

San Sebastian



At the edge of the magnificent Bay of Biscay, in the heart of Basque region lies San Sebastián, the renowned gastronomic capital of Spain. Stretched across a glistening cerulean blue shoreline, this celebratory city of food and wine is infused with a bounty of culinary experiences: from fine tapas to acclaimed molecular gastronomy. A generous metropolis, infused with Basque culture, San Sebastián, inspires with its unparalleled artwork, fascinates with uncommon boutiques, and offers a stunning environment of old and new world in structures of architectural splendor.

Memorable Experiences

Coastal Views

Hike to the top of Monte Urgull and gaze at its spectacular harbor below.

Island Picnic

In summertime, plan a daytime picnic on the stunning Isla Santa Clara.

Cider House

Enjoy a local Guipuzcoan cider at one of the region's authentic sidrerias.

Beach Promenade

Stroll along the shore of the Playa de la Concha by the Paseo.

Distinctive Details

San Sebastián, known as Donostia in the Basque language, is a word derived from Donebastián. It combines “done” the word for “saint” with Sebastián. Thus, residents of the city are known as Donostiarras.

Starwood Preferred Guest Recommends

Pintxos

Fresh slices of hake, cod, and anchovies cover a crusty slice of bread. Served as an appetizer, and consumed with a glass of local red wine, these emblematic small dishes, known as pintxos are the Basque Country's own distinct form of Spanish tapas.

Destination Information

Country Spain
Province San Sebastián
Elevation 6 meters
Population 183,308 (2006)
Language Spanish, Castellano, Euskara



Area Code: 943
Country Code: 34



San Sebastián Airport (EAS)

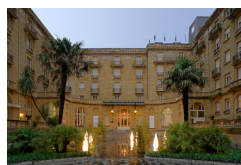


Transportation:
Car, Taxi, Train, Bus



Euro

Nearby Luxury Collection Hotels and Resorts



Hotel Maria Cristina

Paseo Republica Argentina, 4
San Sebastian, E- 20004
Phone: (34)(94) 3437600



Culture

Intriguing details of Greece's classical history emerge in authentic abodes.

Highly Recommended

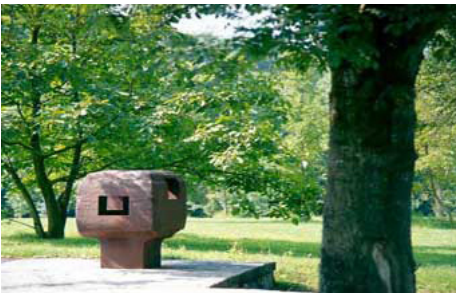


Centro Kursaal

Two cubes of translucent glass, resembling a pair of massive beach rocks, rest upon the sandy shores of the Bay of Biscay. Mirroring the deep golden glow of the moon, their illuminated walls harmoniously link their stunning natural surroundings with their man-made essence. Within this extraordinary work of architecture, auditoriums and exhibition halls witness the crescendo of a symphony orchestra, the pas de deux of a pair of ballet dancers, and the quiet hush of a crowd settling in as the opening movie of the San Sebastián International Film Festival begins.

Address: Avenida de Zurriola, 1
Phone: (34)(94) 3003000

Local Charms



Museo Chillida-Leku

Sunlight falls in patches upon the burnt umber surface of oxidized steel. It filters through the leafy branches of beech, oak and magnolia trees. They dot a grassy hillside where sculptures of iron, concrete, stone, and alabaster exist in harmony with bark-covered tree trunks. Nearly forty immense, moving works by the revered Basque artist Eduardo Chillida cover this tranquil sculpture garden just outside San Sebastián. At its center, within stone rooms, a sixteenth century farmhouse displays smaller pieces, made of materials like felt and plaster.

Address: Barrio Jauregi 66, Hernani
Phone: (34)(94) 3336006



Peine del Viento

Heavy lavender clouds hover above a swelling bay. Steel blue waters grow choppy as waves crash majestically against jagged rocks that glisten with hints of copper. From these mineral-rich boulders at the base of Mount Igeldo, beams of sculpted steel protrude. Robotic-like, crimped arms reach out into the salted air, pitting industrial strength against the unwavering might of the elements. An unprecedented masterpiece created by Basque artist Eduardo Chillida in 1976, the Wind Comb is an invigorating work of public art.

Address: Paseo de Eduardo Chillida

Recreation



Parque Cristina Enea

A peacock fans his tail feathers in a magnificent display of luminous turquoise and chartreuse, a regal prince of this inviting oasis. Bordered by a curve of glistening water that flows along the meandering path of the River Urumea, Cristina Enea Park offers serene moments of repose, as well as bountiful opportunities for recreation. Shaded paths lead beneath paved footbridges, past ebullient blossoms of fuchsia hydrangeas. White rabbits hide in the shadows of giant sequoias whose thick branches merge with tall ginkgos and form a heavenly canopy.

Address: Paseo del Duque de Mandas



Shopping

From art-inspired fashions to handmade chocolates, exquisite offerings abound.

Indigenous Flavors



Chocolades de Mendaro

Pure milk chocolate envelopes a wedge of marzipan as a skilled artisan prepares a batch of bonbons. In a folkloric boutique in the heart of San Sebastián, copper candy molds hang upon eggshell walls. Bite-sized treasures coated in shades of umber, ochre, russet, and dark brown are arranged sophisticatedly on white plates, within a pristine glass case. Since 1850, the revered Chocolades de Mendaro company has been creating over one hundred varieties of delectable nougats, pralines, truffles, and chocolate bars infused with nuts and liqueurs.

Address: Etxaide, 6
Phone: (34)(943) 424804

Local Charms



La Bretxa

Bundles of razor clams wrapped in twine lie beside long gray hake and silver sea bass. The spiny orange claws of a Norway lobster reach out toward fresh, hook-caught squid. Within San Sebastián's radiant neoclassical market building, constructed in 1870, a medley of Basque fare covers icy counters and fills rustic wooden crates. Heaps of earthy beets and urban patches of kale and swiss chard are found alongside thick wheels of artisanal cheeses that rise from marble tables like amber towers.

Address: Calle de Aldamar in Parte Vieja

Shops & Boutiques



Loreak Mendian

A light shines upon a sculpture of sanded chairs in the window. The provocative display acts as an alluring miniature gallery at Loreak Mendian. Within this Spanish shop's dynamic interior, pale wood offsets well-crafted streetwear with sophistication. Since 1995, artists Xabi Zirikiain and Victor Serna have been designing a line of stylish jackets, surf shorts, and knits in basic shades of black and beige, as well as colorful turquoise and sunflower hues. Their signature sundresses come in Bauhaus-inspired prints.

Address: Calle Hernani 27
Phone: (34)(943) 434176



Noventa Gardos

Flanked by a pair of Doric columns, the glass door of this modern shop leads into a vast, pristine space where fashion and art collide stunningly. Within the departments of San Sebastian's fashion concept shop are an array of curated books, cosmetics, music and even art toys alongside a selection of exciting men's and women's clothing and shoes. Recently awarded best designed shop in the Gizuakoa region, spend time perusing the adventurous world of Noventa Gardos.

Address: Calle Mayor 3
Phone: (34)(943) 420760



Cuisine

Tradition and innovation mingle in kitchens of exceptional gastronomic prowess.

Acclaimed



Martin Berasategui

A set of windows sweeps across a curved wall overlooking acres of verdant treetops. Walnut chairs upholstered in a deep, sophisticated blue match the walls that frame an impressive limestone hearth. Ivy tumbles from terracotta pots hung from iron trellises that separate tables from which the alluring scent of exquisite meals wafts. Acclaimed chef Martín Berasategui combines cinnamon and curry, and dry mint and tangerine in tantalizing dishes. Small portions preserve the distinct flavors of lightly smoked cod and roast mullet in his prized degustation menu.

Address: Loidi Kalea, 4, Lasarte-Oria

Phone: (34)(943) 36647194



Mugaritz

Cloaked in vines of dark green ivy, a terracotta-roofed farmhouse, nestled into the hills south of San Sebastián, is one of the world's most exquisite gastronomic havens. Beneath beamed ceilings, surrounded by wide planks of knotty pine, tables are laden with intriguing dishes. Small potatoes, coated with clay, resemble smooth stones. Beef served over cinders and crispy radishes appears to be a charred ember of coal. Deceptive in appearance, the unrivaled creations of star chef Andoni Luis Aduriz intoxicate with the sublime flavors of the Basque Country.

Address: Aldura Aldea 20, Errenteria

Phone: (34)(943) 522455

Indigenous Flavors



Zuberoa

Ravioli, filled with Norwegian lobster and truffles, exudes the aroma of sweet onion. Roast pigeon sauce infuses a risotto of foie gras. Chef Hillario Arbelaitz's inventive cuisine combines contemporary sophistication with authentic Spanish tradition. Surrounded by sumptuous landscaping of trimmed hedges and lush hydrangea bushes, this exceptional restaurant resides within a six-hundred-year-old farmhouse. Rich drapes hang against walls of ancient stone in a series of dining rooms, while the cool air of evening drifts among the rugged beams of a charming terrace.

Address: Plaza Bekosoro 1, Oiartzun

Phone: (34)(943) 491228



Casa Urola

Raisins scent foie gras, while rosemary infuses sea bass in signature dishes at Casa Urola. In this esteemed restaurant near San Sebastián's bustling main square, a harvest of garden herbs mingles with the bounty of the land and sea. Prized bottles of rioja, tempranillo, other varieties from the world's most notable wine regions fill an exquisite cellar and compliment traditional Basque dishes such as veal, ox, hake and anglerfish. An exciting dessert menu includes coconut ice cream and toffee french toast.

Address: Calle de Fermín Calbetón, 20

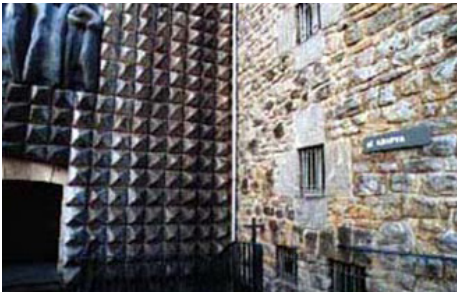
Phone: (34)(943) 423424



Noteworthy

The region's vibrant history is revealed in picturesque villages and merry parklands.

Day Excursions



Arantzazu

Carved from limestone, thousands of diamond-shaped tips emerge from the imposing façade of a staggering modernist structure. The abstract human shapes of fourteen apostles hover against the building's base. A moving work of avant-garde architecture, the Sanctuary of Arantzazu was constructed in 1951. Within its solemn main church, an astounding wooden altarpiece resembles a granite boulder with its chiseled plains of violet and ochre hues. An hour's drive from San Sebastián, this sacred retreat is encircled by an enchanting landscape of Basque mountains.

Address: Arantzazu, near Oñati, 85 kilometers south of San Sebastián



Hondarribia/Fuenterrabia

Red geraniums tumble over balconies painted blue, green, and brown and match the fishing boats that bob within the nearby harbor. Encircled by an ancient wall, this charming town on the eastern shore of the Bidasoa River lies just across the bay from France. The essence of the Middle Ages wafts through its colorful streets, hinting at a vivid past. A 10th century castle where King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella once lived rises above stately mansions. One of the most picturesque villages in all of Spain, Hondarribia lies just thirty minutes from San Sebastián.

Address: 22 kilometers east of San Sebastián, at the mouth of the Bidasoa River

Family



Monte Igueldo

A funicular railway car ascends through an archway of pines, rising smoothly up the tracks before emerging among sunny skies at the apex of fabled Mount Igueldo. From this lofty perch, one hundred sixty meters above sea level, singular views of San Sebastián and its glistening bay stretch out below. The sound of laughter fills the air as a teacup ride spins around in a dizzying swirl of vibrant red and blue hues. An emblem of the city, this historic amusement park delights with its pony rides, labyrinth, roller coaster, and distinctive old-fashioned rides.

Address: Entrance via Plaza del Funicular, 4

Phone: (34)(943) 213525

Neighborhoods



San Sebastián's Old Quarter

Tiers of balconies look out upon the umbrella-shaded cafes of Constitution Square. Elegant lanterns hang from the arches of colonnades that lead to the narrow, cobbled streets that wind through the heart of the city. Known as Parte Vieja, the distinctive buildings of San Sebastián's Old Quarter were rebuilt after the fire of 1861. Colorful shops and tapas bars line these inviting alleyways, embellished by buckets of yellow roses and pink geraniums situated nearby crates of onions and peppers. The ruins of ancient walls hint at this neighborhood's evocative past.

Address: Situated at the foot of Monte Urgull, between the river and the bay