and most important chefs in the history of European gastronomy; to wolf down a meal of pintxos in the countless bars to be found in all neighbourhoods, to take advantage of the high concentration of Michelin-starred restaurants, to enjoy an authentic experience at one of the *sagardotegis** or *txakolindegis*** in and around the city, or to snap up the best fresh produce at its different markets.

There are also people who come to study at our schools, among which are particularly the Basque Culinary Centre, recognised across the globe as one of the most innovative centres of gastronomy education.

This passion for good food, while today more alive and kicking than ever, goes back a long way. Gastronomic societies, so typical of the Basque Country, are literally just that, places where entire groups of friends would (and still do) gather to cook and eat together.

* Place to taste **cider**, a beverage made for centuries from fermented apple juice according to traditional methods. From mid-January until the end of April the favourite Basque ritual is the *txotx* season.

** Place to taste **txakoli**, a fresh and sophisticated white wine made in the Basque Country and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in some areas of Cantabria and Burgos. This is a wine which has been linked for centuries to the culture of the Basque people.

More INFO

Gastronomy in San Sebastián

For its love of sport

In the water, on land or in the air. Donostia / San Sebastián is a city that lives and breathes sports of all kinds, home to myriad professional and amateur sports meets. For runners: the banks of the Urumea and the seafront promenades are ideal spots. The city hosts numerous sporting events, starting with one of those most loved by the people of Donostia: the Behobia-San Sebastián race.

For water-lovers, the Cantabrian sea and the Urumea and Oria rivers offer everything you could wish for: you can surf on one of the sport's iconic beaches: the Zurriola; or make your way on a canoe, rowing boat or stand-up paddle board to Santa Clara Island; kayak or SUP down the Urumea or Oria rivers...

The roads and hills around San Sebastián are perfect for cyclists to pedal along the coast, on leafy mountains, green ways, or for climbing some of the iconic passes on the "Clásica San Sebastián" route.

And let's not forget sports to do as a group or in pairs, largely represented by the numerous pelota courts to be found throughout the city, where amateur and professional pelota tournaments and matches are still played regularly.

More INFO

For being the perfect setting for conferences

Donostia/San Sebastián offers excellent conference venues: from a convent housed in a historical-artistic monument, a royal palace surrounded by gardens looking out over La Concha Bay, or a seafront Congress Centre.

San Sebastián is one of the world's 200 leading cities of science and the 4th in Spain, according to the Nature magazine. Well above our country's national average, in Donostia 22 out of every 1,000 inhabitants are dedicated to research, compared to the national average of 4.6 per 1,000. The city also has state-of-the-art science, technology and medical centres earning it a strong international position, and a talent, knowledge and innovation ecosystem which now has enormous drawing power for the holding of major congresses.

Since 1988, a team of professionals has been working to promote San Sebastián as a hub for meetings, together with a network of local businesses specialising in the MICE sector (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions).



More INFO

Convention Bureau

For being premium

Queen Isabella II was one of San Sebastián's first tourists, and certainly the person who put the city on the map as a fashionable destination. In 1845, she chose La Concha Beach as her favourite summer getaway and years later Queen María Cristina established the summer residence of the Court in Miramar Palace. Donostia is a city overflowing with elegance, a premium destination for more than a century and which, still today, offers a unique experience for our most demanding guests. Those strolling through the streets of San Sebastián can breathe the peace and authenticity of a destination committed to sustainability.

San Sebastián awakens all your senses and offers options ranging from luxury hotels where previous guests have included historical figures and numerous Hollywood stars during the International Film Festival, to restaurants with the world's most recognised chefs, not to mention authentic experiences in the most exclusive *txakolindegis*, artistic works and museums dedicated to leading local artists past and present, such as Eduardo Chillida, Jorge Oteiza, Cristina Iglesias and Cristóbal Balenciaga.



More INFO

For its surroundings

Donostia / San Sebastián is a destination to visit at any time of year. It has privileged surroundings that complement the offer in the capital of Gipuzkoa. The province of Gipuzkoa, the French Basque Country, known as *Iparralde*, the Basque coast and its neighbouring cities... are idyllic places with landscapes and pursuits to enjoy in both summer and winter.

THE PROVINCE OF GIPUZKOA: Gipuzkoa is a small yet intense and authentic province with thousands of spots to enjoy. In the province you'll find untamed natural parks, a coast combining fabulous beaches and treacherous cliffs, shaped only by the power of the waves; charming towns; small fishing villages that have lost nothing of their rustic style, and the large stately towns that flourished in the 19th century and still have their typical squares, markets and streets.

The Basque Coast:
Hondarribia, Orio, Getaria, Zarautz, Zumaia, Deba... Gipuzkoa's coastal towns are famous for their beauty and gastronomy. Whether on foot, by bike or on public transport, following the route along this coast is a fantastic idea at any time of the year.

The French Basque Country:
Wending through the foothills of the Pyrenees, the road takes you to delightful towns, such as Hendaye, Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Biarritz. Here you can surf all year round. These towns are also the door to the French Pyrenees from a municipality slightly more to the south: Roncesvalles, starting point for the Way of St James.

Bilbao and Vitoria:
San Sebastián's sister cities are a little more than an hour away by car and offer very different alternatives to Donostia for spending a day discovering other aspects of the Basque Country.

Donostia San Sebastián Turismoa offers experiences organised by local companies for discovering the surrounding areas.



CATHEDRAL OF MARIA INMACULADA VITORIA

MAISONS DU PORT. SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM. BILBAO

More INFO

Things to see near San Sebastian

Act 4

The Ending

San Sebastián: its districts, its people, its culture... These places are a theatre for all five senses where those who come to visit us with respect and the desire to live the real Donostia will be warmly welcomed by the people of Donostia on any of the 365 opportunities...



Jan

Month of the Tamborrada drum parade, San Sebastián's biggest celebration, and start of the cider season, going by the name of txotx!

Feb

A month of festivities and tradition with carnivals, Iñudeak eta Artzainak (Nursemaids and Shepherds) and Caldereros (Tinkers).

Mar

Dferia (Performing Arts Festival), the Lilatón women's race and the Spring Race.

Apr

The Comic-D Festival, the San Sebastián half marathon, the Human Rights Film Festival and the International Open Chess Tournament.

May

Start of the open air sports season, and month of the Tango Festival.

Jun

On St. John's Eve bonfires light up the whole city, San Sebastián holds its Triathlon and the first horse races of summer take place.

Jul

The Jazz Festival sees the city fill with stages, San Sebastián holds its Yachting Regatta and hosts the Clásica cycling race.

Aug

Countless activities and the International Fireworks Competition during San Sebastián's Big Week, the Classical Music Fortnight and the electronic music festival: Dantz.

Sep

The glamorous International Film Festival, the event for the music of the moment: Donostia Festibala, the fantastic atmosphere of the Bandera de La Concha rowing boat races and the Euskal Jaiak (traditional Basque festivities).

Oct

Cinema continues with the Horror and Fantasy Film Festival. GDM San Sebastián Fashion Festival.

Nov

Gastronomika sees the top names in gastronomy come together at the Kursaal. Literaktum, the Behobia-San Sebastián race, the Marathon, or plunge into the International Underwater Film Festival.

Dec

Christmas, fairs and markets and one of our biggest days: Santo Tomás.

Más INFO

Practical information

CURRENCY:

The official currency, like in the rest of the European community, is the euro.

CLIMATE:

Temperate, with generally mild temperatures, often cloudy and with regular rainfall throughout the year.

SAN SEBASTIÁN TOURIST OFFICE:

Ijentea, 1 (Donostia / San Sebastián City Hall Building).

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES:

Euskera (Basque) and Spanish.

AIRPORTS:

3 airports within less than 100km
(San Sebastián, Bilbao, Biarritz).

TRAIN:

Railway station in the city centre.
Connections provided by three companies:
Renfe, Euskotren, SCNF (Hendaye).

BUS:

Bus station in the city centre; bus connections to all of Spain and part of Europe.

TAXI:

2 taxi companies functioning 24/7
(Taxidonosti, Vallina Teletaxi).

TOURIST TRANSPORT:

The SSCard make travel by bus simple and offer discounts on leisure, culture, shops, gastronomy...

BIKING:

More than 80 km of cycle lanes,very easy to walk or bike on.



Travel advice and tips

More INFO

List of contacts

MAIN FESTIVALS

DOCK OF THE BAY
+34 943 22 45 30
prentsa@dockofthebay.es

DFERIA
+34 943 48 33 59
dferiaprensa@donostia.eus

DONOSTIA FESTIBALA
+34 944 15 45 51
itxaso@lasttour.net

HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL
+34 943 48 14 71
cinederechoshumanos@donostia.eus

INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL
+34 943 48 19 00
prensajazz@donostia.eus

CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
+34 943 00 31 70
quincenamusical@donostia.eus

HORROR AND FANTASY FILM FESTIVAL
+34 943 48 11 57
cinema_cinema@donostia.eus

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
+34 943 48 12 12
prensa@sanSebastiánfestival.com (Spanish press)
press@sanSebastiánfestival.com (international press)

DONOSTIA SAN SEBASTIÁN TURISMOA PRESS CONTACT

Donostia San Sebastián Turismoa
+34 943 48 11 66 / +34 943 48 11 67
press_turismoa@donostia.eus

LOCAL VISITS AND EXPERIENCES

The visits and experiences offered by companies in San Sebastián its territory can be acquired from:
shop.sansebastianturismoa.eus

DSS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

@sansebastiantourism + Donostia / San Sebastián Tourism
San Sebastian Tourism / Donostia Turismoa
@DSSTourism
Visit San Sebastian
Donostia San Sebastian Turismoa
Donostia San Sebastian Turismoa
Donostia San Sebastian Turismoa
sansebastianturismoa.eus/blog
sansebastianturismoa.eus
#sansebastiantourism #kaixodonostia
Donostia San Sebastian Tourism



Awards and acknowledgements

CITY

Best destination to travel to.
National Geographic (2026)

The world's most perfect city.
The Telegraph (2025)

La Concha. Spain's best urban beach
National Geographic (2025)

La Concha. Spain's best urban beach
Forbes (2025)

Best European city for enjoying culture and the sea.
Forbes (2025)

The most beautiful city in Europe.
National Geographic (2025)

Second best small city in the world to visit.
Traveler (2024)

Top 10 travel destinations.
Forbes (2024)

Europe's best city for travellers.
Traveler (2024)

La Concha. One of the best beaches in the world.
Tripadvisor (2024)

Readers' Choice Awards Calificación 96,67.
Traveler (2023)

Third most welcoming city in the world.
Booking (2021)

Top 20 places to live in Europe. No. 4 San Sebastián.
Forbes (2021)

La Concha, 4th best beach in Europe.
TripAdivisor (2021)

The 25 best cities in the world to visit. #15 San Sebastián.
Travel & Leisure (2021)

Top 10 cities in Europe. #5 San Sebastián
PressFrom (2021)

The most gorgeous cities in the whole world. #11 San Sebastian.
The Asian Today (2021)

Top 5 luxury cities with beach in the world. No. 2 San Sebastián.
Luxury Lifestyle Magazine (2020)

San Sebastián, one of Spain's best biking cities.
La Sexta (2020)

San Sebastián, the best coastal city for a winter break.
Lonely Planet (2020)

San Sebastián, Europe Prize.
Council of Europe (2019)

La Concha, the best beach in Spain and one of the best in Europe.
Trips to Discover (2019)

La Concha, Europe's best beach.
The Guardian (2019)

Innovation and Sustainability Award.
UNWTO (2019)

San Sebastián, Best European Destination.
Expert's Choice, TripExpert (2018)

San Sebastián among the 15 top European destinations.
Time (2018)

GASTRONOMY

SS PINTXOS: Among the world's 10 best gastronomic experiences.
Lonely Planet (2026)

2nd city with most Michelin stars per m² in the world.
Michelin (2026)

59 Repsol Suns and 1 Sustainable Sun
Repsol (2026)

Best city in the world for food.
Traveler (2024)

One of the world's best gastronomic destinations.
Tripadvisor (2023)

World's Best Foodie Destination.
Travel Awaits (2021)

Savor del año.
Basque Burnt Cheescake, San Sebastián.
New York Times (2021)

2nd city with most Michelin stars per m² in the world..
19 stars (2021)

World's Top 10 Gastronomic Experiences. No. 1: Pintxos in San Sebastián.
Lonely Planet (2020)

Spain's gastronomic capital..
Independent (2019)

SS PINTXOS: Best gastronomic experience in the world.
Lonely Planet (2018)

World's Best Foodie Destination.
Liberty (2018)

World's Best Foodie Destination.
Caterwings, UK (2017)

CULTURE AND FESTIVALS

Film Festival. Fourth most important cultural initiative in Spain.
Contemporary Foundation (2021)

San Sebastián Film Festival, one of Europe's best film festivals.
The Guardian (2019)

San Sebastián, European Capital of Culture 2016.
Council of Europe

San Sebastián Jazz Festival, one of Europe's best jazz festivals.
Leger Holidays (2016)

SURF

San Sebastián, among the world's best surfing cities.
National Geographic (2018)



More INFO

Donostia in the media

ROMÁNTICO

La Concha, one of the best beaches in the world.
Tripadvisor (2023)

Best beach in Spain and 4th in Europe.
Tripadvisor (2021)

San Sebastián, one of the best cities in the world for celebratingt Valentine's Day.
Dandelion Chandelier (2020)

San Sebastián, one of Europe's most romantic destinations.
European Best Destinations (2018)

San Sebastián, one of the world's most romantic destinations.
Citi.Io (2017)

Among the world's most romantic cities.
Traveler (2014)

SUSTAINABILITY

Capital of the Social Economy
Government of Spain (2023)

Smart Tourism Destination.
(2023-2024)

European Capital of Christmas. Values: peace, coexistence, integration and harmony.
European Parlament (2022)

4th best place to live in Europe.
Forbes (2021)

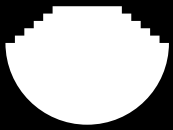
Award for Innovation in Public Policies and Governance.
UNWTO (2019)

FAMILIES

San Sebastián, one of Spain's best family destinations.
Family Traveller (2019)

Best Urban Family-Friendly destination.
HomeAway (2018)





Donostia
San Sebastián

sansebastianturismoa.eus