

DONOSTIA SAN SEBASTIAN

MUCH MORE THAN A UNIQUE SETTING

PRESS FILE



DONOSTIA
SAN SEBASTIAN
Turismo & Convention Bureau



Any excuse to visit San Sebastian is good. Besides the unequalled beauty of La Concha Bay, which the royal family fell in love with at the start of the last century and continues to captivate anyone who comes to see it, the city is the place to come to for innovative cuisine that has made it famous across the world, a wide range of festivals that have made it a genuine cultural phenomenon and an active and healthy lifestyle that is very much in touch with the natural resources on offer.

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SAN SEBASTIAN is a city with 186,000 inhabitants, with a level of cultural activity that is rare for a city of its size. The beauty of its Bay, known as the Pearl of the Cantabrian Sea, the way that it faces out to sea like an incredibly beautiful Amphitheatre, with the sea and the mountains just a step away, its quality of life and its famous cuisine have made it a top tourist destination over the last two centuries.

Shaped by its history, it started as a fishing village, it grew into a market town and military stronghold with the invasion of Napoleon's troops and, after it was almost completely destroyed in 1813 in a battle with the Anglo-Portuguese troops, it was reborn as a service city where the royal family spent its summer holidays. Isabel II chose this city as her holiday resort.

It was at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century when San Sebastian established itself as a city of culture, with a wealth of services and the number one tourist destination in the north of Spain. Its majestic buildings and their eclectic style reflect the tastes of the royal family and bourgeoisie during that period, and give it a stately character that has adapted well to changing times.

Cultural activity increased at the same pace as tourist activity, giving the city the exceptional programme of stage and cultural events that it enjoys today. The countless world-famous festivals that are held over the year, such as the International Film Festival, Jazzaldia —the Jazz Festival— the Musical Fortnight, are unmissable events, as are the various themed film festivals, like the one for Human Rights, and the performing arts events like the DFeria theatre festival.

San Sebastian is a world-famous food destination, being located in one of the areas with the most Michelin stars per square meter in the world and it was the home of the rebirth of Basque cuisine, thanks to the «new Basque cuisine» movement. The quality of its ingredients and its world-famous «pintxos» (tapas) thrill locals and tourists alike throughout the year.

The city is also a frequent destination for many athletes, renowned for its highly active and healthy lifestyle, very in tune with the natural resources offered by the city. So, the beach and surfing culture has become deeply ingrained on the coast of San Sebastian, especially in the summertime. The beaches and surrounding areas become the perfect setting to enjoy your leisure time, take part in sporting activities or simply socialize.

Thanks to its cuisine, culture, beauty and experience as a tourist destination, with a wide variety of high-quality accommodation and tourist resources, San Sebastian continues to be one of Spain's top tourist destinations, which receives more than 620.000 visitors every year.



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Romantic Destination

San Sebastian is an unbeatable destination for a romantic getaway with your partner. Besides being in a setting with unequalled beauty, where you can forget all about the world and enjoy a pleasant time, the city offers a number of facilities that are perfect for you and your loved one to enjoy such a special time, with the highest quality and the friendliest of atmospheres: charming hotels, top quality restaurants, thrilling tours and romantic plans.

Charming accommodation

San Sebastian's appeal as a tourist destination is complemented by a huge selection of accommodation of every type. San Sebastian has 30 hotels, ranging from 1 to 5 stars, and 48 guest houses. Some of this accommodation is especially designed to give you the tranquillity and warmth necessary for you to really switch off and enjoy a romantic time with your partner. Five-star hotels, romantic 19th century buildings, country houses declared Historical Heritage Sites and modern buildings full of glamour from a cinematic city are just some of the reasons for recommending the following accommodation:

- Hotel María Cristina, San Sebastian's most iconic hotel and the only one with five stars, the majestic Maria Cristina, with spacious rooms in the Belle Époque style, the perfect place to enjoy an unforgettable stay in the charming setting of the city. (www.hotel-mariacristina.com)
- The Hotel Londres is in the city centre, with spectacular views of La Concha Bay. Over the years, this dream accommodation, built in the 19th century, has managed to combine the romantic style in which it was designed with more modern facilities. You'll have an unforgettable stay. (www.hlondres.com)



- Hotel Astoria 7, a newly-built hotel in an iconic building, in what was formerly San Sebastian's Astoria Cinema. With great warmth in its decor, it devotes almost all of its 102 rooms exclusively to an individual movie star, actor or director who has attended the San Sebastian International Film Festival over its history. (www.astoria7hotel.com).
- Hotel Lasala Plaza: The hotel sits in a privileged location at the confluence of the fishing port, the bay and the Old Town. The small and peaceful plaza which lends the hotel its name. Basque culture and classical French styling are the source of inspiration for the interior design of each of the hotel's rooms. (www.lasalaplazahotel.com)
- Hotel Villa Soro is a very special hotel with 25 rooms, the result of the careful restoration of a country house from the end of the 19th century, declared a Historical Heritage Site of the City of San Sebastian. Villa Soro provides a perfect balance between the welcoming and homely atmosphere of an old country house and the services and comfort of a luxury hotel. (www.villasoro.com). We also recommend the following accommodation because of their views, quality and their romantic settings:
- Hotel Niza, right on La Concha Bay, with homely and welcoming decor. (www.hotelniza.com)
- Hotel Barceló Costa Vasca, in the residential area of Ondarreta, very close to the beach of the same name and next to the gardens of the Miramar Palace. It has a Wellness Centre (www.barcelocostavasca.com)
- Hotel Husa Europa, a hotel in the center of San Sebastian, in a majestic neoclassical building. (www.hotelhusaeuropa.com)
- Hotel La Galería, a beautiful French-style building from the end of the 19th century, right on the Ondarreta beachfront. (www.hotellagaleria.com)

Restaurants for special occasions

San Sebastian is the home of gastronomy. Our chefs are meticulous and take special care with the recipes and produce, making an art form out of their cuisine. But in addition to this, San Sebastian has special restaurants with a romantic air that you can detect with only a glance. Restaurants with spaces that create an intimate and warm ambiance, designed to give you a romantic dinner which conjures up the intimate atmosphere of a dinner at home. Their spectacular views of the sea are precisely what make these select and romantic high-end restaurants so special.

- Bokado Aquarium, located in the same building as the Aquarium, offers the unique setting of the San Sebastian bay. An exceptional place that offers traditional Basque food that has been updated and modernised, genuine miniature signature cuisine in an exquisite ambience. (www.bokadogrupo.com)
- El Ni Neu en el restaurante del Kursaal y ofrece una propuesta culinaria de alto nivel a precios muy atractivos. (www.restaurantenineu.com)



- Ni Neu is the restaurant in the Kursaal building and it offers a culinary experience of the highest standard at very attractive prices. (www.restaurantenineu.com)
- La Perla Restaurant, right on La Concha Beach and with views of the Bay, is an excellent choice if you want to enjoy an intimate evening with your partner (www.la-perla.net).

Specific plans for couples



The ride of your life

The guided tour to discover the most romantic sights of San Sebastian and enjoy an unforgettable ride together with your partner. The tour goes along the city's three beaches, with a climb up Mount Igeldo and strategic breaks to rest and enjoy the splendid views while you have a coffee.

Health and hydrothermal wellness

The close ties between San Sebastian and the sea have given the city a highly acclaimed spa tradition. The finest example of this is La Perla Thalassotherapy Centre, which is right on La Concha beach, in a classical building from the romantic Belle Époque period. You can also enjoy a relaxing afternoon of hydrotherapy in the Maria Cristina Spa and Barceló Spa.



Aquarium

The Sea Palace or Aquarium is one of the most modern in Europe. The building, the work of the architect Juan Carlos Guerra, stands on the rock and has just undergone extensive renovations. It has an oceanarium that passes through a 360° acrylic tunnel, where the visitor feels like part of the marine life, watching sharks and stingrays pass above.



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Gastronomic Capital

Gastronomy is an art form and the hallmark of San Sebastian. Its chefs have made it famous across the world and its combined 18 Michelin stars are a testament to the good work done by **San Sebastian's culinary artists every day. Whether** you opt for traditional food or the most modern cuisine, whether you visit one of the establishments that have been acclaimed by the Michelin guide or you skip from bar to bar, the quality is guaranteed.

18 Michelin stars

San Sebastian is the home of signature cuisine. Our chefs are meticulous and take special care with the recipes and produce, making an art form out of their cuisine. A total of 18 Michelin stars recognise the work done by chefs like Juan Mari Arzak, Andoni Luis Aduriz, Martín Berasategui and Pedro Subijana, world-acclaimed exponents of Basque haute cuisine. In fact, Andoni Luis Aduriz's Mugaritz restaurant has been one of the top 5 restaurants in the world for several years, according to the British publication Restaurant.



Juan Mari Arzak

The forefather of nouvelle cuisine, Juan Mari Arzak (San Sebastian, 1942) combines research and cutting-edge techniques in his works of culinary art. He revolutionized cooking in the 20th century by combining innovation and tradition and his restaurant Arzak has three Michelin stars.



Pedro Subijana

Awarded with the highest distinctions in prestigious food guides, Pedro Subijana (San Sebastian, 1948) combines excellence and cutting-edge techniques in all of his culinary creations. His restaurant, Akelarre, has been awarded with three Michelin stars.



Martín Berasategui

Acclaimed chef, awarded with three Michelin stars, whose food is light, imaginative, fresh, immediate and prepared with a precise technique. After a long career, he finally opened his own restaurant in 1993.

The Pintxo is king

A genuine gastronomic art in miniature form. The most common and beloved of San Sebastian's dining habits is 'going out for pintxos' (tapas). It consists of skipping from bar to bar, with the selected tapa normally coming with a zurito –a small glass of beer- or a glass of wine. In recent decades, San Sebastian's pintxos have evolved and have now achieved a high degree of sophistication. The famous pintxos are expressions of tradition and innovation that are always represented in the spectacular restaurant bars and pubs in San Sebastian's Old Town, Centre and Gros district. The pintxo was originally a small slice of bread, on top of which a portion of food was placed, which could take many forms. A toothpick was used to hold it, hence the name «pintxo». However, that traditional image has evolved and the pintxo is now haute cuisine in miniature form, flavours prepared and concentrated in little tasty packages.

Cider houses

Cider houses are a very characteristic form of gastronomy in San Sebastian. They are rooted in the tradition of tasting the cider produced in the farmsteads during the previous year. The tasting of the cider, taken directly from the different «kupelas» (wooden barrels), is a beloved ceremony or rite that takes place in a «sagardotegi» –cider houses equipped with large wooden tables and barrels that contain the year's produce – set in a relaxing and friendly atmosphere thanks to its rustic and natural setting.

A regular menu usually contains: cod omelet, cod, rib eye steak, cheese and walnuts; the diner can get up as many times as they like during the evening to go to the barrel and pour themselves this drink that has recently been prepared using local apples and stored in enormous barrels or «kupelas». The cider house season lasts from December to April and, during those months, there



is but one menu in these farmsteads with their own cider houses: cod omelet's and pintxos (tapas), rib eye steak, cheese and quince with nuts. When someone is thirsty, they rise to the cry of «Txotxl!» and go to the barrel, joined by other diners.



A seasonal tradition

Near to San Sebastian, within a radius of 3 km, there are a total of about 42 cider houses. Traditionally, the cider house season lasts from December to April, but nowadays there are cider houses that are open all year long.

More information: San Sebastian Tourist Office.
www.sansebastianturismo.com / (943 48 1166)



A very special museum: Cider Museum

The Cider Museum (Sagardoetxe) is a very special museum in Astigarraga, 5 kilometres from San Sebastian and the quintessential home of the most traditional cider houses. The Cider Museum is a living space where you can learn about apples and cider, past and present.

www.sagardoetxea.com

The quality of the raw ingredients

The secret to San Sebastian's delicious food is the attention to detail, the know-how but, above all, it's the quality of the raw ingredients. Producing and eating high-quality food is one of the hallmarks of Gipuzkoa: traditional fairs and markets, specialist delicatessens and Designations of Origin are just some examples of this.

As well as the products that have Eusko Label certification, which include beef, farmhouse chicken, spring lamb, high-quality pasteurised milk and tomatoes, we also have the famous Ibarra chili peppers and Tolosa beans and products with Designation of Origin - Txakoli Wine from Getaria and Idiazabal Cheese.



San Sebastian's markets

There are two markets in San Sebastian. One, San Martín, is in the city center and in modern facilities that have recently been refurbished but which preserve their old charm. But without a doubt, the most charismatic market is La Brecha, which owes its name to being in the place where the Anglo-Portuguese troops entered the city during the siege of 1813.



Txakoli wine from Getaria

In 1989 the Txakoli wine from Getaria was awarded Designation of Origin status, with the name Getariako Txakolina. Txakoli is a fruity young white wine with a very characteristic and distinctive flavor that is produced with a local grape. We recommend trying it with salted anchovies and tuna in oil, snacks that you'll be offered by the harvesters of Getaria's Txakoli wine if you visit any of their wineries. www.getariakotxakolina.com



Delicatessens

The greatest possible care is taken with the high-quality raw ingredients in San Sebastian's delicatessens which, as well as providing the most characteristic local produce, offer a genuine gastro-nomic culture with the highest standard of service. Examples of this include the stores Aitor Lasa (food) and Gourmet, which specializes in tea and coffee. www.sansebastianturismo.com



Goierri-500 years of the Ordizia Market

Goierri is an inland region of Gipuzkoa, a valley with outstanding natural and scenic beauty. Goierri has a number of traditional products that are showcased in a magnificent farmer's market that is famous across the whole of the Basque Country, the Ordizia Market, (the market is held every Wednesday morning) (www.ordiziakoazoka.com). The famous Idiazabal cheese, which comes from Goierri, has its own museum, the Idiazabal Cheese Interpretation Centre (www.idiazabalgaztarenmuseoa.com). There is also a very special center in Goierri, D'elikatuz, a food and gastronomy center that was created to please the palate and promote good health. (www.delikatuz.com)



A very gastronomic culture



San Sebastian is a gastronomic capital, not just because of the quality of the stoves in its excellent restaurants, its wealth of raw ingredients in its products and its famous dining habits, but also because, besides all of that, the city has developed an entire culture and lifestyle around food. In the capital of Gipuzkoa, a number of major organizations, entities and events have been launched that involve training, promotion and creation, and they are proof that the city lives and breathes gastronomy.



Basque Culinary Center

A dream comes true. The Basque Culinary Center or University of Gastronomic Sciences opened its classrooms in 2011 in San Sebastian's Miramón Technology Park. A new academic centre that teaches undergraduate studies in the Culinary Arts, it is the second gastronomic university in the whole of Europe, which is yet another string to the bow of San Sebastian's famous experience in



the world of cuisine. The Basque Culinary Center is necessary for a world - the world of cuisine – that has evolved, where the professionals aren't happy just to feed you, they want to thrill all of your senses. The BCC also organises courses for cooking enthusiasts, in Spanish and Basque for local residents and in English for tourists. (www.bculinary.com)

Gastronomic events and conferences



San Sebastian has some major gastronomic conferences and events that are internationally famous and attract some of the best chefs in the world.

San Sebastian Gastronomika

Second weekend in October hundreds of chefs and food experts from across the world meet up at the San Sebastian Gastronomika conference. For three days, San Sebastian becomes the food capital of Europe, where the leading figures in cuisine present their culinary innovations.

www.sansebastiangastronomika.com

Cook and Fashion

High fashion and gastronomy come together in this unique event. Designs by acclaimed professionals and young talents are then interpreted by great chefs and expressed as exquisite dishes. A final fashion show reveals the result.

www.cookandfashion.com



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City of Culture and Festivals

San Sebastian has many culture festivals, museums and events, one of the reasons why it was chosen as European Capital of Culture 2016.

Festivals to suit all tastes

In the different cultural sectors, they have worked very hard to promote art and creativity at all levels, as shown by the numerous festivals that are held throughout the year in the city:



San Sebastian International Film Festival A film city

Big stars and young directors. Local and international stars from the world of movies come to San Sebastian every September to attend the most cosmopolitan competition of the year: Zinemaldia



or the International Film Festival, one of the biggest film events in Europe, together with the Cannes Festival and the Venice Film Festival.

www.sansebastianfestival.com



International Jazz Festival The warmth of Jazz

During the second fortnight in July, San Sebastian moves to the rhythm of the best jazz. Music greats like James Brown, Liza Minnelli, Bobby McFerrin and B.B. King have come to the beaches, theatres, squares and auditoriums in the city to rock the crowds in this world-famous festival.

www.heinekenjazzaldia.com



Olatu Talka. The festival for everyone

'Olatu Talka' Festival is a new festival concept, where locals, visitors and passers-by take centre stage. Music, theatre, dance, art, photography, health and wellness...there's room for all forms of artistic expression in the 'Olatu Talka' Festival, with two conditions: they must be creative and participatory.

www.olatutalka.eus



Quincena Musical

During August and September, San Sebastian becomes the home of the classical music series with the longest tradition: The Musical Fortnight. The Kursaal Centre, Santa María and San Vicente churches, the Victoria Eugenia Theatre and other stages across the city welcome major symphonic orchestras and soloists from across the world for this event. Five weeks of the finest music in this festival which is now over 70 years old.

www.quincenamusical.com



dFeria theatre fair

The summer's cultural season kicks off with dFeria. The theatres and other cultural venues in San Sebastian raise their curtains to present the Theatre Fair, an unmissable event with national prestige, for performing arts fans and professionals

www.dferia.eus



Horror and Fantasy Film Festival. Halloween at its most cultured

Between the end of October and the start of November, the streets and theatres of San Sebastian become the makeshift set of a horror film to host the Horror and Fantasy Film Festival. The series also includes concerts and exhibitions to complete what this genre has to offer.

www.sansebastianhorrorfestival.eus



Human Rights Film Festival. Solidarity through film

Every April, San Sebastian reinforces its commitment to society and promoting solidarity by holding the Human Rights Film Festival. With a backdrop of movies, in addition to exhibitions and talks, the event helps to raise awareness among citizens about the serious problems and issues that plague our society.

www.cineyderechoshumanos.eus



Donostia Festibala

Although San Sebastián's summer indie music festival is relatively new – it started in 2012 – it has already become the biggest independent music festival in Gipuzkoa. Initially staged in an amusement park, the new retro-style hippodrome venue is quirky, cool, and easy to get to. Anyone who's been comes back. It's the kind of thing you'd have to invent if it didn't already exist.

www.donostiafestibala.com

A wide selection of museums

San Sebastian's culture offers options for everyone. In the Aquarium, which was formerly known as the Sea Palace and is over 80 years old, we can enjoy its biggest attraction thanks to the latest ambitious renovations: the oceanarium with a 360° acrylic tunnel suspended in the water. Very nearby, the Naval Museum has the sea as the central theme of its temporary exhibitions. Sculptures have a magical place in the Chillida-Leku Museum, where the works of San Sebastian's brilliant artist Eduardo Chillida merge with nature at its purest. For science and nature enthusiasts, and in particular children: Eureka! Zientzia Musea and Ekogunea, created for awareness-raising and learning. Located in Pasaia, with the building of historical boats as its main activity, Albaola The Sea Factory of the Basques, is an innovative environment where the marine artisanal technology is recovered and showcased. The range of cultural activities is topped off by the ambitiously renovated Victoria Eugenia Theatre, with its exceptional performing arts programme.



San Telmo Museoa

San Telmo Museum, which opened in 1902, is the oldest in the Basque Country and following a major expansion and restoration project, it stands today both architecturally and conceptually renovated. Using its own collection of pieces, almost entirely relating to Basque society, the newly renovated San Telmo has become a Museum of Basque Society and Citizenship.

www.museosantelmo.com



San Sebastian, contemporary outdoor museum

Art in open spaces, accessible to everyone, is one of the most characteristic features of San Sebastian. A stroll around the city gives you the chance to admire the works of brilliant artists like Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza, pieces that blend into the urban landscape, establishing an in-depth dialogue with their natural surroundings.



Jorge Oteiza

One of the first artists to experiment with avant-garde art, the works of Jorge Oteiza (Orio 1908 - San Sebastian 2003) are the physical manifestation of spirituality. Influenced by cubism and primitivism, his style was always marked by his love and defense of the Basque culture. Dozens of international awards pay testament to his genius.

Eduardo Chillida

An influential figure in contemporary Basque art, Eduardo Chillida (San Sebastian 1924-2002) devoted almost his entire career to sculpture. His works, scattered all around the world and given countless awards, hold a continuous dialogue with the landscape in which they are set, giving their shapes meaning and expressiveness. In addition, some of them can be seen in the Chillida Leku Museum. www.museochillidaleku.com



Having become an icon of the city, Eduardo Chillida's sculpture the Peine del Viento (Wind Comb) is a work of iron that stands challenging the sea. The Peine del Viento (Wind Comb) has become a perfect place to sit and reflect, as it converses with the other imposing work across the bay, Construcción Vacía (Empty Construction) by Jorge Oteiza, which fights back the force of the waves that break onto the Paseo Nuevo. Its accessible location is a perfect example of how to touch art with your hands.

Diverse art venues and styles in one city

For those who never tire of it...art, art and more art. To ensure that every form of culture has its place, San Sebastian offers visitors and locals alike numerous multipurpose art venues and centres, to suit everyone's tastes.



Tabakalera: Visual culture factory

Tabakalera, San Sebastian's tobacco factory for 90 years (1913-2003), is a new centre for contemporary culture with two purposes: to be a centre of production and to offer a programme of activities for the public. The Tabakalera cultural project has the main objective to promote the creation of contemporary cultural in different fields and in all its stages (research, production, exhibition), as well as to generate and share knowledge. With this aim in mind, it focusses on the four lines of work making up its programme: contemporary artistic practices, education, digital culture laboratories and the creation library.

www.tabakalera.eu



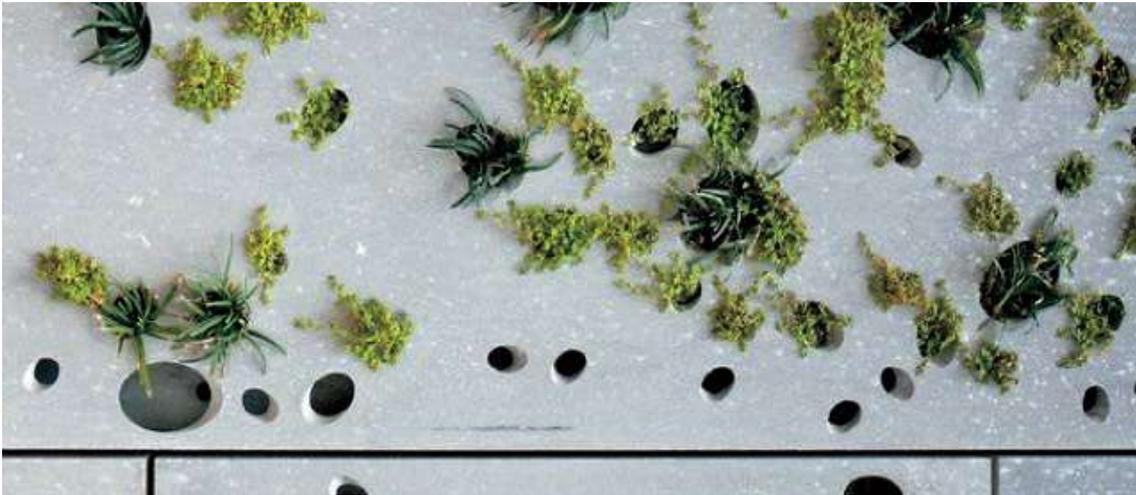
Sala Kubo: Art upon art

Located in the architectural space around the Kursaal 'cubes', the Sala Kubo, or Kutxa Espacio Art Centre, offers locals and visitors alike a wide range of temporary and international exhibitions. A hall devoted to every kind of art that has been very popular with the public from the outset.

www.sala-kubo-aretoa.eus



From the Belle Époque to modernism



Architecture is history in San Sebastián. Each building represents a different period and style and when you explore them you discover part of the city's story. In San Sebastián, classical buildings stand alongside eclectic works in the style of the Belle Époque and, at the same time, you can find avant-garde and modern buildings that are in contrast with the more traditional aesthetics



Part of the façade of San Vicente Church

Located in the Old Town, San Vicente is the city's oldest church. Built during the 16th century in the Gothic style, hidden away inside is one of the finest Romanesque altarpieces. On its side façade, your gaze is inevitably drawn to the sculpture «la Piedad» (the Pietà), by the artist Jorge Oteiza.



Konstituzio Plaza - Constitución Square

At the very heart of the Old Town is Constitución Square. As unique as they come, this square has had very different lives. The balconies on the colourful buildings around the square have numbers printed on them, a remnant from its past as a bullring. However, today, Constitución Square is a place full of life and the main stage for the most important local festival: San Sebastian Day.



San Sebastian City Hall

San Sebastian City Hall is one of the city's most beautiful buildings. Its French-influenced style comes from its past as a casino because, from when it was built in 1887 until it closed in 1924, the city hall building was a casino in which people from the Belle Époque entertained themselves. Stunningly beautiful, in the middle of La Concha Bay, with the non-stop hustle and bustle of the Old Town behind it and the peace and quiet of the Alderdi Eder gardens in front of it, the City Hall is undoubtedly a must-see.



Buen Pastor Cathedral

Buen Pastor Cathedral was built in the 19th century, it is modelled on the medieval churches of Germany and France. This influence can be seen in the tapering spire that sits on top of the building and makes it «the highest in San Sebastian». On its main façade is the outstanding cross called «Camino hacia la Paz» (Path to Peace), the work of the sculptor Eduardo Chillida.



Victoria Eugenia Theatre and Hotel Maria Cristina

The most glorious period of San Sebastian's history is embodied in two world-famous buildings: Hotel Maria Cristina and the Victoria Eugenia Theatre. Separated by an elegant garden square, reflected in the water of the River Urumea, these two buildings in the Neo-Plateresque style are two of the main venues for the San Sebastian Film Festival. Celebrities like Mata Hari, Alfred Hitchcock, Woody Allen and Richard Gere have been here.



The Club Náutico building

San Sebastian's Real Club Náutico (Royal Yacht Club) is a remarkable building in the Rationalist style, designed to resemble a boat moored in the dock. It was built in 1928 by the architects José Manuel Aizpurua and Joaquín Labayen. It is also the most important example of Spanish Modern Architecture and was recently declared a Site of Cultural Interest, classed as a Monument. Alongside it there is a restored landing stage where you can enjoy the sea.



Kursaal Congress Centre

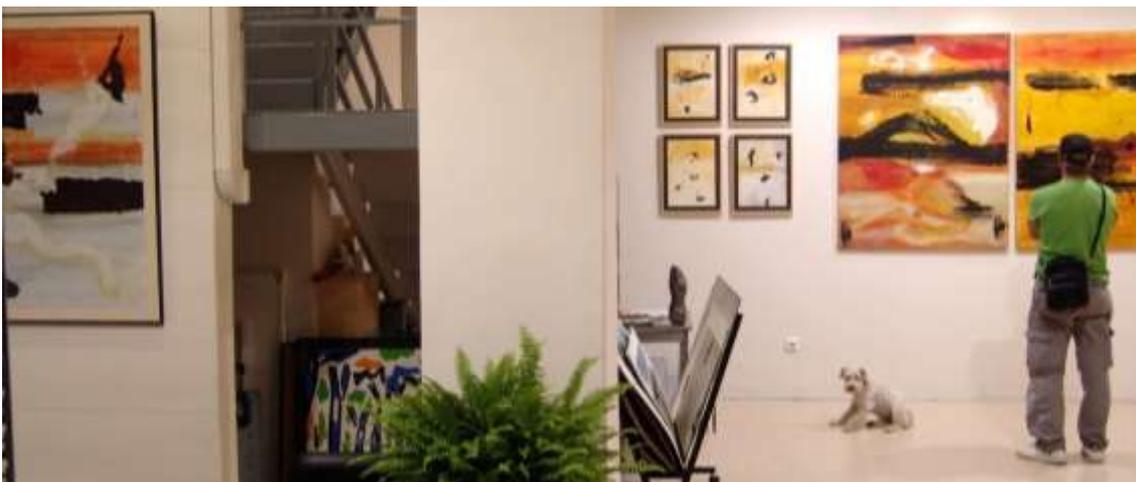
The Kursaal Congress Centre is one of the great expressions of contemporary architecture, in contrast with the traditional aesthetics of the buildings around it, giving the city character and strength. Built in 1999 by the architect Rafael Moneo, these two «beached rocks» have been one of San Sebastian's iconic landmarks ever since. This Auditorium and Congress Centre hosts everything from festivals, like the San Sebastian International Film Festival, to all kinds of trade fairs.



Zurriola Bridge

The bridges that cross the River Urumea are the most vivid reflection of San Sebastian's past. Each building represents a different period and style and when you cross them you discover part of the city's history.

The Zurriola Bridge, also known as the Kursaal Bridge, is known for its famous Expressionist and Futuristic lampposts. The city's second bridge, Santa Catalina, was the first to be built. In the Neoclassical style, since it was completed in 1872 it has been crossed more times than all of the rest. A few metres further along is the María Cristina Bridge. Its enormous obelisks, elaborately ornate, are reminiscent of the Alexander III Bridge in Paris, which was the source of inspiration of this project in San Sebastian. Finally, the Mundaiz and Lehendakari Agirre Bridges. With modern, minimalist lines, it is the perfect example of the contemporary style that pervades San Sebastian.



Art Galleries

Donostia / San Sebastian presents a highly appealing selection of art galleries which acts as a perfect complement to the sculpture routes around the city.

More Information: [Art in San Sebastian](#)



Donostia / San Sebastián

Sport City

San Sebastian is a lively, active city with a healthy lifestyle that is closely associated with the pursuit of outdoor sports. The countless sporting events that are held in our city and the different international movements that are setting a trend towards living a healthier lifestyle come together in a city that is very much in tune with the sporting experience.



San Sebastian: Running destination

San Sebastian is a city that is made for running. Apart from its never-ending promenades along the edge of the sea, it has countless pedestrianised streets, far from the noise of the traffic, which make the city perfect for jogging around it.



Popular races with high participation

Numerous popular races are held in San Sebastian throughout the year. The level of participation is normally very high and, in the best-known events, lots of people come from abroad to take part in this healthy pastime.

Behobia-San Sebastian. The route between Behobia and San Sebastian becomes the stage for Gipuzkoa's great celebration of athletics because «la Behobia» is much more than just a race, it's a sentiment that has been built over many years on the blood, sweat and tears of the many thousands of athletes who take part in the race every year. The race is 20 kilometres long and in 2015 there were 33.900 participants.

www.behobia-sansebastian.com

The Donostia / San Sebastian Marathon is a classic event for fans of athletics. It covers 42 kilometres around the city.

www.zurichmaratondonostia.com



San Sebastian: Surfing destination

Surfing is hugely popular in San Sebastian. Thousands of surfers from across the world come to Zurriola beach in San Sebastian with the sole intention of riding its waves. It is precisely for this reason that in San Sebastian they hold dozens of local, national and international competitions throughout the year, especially between the spring and the summer. During those months it's easy to mistake Zurriola beach and the area around it, e.g. the Sagues district, with any Australian or Californian surf city.

The passion for surfing is so strong in San Sebastian that in recent years it has become a way of life. The areas around Sagues and the promenade along Zurriola are full of bars, pubs, restaurants and stores with a surfing theme.

A very “surfy” neighborhood and beach

Waves, surfing and young people. These are the main components of the Sagues district, the part of San Sebastian where the surfing activity and atmosphere are second to none. Located next to the Gros district, in the foothills of Mount Ulia and adjacent to Zurriola beach, since it was remodeled 15 years ago, Sagues has become a favorite destination of surfers and young people from across the world who want to have fun and meet people. Championships and the continuous surfing lessons, volleyball games, football matches and beach tennis games that take place on Zurriola beach are precisely what make this area so dynamic and appealing.



Surfing lessons

Surfing lessons are the best way to get into surfing.

Surfing lessons are offered at very reasonable prices, with good qualified instructors who are experts in teaching kids and adults, as well as people with reduced mobility or a physical or mental disability. The choice is as varied as the students: intensive course, for one week, two weeks, a day ... the schools are often run by the local surfers and clubs that regulate surfing in the area.

www.pukassurf.com / T. 943 320068

A whole range of surfing-related services

There are numerous accommodation and restaurant services in San Sebastian’s surfing world that are specially adapted and designed for surfers. Besides being places for surfers to get together, these establishments are specially prepared for them (with space to leave surfing equipment, reasonable prices etc.).

There are also numerous stores in the city that have become immersed in the surfing atmosphere and they’re truly iconic stores for lovers of this sport:

- Bera-Bera www.berabera.com
- C.D Fortuna www.cdfortunake.com
- Hawaii www.hawaiidonostia.com
- Kirol Music www.kirolmusik.com
- Pukas www.pukassurf.com
- Surfing Euskadi www.tourism.euskadi.eus



St. James's Way

Visitors to San Sebastian who love active tourism and hiking have an excellent opportunity to enjoy their hobby along a route that is suitable for both walkers and mountain bikers: St. James's Way

The coastal route of St. James's Way passes through San Sebastian, from one side to the other, taking in the incredible views from the cliffs of Mount Ullia or crossing through the city via La Concha Bay. There are many remnants of this age-old pilgrimage that are a testament to this tradition in the city, such as the sculptures of the Saint in the San Vicente and Santa Maria churches, in San Sebastian's Old Town, or the small church of Santiago, in the Amara district.



Jai Alai, tradition at your fingertips

Pelota is possibly the best-known Basque sport around the world as it is played on various continents. This discipline combines fun with culture and entertainment with group participation and interaction. Two teams (red and blue) compete, each with a cesta: a woven basket used to throw and catch the ball. Now you can learn to play with the pelota classes that are held in the city. More information: San Sebastian Tourist Office.

www.sansebastianturismo.com / 943 48 11 66



Sporting events calendar

Throughout the year, San Sebastian hosts various sporting events. For more information, San Sebastian Tourist Office.

www.sansebastianturismo.com

La Concha Flag Trophy

On the first two Sundays in September, San Sebastian-Donostia is decked in colours to host the boat race for the top trophy on the Cantabrian circuit in La Concha Bay: La Concha Flag.

www.donostiakultura.com



Horse Races

The summer horse racing season takes place from June to September. Horsemen and women from across the world compete in this annual equestrian event that is held in San Sebastian. www.oxerspot.com

www.hipodromoa.com



Donostia / San Sebastián

Business Centre

San Sebastian guarantees a business trip with outstanding facilities. The large number of infrastructures offered, the wide range of accommodation in which to stay, its three-star cuisine and strategic location not only guarantee that your meeting will be a success; it will be unforgettable.

The city

Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful places in the world, San Sebastian boasts a perfect location at the gateway to Europe. Its extensive range of facilities caters for every requirement, guaranteeing the success of your meetings. Also, as it is human in scale, mobility and access is simple and convenient. Add to all of this its modern versatile hotels, its cuisine and its wide range of cultural activities and the city is the perfect place to hold any type of meeting or conference.

The most suitable facilities for business tourism

San Sebastian has a long list of auditoriums and conference halls where you can hold successful meetings and conferences. Eleven conference halls, of different sizes and equipped with the latest technology. They range from the Kursaal Congress Centre and Auditorium, with a maximum capacity of 1800 people, the Aquarium Auditorium, with 164 seats, San Sebastian Technology Park, the Anoeta Stadium to the long list of function rooms, among many others.

San Sebastian, the perfect incentive trip

San Sebastian is the perfect choice for a successful incentive trip. The city has dozens of activities to strengthen group values and for teambuilding, such as Basque rural sports, themed gymkhanas (competition events) around the city and in the countryside and paintballing. To combat stress,



there's nothing like a ride in a boat or on a yacht, fishing or scuba diving in La Concha Bay. In addition to its gastronomic tours, the city stimulates creativity thanks to the many festivals it holds and its wide range of cultural activities.

Natural treasure

Hidden among the spectacular cliffs on the western coast of Gipuzkoa there is a unique natural treasure: millions of years of geological history etched on a series of rocky strata, which have been uncovered because of the continuous action of the sea. This peculiar formation has been nicknamed the flysch and has been included in a new Protected Biotope. Guided by a professional geologist, this tour is designed to reveal the impressive geological heritage of this coastline.

www.sansebastianturismo.com



Congress Tourism Figures

In recent years there has been very significant growth in congress activity in San Sebastian. In 2018, a total of 150 congresses, conventions and meetings were held in San Sebastian. These figures cement the city's position as a destination with huge potential for MICE tourism. The number of participants in congresses has also been on the increase, with there being a total of almost 50,000 congress attendees.

San Sebastian Tourist Office & Convention Bureau

To make sure that your stay is perfect, we recommend getting in touch with our department; the Convention Bureau. This organisation offers services and support, e.g. advice on choosing the most suitable venue, obtaining permits, publicising the event in the media and providing you with informative literature about San Sebastian, its surroundings and the festivals being held at that time.

All with one goal: to make sure that the event goes off without a hitch and makes the most of San Sebastian's charms. A memory that is sure to linger in everyone's mind.



Donostia / San Sebastián

A unique and original culture

A whole Basque culture has been built around the Basque language; original, special, distinctive and fascinating. It's a popular culture, where people's participation has always been one of the key components. Rooted in tradition and folklore, the Basque culture encompasses unique and peculiar disciplines that are still practiced today.



Back in Roman times, they were already playing different ball games. Their most striking feature was that the opponents faced one another, because the material from which the balls were made hardly had any bounce.

When they started using rubber to make the balls, they became bouncier than they used to be, meaning that they could bounce when they were thrown against a wall. Hence, Basque pelota was born.



Boat races

The sport of boat racing has two origins: on the one hand, coastal fishing and, on the other, the towing of big ships.

Fishing required individuals who were capable of rowing for hours until they reached the fishing grounds and, once the fish had been caught, returning to the port with their catch. Boat races resulted from the competitions and bets between the different teams of oarsmen.

As for towing, in ports which were difficult to access, like in Bilbao and Pasaia, large ships were towed to port by trailers. After sighting the ships heading for the port from a vantage point, the trawlers would compete to reach the ships first and be paid for the work.



Rural sport

Basque rural sport, or herri kirolak, is the term used to describe the type of sports that have traditionally been played in the rural areas of the Basque Country. Most of these sports originate from work activities in rural areas. Over the years, as a result of the competition that developed between the neighbours or residents of a village to see who was the best at their job, they became sports. So, for example, the chopping of tree trunks for firewood became the sport of the aizkolariak or wood choppers; the activity of moving large rocks for use in construction led to stone-lifting (the



athletes who take part in this discipline are called harrijasotzaileak) and the pulling of stones by oxen (idi probak) etc.



Basque dances

Like in many other cultures, dance has been a very important part of the social and religious life of the Basque Country. Many of the dances still performed at popular festivals have been around now for over 400 years. There are countless popular dances and each celebration and popular festival often has its own form of dance.



Bertsolariak

Bertsolarismo is one of the most peculiar disciplines in the Basque culture. The bertso consists of improvising a sung verse, to a set rhythm and melody. It requires bertsolariak to have a lot of imagination, oral skills and mental agility. Bertsolari competitions are still organised today throughout the region, especially at popular festivals, in cider houses etc. There are even bertsolari schools that have produced a new generation of bersolariak who are of an exceptional standard and hugely popular.



Basque, a language of unknown origin

The Basque language is spoken on both sides of the Western Pyrenees, so it is used in both Spain and France. Euskera or Basque is the co-official language – together with Spanish – of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country or Euskadi, formed by the provinces of Araba, Gipuzkoa and Bizkaia.

The Etxepare Institute, under the auspices of the Basque Government, which is responsible for promoting and disseminating the Basque language and culture around the world, has the following explanation about the origin of the Basque language:

“Basque is a **genetically isolated language**: in other words, it does not belong to any known family of languages. The origin of this language is not very clear either. The first texts written in Basque date back to the 16th century, although in the 10th century songs, expressions and written words are known to have appeared in other languages. However, the first book written in Donostia / San Sebastián is the Basque capital with the most Basque speakers and the highest proportion of bilingual people. According to the last survey conducted by the Basque Government, a third of its population is bilingual, i.e. they regularly communicate in either of the two languages.



Try it! Learn some words in Basque and use them during your trip. You won't regret it!

www.donostiaeuskaraz.eus

www.sansebastianturismo.com



General Information

San Sebastian is a major city built on a human scale. It is fully equipped, not only as a city but also as a quality tourist destination. The large number of places to stay, the many different ways of getting around the city and its strategic location all ensure that there will be a wealth of amenities for your visit.

Facts and Figures

With 186,000 inhabitants, San Sebastian is an accessible metropolis, a city built on a human scale. That's why over half the population get around the city on foot. For those who get around in their own vehicle, the capital of Gipuzkoa has 11,000 ground-level parking spaces and a similar amount in underground car parks. It also has 11 healthcare facilities with a total of 1789 beds.

How to get here

Its strategic location and its vast amount of infrastructures have made San Sebastian an easy place to get to, connected to the rest of the world by every form of transport. Choose the one that suits you best and start your journey towards San Sebastian! By air

San Sebastian has an airport that is 20 minutes away from the city centre. All of Spain's major airlines operate in it, connecting the city to the country's two biggest cities: Madrid and Barcelona.

Just a few kilometres away are the airports of Bilbao, one of the biggest in the country, with fields to practically every city in the world, and Biarritz, where French and international airlines operate.

Each of the airports is connected to the centre of San Sebastian by several direct bus services that will make it easy for you to get to the city.

By train

Right in the centre of the city, San Sebastian train station is connected to many of the Spanish cities, including Madrid and Barcelona, and several international destinations such as Paris and Lisbon. Getting to and from San Sebastian by train will be far quicker thanks to the new High-Speed Train that will soon be connecting the city with a number of destinations. It also has local trains and a number of «topo» stations (which means mole, because of the tunnels), a type of underground system that connects the city to several towns and cities in Gipuzkoa and the French Basque area.

By bus

The San Sebastián bus station has lines to cities throughout Spain and part of Europe. San Sebastian has a new bus station situated in Paseo Federico García Lorca 1, 20.014 Donostia, Near the train station. The other station at Pio XII square will no longer be in operation.



By road

Getting to San Sebastian by car is simple. The city is connected to the rest of Spain and France by the N1/AP1 national highway (Madrid-Irun), the A-8 (Bilbao-Irun) and A-63 (Paris-Irun) motorways and the A-15 expressway (Pamplona-San Sebastian).

They will take you to practically any part of the city, so getting here by car is simple.

Accommodation

Its appeal as a tourist destination is rounded off by a huge selection of accommodation of every type. San Sebastian has hotels, ranging from 1 to 5 stars, and some guest houses. It also has hostels and a campsite that have been fully renovated. In the area around the city centre there are farmhouse hotels that provide the tranquillity of the mountains without having to stray too far from the city.

d-Bus public transport

San Sebastian has a comprehensive public bus service: d-Bus. Over 30 different lines will allow you to get from A to B in no time, cheaply and effortlessly. To make your bus journeys even cheaper and to gain access to many other places, we recommend that you buy the San Sebastian Card at the San Sebastian Tourist Office.

Taxis

If you prefer to get around the city by taxi, you will find lots of taxi ranks dotted around the city. You can also book a taxi on one of their telephone lines. The companies that operate in the city are:

Vallina Teletaxi: 943 40 40 40

Radiotaxi Donosti: 943 46 46 46

Tourist transport

To make the best use of your time and not miss out on any of the city's marvellous sights, the best option is to use tourist transport.

One option is the Tourist Bus. They are unmistakable. So much so that you'll think that you're in London. The Tourist Bus is a red, open-topped double-decker bus that goes around practically all of the city. It is a convenient and dynamic way of getting around that offer useful information in four different languages: Basque, Spanish, English and French.

With over one hundred years behind it, the Funicular is every bit as enchanting, charismatic and picturesque as ever. Sitting on its wooden chairs and seeing how it climbs to the Mount Igeldo Amusement Park while

San Sebastian Tourist Office - Donostia Turismoa and its products

Right in the city centre and with long opening hours, the San Sebastian Tourist Office provides all of the information that you request and a long list of tourist products and services to help you enjoy and explore the city.

True tourism professionals will be waiting for you in the office on Boulevard 8, Paseo de Francia 23 (Train Station) and Plaza Cervantes (summer information point).

San Sebastian Card is the master key to the city. It offers unbeatable discounts in participating establishments. Come to the San Sebastian Tourist Office and get yourself a San Sebastian Card.

www.sansebastianturismo.com



Communications and Press Contact at San Sebastian Tourist Office-Donostia Turismoa

Ainhoa Córdoba Ugarte
Telephone: +34 943 48 11 67
Email: ainhoa_cordoba@donostia.eus

Press contacts for festivals

Below are the telephone numbers and email addresses for San Sebastian's biggest festivals.

Dock of the Bay
Telephone: +34 943 22 45 30
Email: prentsa@dockofthebay.es

dFeria
Telephone: 943 48 1152 / 943 48 11 61
Email of Press Manager: mjaione_askasibar@donostia.org

Human Rights Film Festival
Telephone: +34 943 48 14 71
Email: cinederechoshumanos@donostia.org

Olatu Talka
Telephone: +34 943 48 16 66
Email: olatutalka@donostia.org

International Jazz Festival
Telephone: +34 943 48 19 00
Email: prensajazz@donostia.org

Musical Fortnight
Telephone: +34 943 00 31 70
Email: quincenamusical@donostia.org

San Sebastian International Film Festival
Telephone: +34 943 48 12 12
Emails
Press Manager: prensa@sanSebastiánfestival.com Koro Santesteban
Foreign Press Manager: press@sanSebastiánfestival.com Gemma Beltrán

Donostia Festibala
www.donostiafestibala.com

Horror and Fantasy Film Festival
Telephone: +34 943 48 11 57
Email: cinema_cinema@donostia.org

CIMASUB - Ciclo Internacional de Cine Submarino de Donostia – San Sebastián
Email: info@cidasub.com