



Basque in glory: San Sebastián's sunny seafront; below, classic hake and clams at Bodegón Alejandro. Opposite, Basque

pintxos; Michelin-starred prettiness at Arzak; the local txakoli wine, served the traditional way (from a height) at Goiz Argi

New Orleans

Three homegrown cuisines define the Big Easy's culinary character: finger-lickin' soul food, Creole and Cajun. Toups South (toupssouth.com; mains about £20) offers 'advanced Cajun charcuterie' in a zero-fuss environment. In the same building, the Southern Food & Beverage Museum interprets the city's history through its tum (natfab.org; £8). More upmarket is Compère Lapin (pictured; comperelapin.com; mains about £25), where Creole flavours accent Euro small plates. Liquor lovers will savour drinks historian Elizabeth Pearce's cocktail tour (drinkandlearn.com; £40). **Get me there:** BA has returns from Heathrow from £348. Stay at B on Canal, with its crawfish Benedict breakfast (bhotelesandresorts.com; doubles from £88, room-only).



Mumbai

All India's treats are on offer in this bustling city, from no-frills kerbside kebab joints (Bademiya on Tullock Road, behind the Taj Mahal hotel, has them queuing down the street; kebabs about £2) to Mughal feasts with million-dollar Arabian Sea views (Souk is a fave with the Bollywood set; tajhotels.com; mains about £21). For all-in-one thalis you can't top the small-chain Maharaja Bhog (maharajabhog.com; mains about £4). But it's the street eats Mumbai kars excel at. Try Chowpatty Beach, where classics such as panipuri (spicy tamarind water in popping gram flour shells) are served for a few pence with sunset-on-sea views. **Get me there:** BA has returns from £418. Abode is a neat boutique minutes from the cafes of Colaba (abodeboutiquehotels.com; doubles from £59, B&B).

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San Sebastián



What makes it so foodie? In San Sebastián, up on Spain's Basque coast, the Michelin stars come thick and fast — but so, too, do world-class snacks (*pintxos*) in bars with actual sawdust on the floor. Bounteous on-hand ingredients from sea, mountain and forest all feed a city-wide fervour that keeps standards high and all comers fabulously fed.

How? If anywhere demands a visit built around meals, it's San Sebastián, so get a morning flight and arrive just in time for lunch. Skip from the bus station over one of the handsomely lamp-posted Belle Epoque bridges and into the Old Town. You'll find much of the best *pintxo*-bar action here, but save that for later and grab a table at cosy Bodegón Alejandro for fancy Basque classics (fat garlicky mushrooms, barbecued pigeon, cod cheeks with cockles; bodegonalejandro.com; mains about £21). It's one of dozens of restaurants

that prove you don't have to go Michelin-starred to have your culinary socks blown off — although if you are here for that brand of kitchen wizardry, the three-star favourite is Arzak (arzak.es; eight courses about £214).

Take your time eating — sights and must-dos are gloriously few and far between, just enough to rev up an appetite. Maybe follow the path behind the Old Town up Monte Urgell to find old fortifications and knockout views of mountains and San Seb's sweeping bays; idle along the prom; take a dip on La Concha beach, or hire board and suit to join the surfers on Zurriola. Work in a market visit one morning — well-stocked, central La Bretxa, or for-the-locals San Martin.

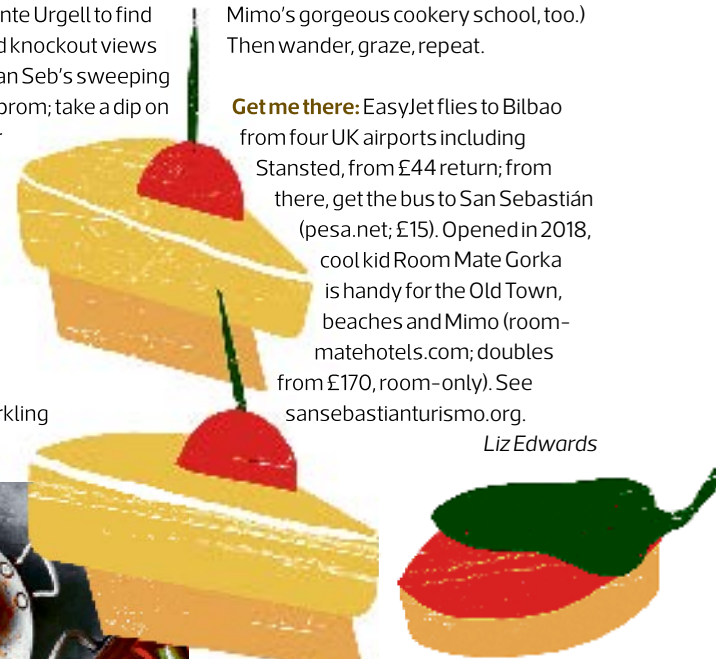
Drink locally: sparkling *txakoli* wine, sloe

liqueur Patxaran, and pucker-dry cider. Get endless from-the-barrel top-ups of the latter, with a feast of salt-cod tortilla and grilled steak, if you come in cider-house season (Jan-Apr; try Zapiain, zapiain.eus; £30).

And the *pintxos*? Mimo's insider-led tours (mimofood.com; £99) are your shortcut to the top bars — they might take in Bar Nestor's unctuous tortilla (bar-nestor.negocio.site) or Goiz Argi's grilled prawns (Fermin Calbeton 4) — and you'll pick up dozens more tips. (Learn how to make *pintxos* in a class at Mimo's gorgeous cookery school, too.) Then wander, graze, repeat.

Get me there: EasyJet flies to Bilbao from four UK airports including Stansted, from £44 return; from there, get the bus to San Sebastián (pesa.net; £15). Opened in 2018, cool kid Room Mate Gorka is handy for the Old Town, beaches and Mimo (room-matehotels.com; doubles from £170, room-only). See sansebastianturismo.org.

Liz Edwards



If you eat one thing in...

ROME

The Italian capital's pizza *bianca*s subtly delicious, not smothered in sauce, but baked gold with a lick of olive oil, dusted with salt and flavoured with rosemary. Try it at '70s stalwart Antico Forno Roscioli (anticoformoscioli.com; £4 a slice).

