

Elciego



Rows of leafy vines stretch across the hills and plains that surround the medieval town of Elciego. This is Basque Country, where limestone mountain ranges and chamomile valleys whisper a story of a vibrant culture, steeped in a great history. In peaceful towns, traditions pass from one generation to the next, family recipes are treasured, and skills, like the weaving of lace, are preserved. In cities, festivals transpire frequently, in celebration of food, saints, and above all, wine. For the finest treasures of this fertile soil are its grapes. They are known by the names of Tempranillo, Manzanillo, Graciano, and Garnacha, and they elevate this land where Romans and Moors once ruled, to legend.

Memorable Experiences

A Taste of Tapas

Sample the tapas at authentic restaurants along Logroño's Calle Laurel.

Spectacular Sights

Watch twirling stilt dancers at the Feast of Mary Magdalene in Anguiano.

Wine Delights

Stroll stone alleys and sample local vintages high on a hill in Laguardia.

Regional Wanderings

Venture deep into the Rioja Alta and visit a cave once home to San Millán.

Distinctive Details

The hills and valleys of La Rioja are heavily trodden. For over a millennium, Christian pilgrims have been making their way to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela on a route known as the Way of Saint James.

Starwood Preferred Guest Recommends


Logroño


Vivacity fills the air as bulls race around the ring, brass bands parade through the streets, and hearty locals stomp grapes in oak barrels. For six days in September, the town of Logroño celebrates the annual grape harvest with a jubilant festival.

Destination Information

Country Spain
Province Alava
Elevation 449 meters
Population 1,000 (city)
Language Spanish

 **Country Code:** 34
Area Code: 945

 **Bilbao (BIO) Logroño (RJL)**

 **Transportation:**
Car, Train (RENFE)

 **Euro**

Nearby Luxury Collection Hotels and Resorts



Hotel Marqués de Riscal

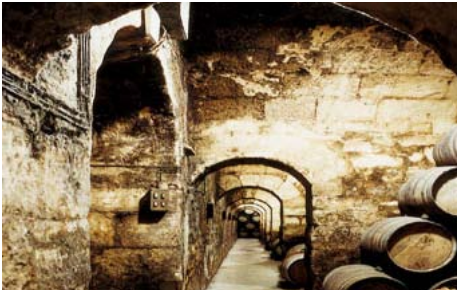
Calle Torrea, 1
Elciego, 1340
Phone: (34)(945) 180880



Culture

A brilliant pairing of fine art and superb wine forms an atmosphere of distinction.

Highly Recommended



Herederos de Marqués de Riscal

Thousands of glass bottles gleam darkly in the dim light of a cool cellar. Quietly, they whisper secrets of a long and detailed history. Many date back to the winery's beginnings a century and a half ago, when these two hundred hectares of rich Basque soil were first plowed. It was then the prized tempranillo, graciano, mazuelo, and cabernet sauvignon grapevines were planted. Fascinating tours of the winery's grounds and buildings reveal the process of winemaking through evocative stories of the past and presentations of modern technologies employed today.

Address: Calle Torrea, 1
Phone: (34) (945) 180888



Dinastia Vivanco Museum

Russet and cobalt tiles form an ancient mosaic. From an urn at its center, a grapevine grows, wrapping delicate tendrils around a deer, a goat, and a rooster. Dating from the sixth century, this piece of Roman art illustrates a civilization with wine at its essence. This work joins an unparalleled collection of chalices, kraters, and Renaissance paintings at the museum's art and archeology section. Within this vast complex, wine culture is honored with exhibitions, wine tastings, and a garden where over two hundred rare varieties of grapes are grown.

Address: Carretera Nacional 232, Briones
Phone: (34) (902) 320001



Würth Museum La Rioja

A framework of white steel supports an expanse of clear glass. Bright light fills a vast gallery where massive abstract and realistic sculptures, including Manolo Valdez's "Lillie" sit proudly. A marvel of architectural ingenuity, this stunning building lies within an industrial park in the village of Agoncillo and houses one of Europe's most extraordinary collections of modern art. Works from the private collection of German industrialist Reinhold Würth are regularly exhibited along with art workshops, movie screenings, and orchestral concerts.

Address: Avenida Los Cameros, 86, 87 & 88, Agoncillo
Phone: (34) (941) 010410



Artium Museum

As the sky turns deep sapphire over northern Spain, a triangular atrium in the center of Vitoria glows with a brilliant blue light. Crowned by this three-sided pinnacle, a white building defined by geometrics, sits within the city's medieval quarter. Beyond a cubic entry, Joan Miro's "Mural Ceramico" adds a splash of color to a stark foyer where a stairway leads beneath Javier Pérez's crystallized orb to the exhibition halls below. Here, a collection highlighted by Dalis and Picassos, joins exhibitions of contemporary artists from the Basque region.

Address: Calle Francia, 24 Vitoria-Gasteiz
Phone: (34)(945) 209000



Shopping

Expertly crafted items and fine culinary products lure the most discerning shopper.

Local Specialty



El Buen Gusto

In a historic stone building, on one of Santo Domingo de la Calzada's charming streets, shelves of dark wood are filled with fine gastronomic products. Boxes of locally made almond pastries and tea cakes are adorned with images of the medieval saint who gave the town its name. Bags of "Spaghetti al Nero di Sepia" and "Taglierini al Tartufu" from Italy bare a colorful illustration of a grandmother rolling out the pasta. Delightful products from Spanish olive oil to Riojan Chorizo can be found within this distinctive gourmet grocery.

Address: C/ Pinar, 94, Santo Domingo de la Calzada
Phone: (34) (941) 340580

Neighborhoods



Plaza San Ant3n's Market

A patchwork of fruit covers the table. Sun hued oranges, plump grapes, and deep red cherries sit beside soft figs, bristly kiwis, and ripening bunches of bananas. Ropes of garlic and shiny red peppers hang among leafy garlands, above freshly baked bread stacked upon checkered tablecloths. At the foot of the church of San Ant3n's clock tower, farmers from around the Alava region set up their stalls each Friday. They make their way across the stunning, mountainous landscape to the small stone town of Amurrio to sell the bounty of their seasonal harvest.

Address: Plaza San Ant3n's, Amurrio, 100 kilometers north of Elciego



Logroño

Beneath floral garlands carved into 18th century facades, crates of oranges, limes, tomatoes, and cabbages spill from open entryways. Inside an immense building on Calle Capitan Eduardo Gallarza, the Mercado de Abastos lies at the heart of Logroño's medieval center. Surrounded by Grand avenues, gothic spires, and enchanting homes with iron balconies, this historic city is filled with distinctive shops. Beneath arched colonnades that line leafy squares, small boutiques offer a range of distinctive local items such as ceramics, quilts, and lace.

Address: 23 kilometers east of Elciego



Cuisine

Roast lamb, smoked eel, and grilled sole, prepared elaborately, and served with gusto.

Acclaimed



Gastronomic Restaurant at the Marqués de Riscal

The alluring scent of baked lobster and red wine caviar fills the spacious dining room as the quiet of night descends upon Elciego. Among the chime of Baccarat stemware, conversations turn to the façade of the Iglesia de San Andres, illuminated, and framed by the angled oak beams of the window. In this stunning, Frank Gehry-designed interior, traditional dishes instilled with a dash of culinary avant-garde by Ramón Piñeiro under the direction of Michelin-starred chef Francis Paniego, are feasted upon between sips of rioja from the neighboring vineyard.

Address: Calle Torrea, 1
Phone: (34) (945) 180880



1860 Bistro

A burgundy carpet stretches across the length of this modern, third-floor restaurant, hinting at the exquisite reserve wine, which gives it its name. Views of undulating green hills that roll softly into magnificent Basque mountains stretch for miles, as they did over a century ago. Then, the Marquis de Riscal constructed his fabled stone cellars and began bottling that exquisite Rioja. Feast upon marinated anchovies and jamón serrano while seated upon curvaceous red chairs positioned beneath framed Frank Gehry sketches in a sophisticated dining room.

Address: Calle Torrea, 1
Phone: (34) (945) 180880

Local Specialty



Restaurant Posada Mayor de Migueloa

Sweeping fabrics, richly patterned in tones of crimson and cornflower blue, frame simply carved wooden doors. Exposed stonewalls, beamed ceilings, Persian rugs, and antique china cupboards create a magical ambience in this warm, softly lit dining room, the centerpiece of a stunning Spanish Baroque home, built in 1619. Succulent baby lamb, minced blood sausage, leek and shrimp terrine, and other exquisitely prepared regional dishes are served with Tempranillos and Granachas, Merlots and Cabernet Sauvignons from the restaurant's own ancient wine cellar.

Address: 20 Mayor de Migueloa, Laguardia
Phone: (34) (945) 621175



La Vieja Bodega

As if engaged in a waltz, square wooden tables, covered in white cloths are gracefully spaced beneath beamed cathedral ceilings. Terracotta tiles cover the floors of a complex of rooms, both vast and intimate, within a romantic stone building built above a seventeenth century wine cave. Aged oak barrels flank the dark wood of the entry near hearth-side armchairs where guests can enjoy a fine Spanish wine. Enjoy a hearty meal of chorizo asado or carrilleras con crema at this truly distinctive restaurant.

Address: Avenida de La Rioja, Casalarreina
Phone: (34) (941) 324254



Noteworthy

From ancient cloisters to dinosaur footprints, La Rioja enchants with possibilities.

Day Excursions



(Photo courtesy of Monasteria de Suso)

Monasterios de Suso y Yuso

Church bells echo throughout this Spanish valley, marking the time of day. For miles, verdant foliage covers the hillsides, encircling the monastery in a ring of natural paradise. At the center of this tranquil oasis, the arches of a colonnade frame a grassy courtyard where medieval monks once passed. Within the brick structure's rooms, illuminated manuscripts, brass chests, and holy statues are displayed beneath ornately painted ceilings. While the tombs of three queens of Navarre reside within the Mozarabic style Church of Suso.

Address: San Millán de la Cogolla, 37 kilometers southwest of Elciego
Phone: (54) (38) 6842 2229

Family



Enciso Paleontology Centre

In the arid outcrops of the Iberian foothills, massive fossils outline the places where dinosaurs once trod. Ancient relics, they provide evidence of a time when the largest living creatures ever known to have roamed the earth, lived and prospered in Spain. In the tiny, south Rioja town of Enciso, one of the world's most respected centers for paleontology research details the region's dozens of fossil beds. Fascinating bones and fossils are displayed within glass cases inside the museum. Outside, life-sized models bring back the Jurassic Age brilliantly.

Address: Calle Portillo, 3, Enciso
Phone: (34)(941) 396093

Further Afield



Guggenheim Bilbao

Undulating ribbons of gleaming silver titanium reflect the startling blue of a Biscay sky. An extraordinary architectural triumph by Frank Gehry, this sparkling jewel in the cultural crown of Bilbao is a majestic symbol of Spain. Inside, sloping walls and concrete floors lead from a spacious atrium to twenty galleries, which cover nine thousand square meters of space. Revolving temporary exhibitions culled from the collections of Guggenheim museums around the world take place alongside displays of the museum's own masterworks of modern and contemporary art.

Address: Avenida Abandoibarra, 2
Phone: (34) (944) 359080

Highly Recommended



Bodegas Remirez de Ganuza

A fortress, made of centuries-old masonry, rises like a medieval castle above the hills and valleys of Basque Country. Fifty hectares of rambling vineyards surround. Coiled, knotted branches entwine in elegant, organic patterns, dripping with lush clusters of deep purple grapes. Harvested in autumn, then fermented in stainless steel tanks and oak barrels, Ruby-hued tempranillos and cherry-toned gracianos are the bounty of this premiere Rioja Alavesa winery. Visits reveal ancient winemaking techniques, updated with the most advanced modern processes.

Address: Calle Constitución, 1, Samaniego
Phone: (34) (945) 609022