BÉARN Pyrénées Pays BASQUE

Agence Départementale Tourisme 64

PRESS KIT

Béarn Basque Country

PLAISIRS D'HIVER * WINTER WONDERS

Brussels

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Villa Belza in Biarritz ©Edelweiss Loren Bedeli

Biarritz awaits you at Winter Wonders from 11/12 to 17/12

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The Rock of the Virgin in Biarritz ©Edelweiss Loren Bedeli



Sheep in the Basque Country ©PierreCarton

Discover Fromages Agour at Winter Wonders from 27/11 to 3/01



Iraty ©Guillaume Arrieta

EDITORIAL

Two lands, a world in harmony

There is a region in south-western France where you can travel from the coast to the Pyrenees in just a few hours. One department – the Pyrénées-Atlantiques – but two very distinct identities: the Basque Country and Béarn.

To the west, **the Basque Country** stretches from the Atlantic to the foothills of the Pyrenees. The coastline is often the first image that springs to mind: Bayonne, Biarritz, Anglet, Bidart, Guéthary, Saint-Jean-de-Luz or Hendaye. But leave the coast behind to discover another side to the region, one of villages, valleys, traditional houses, and landscapes of hills and mountains. From Lower Navarre to La Soule and the Pays Charnegou, the inland Basque Country nurtures a strong identity, underpinned by the Basque language, pelota, pastoral traditions, gastronomy and a thriving craft industry.

To the east, **Béarn** centres on Pau and gradually opens out towards the Pyrenees. From the vineyards of Jurançon to the hillsides of Northern Béarn, from the Pays de Nay to the Ossau, Aspe and Barétous valleys, the every-evolving landscapes tell a different story. A region characterised by its heritage, its traditional skills, its local produce and a mountain landscape still largely inhabited and shaped by pastoral activities.

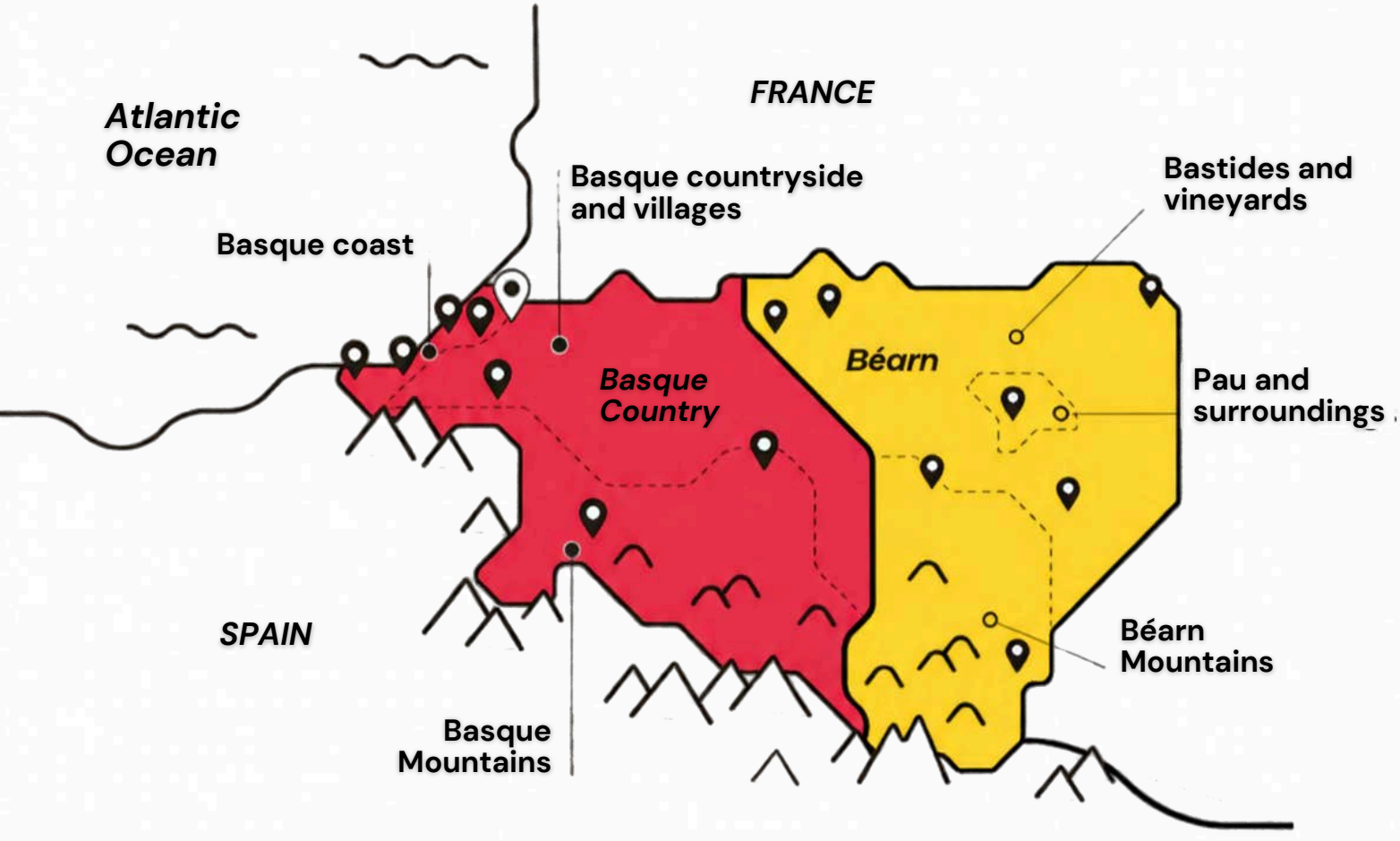
Two separate regions, but several common denominators. A love of markets and convivial meals, a passion for traditional skills, the importance of the mountains and agriculture, a vibrant culture and landscapes that invite you to take your time.

NAIA

MAP OF THE REGION

Nothing quite beats **a destination of contrasts**: a morning by the Atlantic could bring you face to face with a local creator; a drive through the villages could transport you to the vineyards of Béarn; and a gastronomic discovery could, in itself, tell a story of the region, of tradition and of local producers.

The Basque Country and Béarn each have their own distinct character. They come together to offer a destination where the journey is shaped as much by the landscapes as by the people you meet, the experiences you enjoy and the flavours you discover.



PYRÉNÉES ATLANTIQUES LE DÉPARTEMENT

The Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department offers an exceptional living environment for its 679,534 residents acrsos 547 communes.

Here, two strong cultures live side by side, with people preserving their **heritage, their customs and their languages: Béarn, the Pyrénées and the Basque Country.**

BÉARN & THE BASQUE COUNTRY IN BRIEF



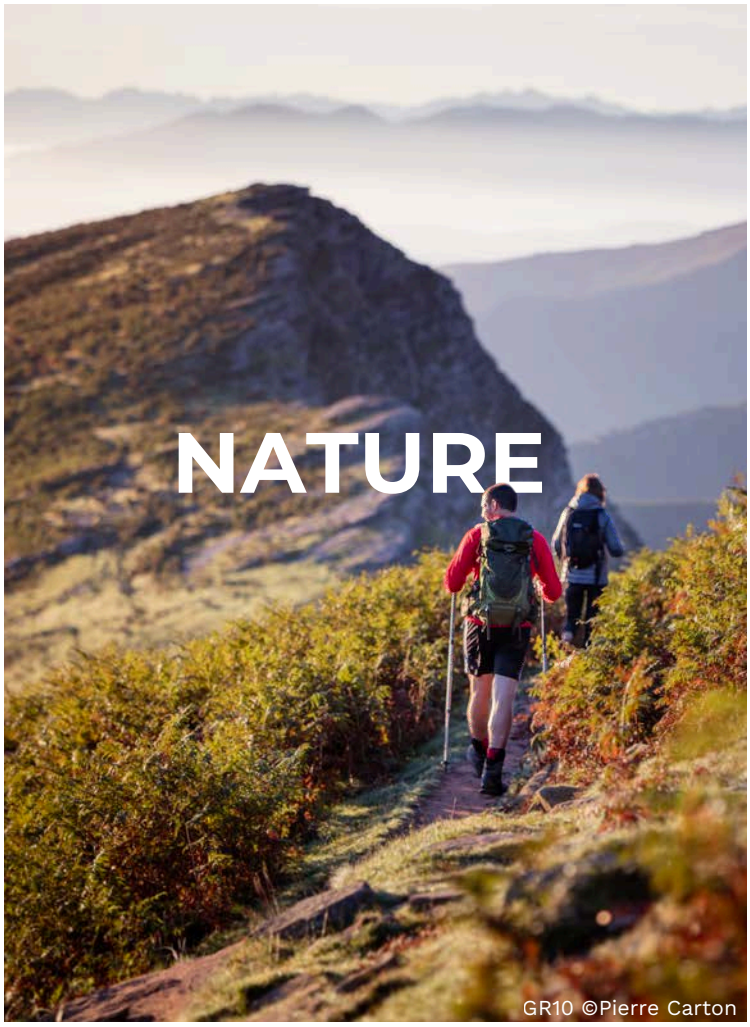
Pau Castle ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

- **5 'Towns and Lands of Art and History'**: Bayonne, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Ciboure, Pau, the Béarn Pyrenees
- **2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** the portal of Oloron-Sainte-Marie Cathedral, the Way of Saint James
- **Towns with a remarkable heritage:** Bayonne, Biarritz, Pau, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Oloron-Sainte-Marie...
- **Iconic sites:** Château de Pau, the Château-Observatory of Abbadia in Hendaye, Villa Arnaga in Cambo-les-Bains, two cathedrals – Lescar and Oloron Sainte-Marie
- **Charming villages:** Sare, Ainhoa, La Bastide-Clairence, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Navarrenx
- **Two living languages**: Euskara and Béarnais
- **Figures who have left their mark on history and culture:** Henry IV, Gaston Fébus, Bernadotte, Edmond Rostand, Maurice Ravel...
- **Traditions that are still very much alive**: songs, dances, pelota, Basque strength-lifting, and the whistled language of Aa – part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage

- **Basque-Béarnese linen:** Tissages Moutet, Lartigue 1910, Jean-Vier...
- **The French beret:** La Manufacture de Bérets, Laulhère
- **Espadrilles** 100 per cent French-made in Mauléon
- **Le Makila** in Larressore, a living heritage company
- **Jewellery and design:** Lorea Bijoux
- **The only manufacturer of shepherd's umbrellas:** the Pando family
- **Rare crafts:** cowbells, chistera, weaving and leatherwork
- **Studded bags and belts** from Laffargue in Saint-Jean-de-Luz
- **Goicoechea's XXL pottery**



"Manufacture de bérets" ©Loïc Forques



GR10 ©Pierre Carton

- From the Atlantic Ocean to the peaks of the Pyrenees, an **exceptional variety of landscapes**
- **The Coastal Path,** from Bidart to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and the Victor-Mendiboure Promenade in Anglet
- **Iconic peaks and sites**: the Rhune, the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, the Aiguilles d'Ansabère, the Pic d'Anie
- **The GR®10 and the major routes of the Way of Saint James**
- **Spectacular natural landscapes:** Iraty Forest, Holzarte footbridge, Bétharram Gorges, the Chemin de la Mâture hiking trail
- **Major underground sites:** the caves of Sare, Isturitz and Oxocelhaya, and La Verna
- Iconic wildlife of the Pyrenees: bears, marmots, griffon vultures, bearded vultures, chamois...
- **The Rhune Railway and the Artouste Railway**, two unique ways to climb up to catch the view

- **The Pyrenees in all their glory and their thrilling sports:** skiing, hiking, trail running, cycling, climbing, paragliding, canyoning, rafting, caving...
- **Cycle touring and the legendary mountain passes of the Tour de France:** Aubisque, Pourtalet, Marie-Blanque, Soulor and La Pierre-Saint-Martin
- **12 golf courses, set between the ocean and the mountains,** including Biarritz Le Phare and Pau Golf Club (founded in 1856)
- **Basque pelota, Basque strength games and rugby,** sports deeply rooted in the region
- **Pau, a hub for top-level sport,** with its white-water stadium, major clubs and racecourse
- **A Land of Champions,** from Tony Estanguet and Sébastien Combot to the big names in surfing and pelota



Gourette ©G.Arrieta



Cidrerie Arbonne ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

- **12 Michelin-starred chefs, including one with two stars** and numerous **renowned chefs hailing from Béarn and the Basque Country**
- **4 PDOs:** Kintoa Basque pork, Espelette chilli, Irouléguy wine, Ossau-Iraty sheep's cheese
- **Chocolate**
- **Banka trout**
- **Cider and Basque-Béarn beers**, Izarra, Patxaran
- **4 CDOs:** Jurançon, Béarn-Bellocq, Madiran and Irouléguy
- **Bayonne Ham PGI** and **Salies-de-Béarn Salt PGI** — 100 per cent pure
- **Ogeu,** mountain water from the Pyrenees
- **A proudly local cuisine:** poule au pot, garbure, axoa, Basque cake

- **5 thalassotherapy centres** overlooking the ocean in Anglet, Biarritz, Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Hendaye
- **2 high-end spas:** Loréamar at the Grand Hôtel in Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Guerlain at the Hôtel du Palais in Biarritz
- **Cambo-les-Bains,** a spa and health resort nestled between the ocean and the mountains
- **Salies-de-Béarn,** the town of salt and saltwater spa treatments
- **Eaux-Chaudes and Eaux Bonnes** — thermal spas in the heart of the Pyrenees
- Les Bains de Secours in **Sévignacq-Meyracq**: treatments and Nordic bathing out in the wild
- Calicéo in **Pau**: spa treatments, pools, sauna and steam room
- Hôtel du Parc Beaumont **in Pau**: spa and treatments in a luxury setting
- **Yoga, wellness retreats and time out,** by the sea, in the mountains or in the forest.



Saint-Jean-de-Luz ©Thalasso Thalazur



BY TRAIN

It is THE most environmentally friendly way to travel from Brussels. Seamless TGV connections via Paris or Bordeaux to the stations at Bayonne, Biarritz, Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Pau. Bordeaux and Toulouse are a 2-hour journey by TGV, Intercités or TER. The TER Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Txik Txak and Idelis networks also make your journeys easier, both on arrival and during your stay.



BY CAR

Two motorways lead drivers to our destination: the A63, which runs north-south along the Atlantic coast, and the A64, which serves the inland east-west axis.

BY PLANE

Biarritz-Pays Basque Airport offers a direct route to Brussels – direct flights from Brussels Charleroi / Brussels National depending on the season – and regular flights to Paris.
www.biarritz.aeroport.fr

AÉROPORT
BIARRITZ PAYS BASQUE

Pau Pyrénées Airport schedules daily flights to Paris CDG and Orly, as well as to Lyon.
Flight schedule:
www.pau.aeroport.fr



THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Guéthary ©Guillaume Arrieta

OCEAN WAVES and ancestral roots

The Basque Country is full of surprises! It basks in international fame, and yet it's such a small patch of land that, should you feel like it, you can walk the length and breadth of it in a single day! An extraordinary variety of landscapes then unfolds. Few destinations offer the luxury of a morning hike in the mountains and an afternoon on the beach. From the sophistication of Biarritz to the wild and unspoilt Soule region, the Basque Country strikes a perfect natural balance.

The journey begins in Labourd, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The coastline here is truly remarkable, boasting a wide variety of landscapes over a distance of just 30 km! Long stretches of fine sandy beaches, layered cliffs and hidden coves offer both wide-open spaces and more secluded spots.

The coastal landscapes also come with a variety of atmospheres: the high-society scene in Biarritz, 'Little California' in Anglet, a quiet, off-the-beaten-track spot in Guéthary, a family-friendly atmosphere in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and a touch of Spain in Hendaye...

Further inland, the landscape changes rapidly: villages pop up amongst the hills and valleys, traditional houses gradually give way to seaside villas, and the mountains draw nearer.

In just a few dozen kilometres, the region treats you to a host of different landscapes. Yet a shared identity remains: the Basque language, the cuisine, pelota, the festivals, traditional skills and a culture that continues to be passed down through the generations.



Biarritz ©F. Makhlouf

THE ATLANTIC COAST
FROM BIARRITZ TO HENDAYE

Following the course of the water along the Basque coast means passing through an endless variety of seascapes.

Biarritz

THE BEAUTY OF THE COAST

Biarritz underwent a transformation in the 19th century. When Empress Eugénie discovered the Basque coast, she decided to have a summer residence built there in 1855: the Villa Eugénie. Napoleon III and the imperial court also chose it at a bolthole. The town went on to attract an international clientele and became a highly sought-after holiday destination.

A EUROPEAN HISTORY

Villa Eugénie, now known as the Hôtel du Palais, still overlooks the Grande Plage. In the town centre, several buildings bear witness to this history: the Municipal Casino, built in the Art Deco style; the Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Church, attended by the vacationing Russian community; and the Church of Saint Eugenie.



La Grande Plage in Biarritz ©Edelweiss Loren Bedeli



Villa Belza as seen from Port-Vieux in Biarritz ©Guillaume Arrieta

Biarritz was also a forerunner in developing sea bathing and spa treatments. Thalassotherapy is still one of the town's big draws.



THE BIRTHPLACE OF SURFING

In 1957, American screenwriter Peter Viertel discovered the waves of the Côte des Basques while filming *The Sun Also Rises* in Biarritz. He had a surfboard sent over from the United States and took to surfing: this is often regarded as the starting point of the history of surfing in France. Since then, the Côte des Basques, the Grande Plage and the beaches of Anglet have become iconic spots. Schools, clubs, shapers and competitions are a regular feature of local life, well beyond the summer season.

CULTURAL AND SPORTING EVENTS

The town has a long sporting tradition, ranging from golf at Le Phare to rugby, and a rich cultural programme that runs throughout the year. *The Biarritz Latin America* and *Nouvelles Vagues film* festivals, the *Le Temps d'Aimer la Danse* dance festival, exhibitions and concerts play an important role in local cultural life.



Biarritz Golf du Phare ©Golf du Phare



Les Halles in Biarritz ©Edelweiss_Loren Bedeli

LES HALLES

the morning, Biarritz's covered market hall is another popular meeting place. Fishmongers, butchers, charcutiers, cheesemongers, greengrocers and local producers attract locals and visitors alike.

WALKS BY THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

In Biarritz, the ocean is always within sight. From the Rock of the Virgin, the seafront can be admired from a different angle. Further north, Biarritz lighthouse offers a panoramic view of the coast from the heights.

PLAISIRS D'HIVER * WINTER WONDERS

DESTINATION BIARRITZ

BIARRITZ AND ITS PARTNERS AT WINTER WONDERS

From 11 to 17 December, come and discover Biarritz and its partners at the heart of the Basque-Béarn Village, set up as part of the Winter Wonders event in Brussels. An opportunity to discover the destination, its key players and its local expertise, and to plan your next holiday on the Basque Coast.

→ Retrouvez toutes les informations sur Biarritz & ses partenaires :
www.destination-biarritz.fr

Bayonne

BAYONNE, A TOWN OF ART AND HISTORY

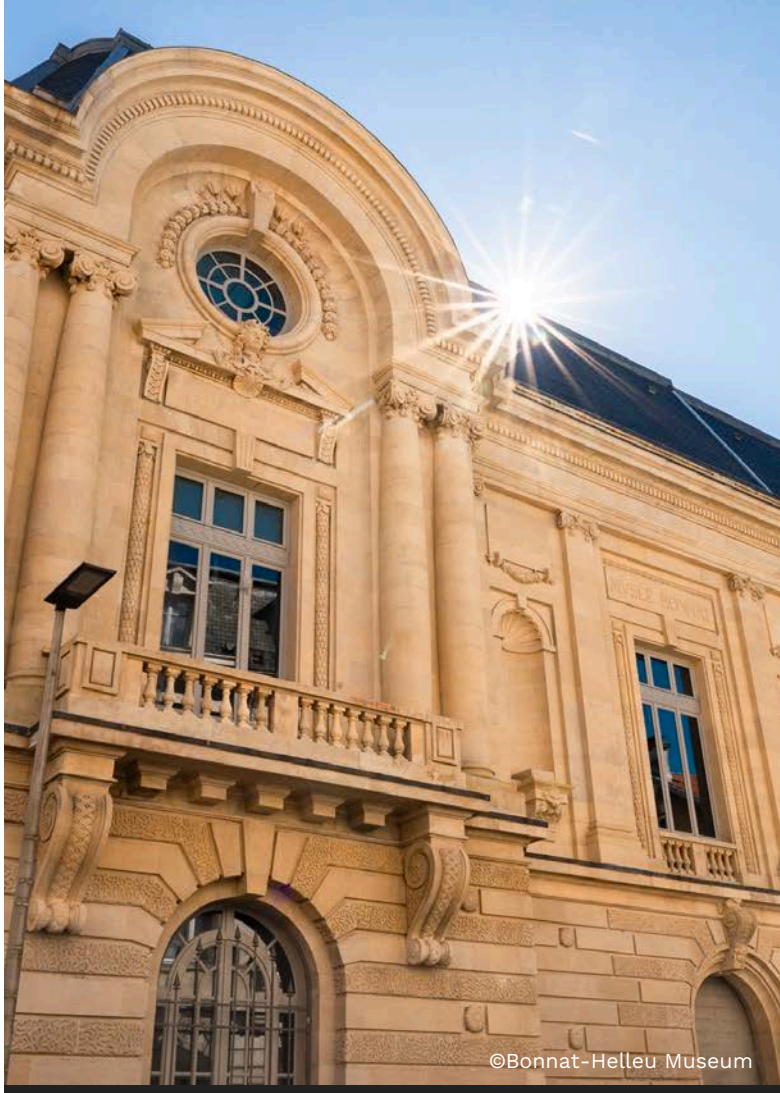
An open-air museum, the capital of the Basque Country can look back at 2,000 years of history. With its dual Basque and Gascon identity, Bayonne is a city with a captivating charm. Awarded the 'Town of Art and History' label, it has successfully preserved its historic centre with its medieval houses, châteaux that have forged the history of France, and ramparts fortified by Vauban. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its cathedral boasts one of the largest cloisters in France.

BETWEEN THE NIVE AND THE ADOUR

Bayonne was built at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour. Its narrow streets, half-timbered houses and quays betray its past as a trading and port town. Chocolate has a long history there: the first chocolate makers set up shop there as early as the 17th century.



The narrow streets of Bayonne ©F. Makhlouf



©Bonnat-Helleu Museum

+ RECENT ADDITION

THE BONNAT-HELLEU MUSEUM
A MUST FOR FINE ARTS LOVERS

Housed in the Petit-Bayonne district since its opening in 1901, the museum owes its existence to a bequest from the Bayonne-born painter Léon Bonnat (1833–1922).

Its collections of paintings, sculptures and graphic art include a collection of drawings by internationally renowned masters – **Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Dürer and Rembrandt**– as well as works by **Rubens, Goya, Ingres** and **Degas**.

It is now the Louvre's largest branch museum in France, and has established itself as an essential part of the Basque Country's cultural heritage.



Anglet ©F.Makhlouf

Anglet

BEACHES AND FORESTS

Its neighbouring town, Anglet, boasts 11 long, fine sandy beaches, stretching for 4.5 km from the Biarritz lighthouse to the Adour estuary. The greens at Chiberta Golf Club and the Atlanthal thalassotherapy centre skirt the ocean. On the paths of the Pignada – the maritime pine forest – walkers, horse riders, cyclists and joggers can indulge in their favourite activities in this green lung, which is the perfect place to recharge your batteries.



Port Saint-Jean-de-Luz / Ciboure ©Edelweiss_Loren Bedeli

Saint-Jean-de-Luz

LA CITÉ CORSAIRE

Sheltered by its bay, Saint-Jean-de-Luz retains traces of its maritime history, from fishing to trade and racing. The old town centre is home to numerous half-timbered houses and mansions.

It was here, in the Church of Saint John the Baptist, that Louis XIV married the Infanta of Spain, Marie-Thérèse, in 1660. Today, the harbour and the town's restaurants keep this connection with the sea alive, with local catch from the fish market and Basque specialities.

Hendaye

BORDERLINE

Once you've passed Ciboure and Socoa, you come to Hendaye, the last jewel in the coast's crown. The sea is calmer, and all eyes and thoughts turn towards Hondarribia and Spain. An ideal destination for families, where you can try your hand at stand-up paddleboarding or windsurfing, or moor your sailing boat in the marina, just a few metres from the Serge Blanco Thalassotherapy Centre.

Bidart and Guéthary

THE COASTAL VILLAGES

Bidart and Guéthary take the coastline to new heights. In Bidart, the Basque pelota court, the church and the traditional houses command the cliff line. In Guéthary, the former fishing and whaling port is as much a draw as the beaches and surf spots.

Two villages where you can discover a more intimate side of the Basque Country, with its coastal paths, small squares and breathtaking views of the Atlantic.



THE BASQUE



VILLAGES & COUNTRYSIDE

AN AUTHENTIC 100% BASQUE STYLE

Ainhoa ©Fotolia Delphotostock

Wether they're on the coast or tucked away inland, Basque villages have that magical power of attraction that you simply don't find anywhere else... There are the houses, of course, with their white façades streaked with red or green; the church with its polished wooden galleries running along the walls; and the landscaped cemetery dotted with disc-shaped gravestones. Next, the Basque pelota court, or fronton, – an integral part of the landscape and way of life. People come here to bounce a few balls, either bare-handed or with a pala, before heading off to enjoy a coffee or a glass of sangria on the terrace, just a few metres away.



Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port ©Ivan Rodeo Rodriguez



Espelette ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat



La Bastide Clairence ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

HOME TO FRANCE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES

Just a few minutes from the sea, the scenery changes. The Basque Country's inland region marks the gateway to a sheltered haven where an authentic way of life, shaped by the land and the history of its people, is cultivated – a landscape of many contrasts, oozing natural charm.

Against this endearingly picturesque backdrop, the Basque villages are dotted with red and white houses nestled in the hollows of the hillsides, where flocks of sheep and Basque pigs graze in semi-freedom. A harmony in which everyone nurtures their own individuality: **Espelette** and its fields of bright red chillies, **Sare**, a former stronghold of smuggling, and its 'Saran Astia' – an invitation to take time to enjoy life whilst sitting at a café terrace overlooking the Rhune. A carefree 'dolce vita' that serves as a reminder that we are here in one of **the most beautiful villages in France**, a title also held by the ancient bastides of **Aïnhoa, La Bastide-Clairence** and **Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**.

The more remote villages tell you that you have reached the region of Lower Navarre. From a height of almost 900 metres, Mount Baïgurra watches over the tranquillity of **Hasparren**. As you follow the Nive, which winds merrily from **Cambo-les-Bains** to **Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**, the mountains start standing tall as the first foothills of the Pyrenees. The half-timbered houses of the Basque villages give way to pink sandstone and cobbled streets leading to the **Garazi citadel**, a major milestone on the **Way of Saint James**.



St-jean-Pied-de-Port ©ivanrodeorodriguez

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port Saint-Palais

ON THE RIGHT PATH

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, a medieval town surrounded by pink sandstone ramparts, is a legendary and internationally renowned stopover for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Just a few kilometres away, Saint-Palais, the former capital of the Kingdom of Navarre, is a hub at the crossroads of the ways of Saint James, faithful to the spirit of the fairs of yesteryear.

The Pays Charnégou

BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

On the border between the Basque Country and Gascony, along the Bidouze and the maritime Adour rivers, the Pays Charnegou (Xarnegu) nurtures a unique blend of cultures. It is a harmonious blend of Basque culture and Gascon traditions, renowned for its unspoilt riverside landscapes, its boatmen and its relaxed way of life.



Gramont Castle in Bidache ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

La Soule

THE WILD BASQUE MOUNTAINS

The most secluded and unspoilt province in the Basque Country. A land of rich oral traditions (pastoral customs, dances), La Soule is home to the spectacular Holzarte footbridges and Europe's largest beech forest (Iraty Forest).



Holzarte footbridge ©C.Migeon

Iraty Forest

EUROPE'S LARGEST BEECH FOREST

Draping the Pyrenees and straddling the border between France and Spain, Iraty is the largest beech forest in Europe. Shepherds and their flocks making their way up to the mountain pastures, hiking, horse riding, river fishing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in winter... The seasons set the rhythm of life in this vast forest, which also attracts amateur birdwatchers to the Col d'Organbidexka, a major bird-spotting site during migration periods.



Pic du midi d'Ossau ©Aurelien Brusini



FROM THE ROYAL CITY **TO THE PYRENEAN VALLEYS**

Nestled between the Atlantic and the mountain peaks, Béarn is a land of balance and character.

Understated yet vibrant, unspoilt yet daring, this region captivates visitors with its diversity, its authenticity and the warmth of its welcome.

From the royal city of Pau to the mountain villages, from the plains of Jurançon to the ridges of Ossau, Aspe and Barétous, Béarn comes to life through its landscapes, traditions and the people who cross your way.

Here, nature is a source of wonder: sparkling lakes, crystal-clear mountain streams, deep forests and pastoral plateaus form a magnificent natural landscape, preserved for centuries by the shepherds.

Throughout the seasons, the roads of Béarn offer unforgettable getaways: wine routes, mountain-passes and walking trails winding through villages proud of their character and history.

Foodies are also in for a treat, as Béarn promises simple, authentic delights: summer mountain cheeses, garbure, poule au pot, foie gras, Salies salt, Roussanne peaches, and wines from Jurançon, Madiran and Pacherenc...

From farm to inn, from markets to fine dining establishments, every product tells a story of passion and tradition.

The region is also renowned for its craftmaking and creative talents, who are true ambassadors for ‘Made in Béarn’: cowbells, berets, woven fabrics, Pyrenean wool... all examples of living, recognised craftsmanship.

And because here, everything is shared, celebrations are part and parcel of life: transhumance, food fairs, sporting and cultural events, festivals and pastoral celebrations mark the passing of the seasons, celebrating the mountains, a sense of community and the art of living.

Béarn isn’t the sort of place you just visit. It’s a place that gets under your skin, a place you keep coming back to.



Vallée d'Ossau Pyrénées Office de Tourisme

PLAISIRS D'HIVER * WINTER WONDERS

Artouste Train in the Ossau Valley ©Fotolia_photlook.jpg

A destination to discover at Winter Wonders from 27/11 to 3/12

Pau

ROYAL CITY

Pau, the capital of Béarn, lies on a natural terrace overlooking the Pyrenees. You have to have walked along the Boulevard des Pyrénées at least once to understand the appeal of the city of Pau. On a clear day, the Pyrenean mountain range rises up majestically on the horizon, stretching behind the town as far as the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. As the birthplace of King Henry IV, Pau preserves traces of its Bearnese and royal history around its château. The 19th century transformed the city: it became an international holiday resort, as its villas,gardens and grand hotels still bear witness. Today, the town's historical heritage coexists with a vibrant cultural, culinary and sporting scene. A town where the mountains are always in view, even right in the heart of the town centre.



THE BALCONY OF THE PYRENEES

From the legendary Boulevard des Pyrénées, your gaze drifts towards the snow-capped peaks: a life-size tableau that has inspired kings, poets and travellers. The gardens of the **Château d'Henri IV**, the shaded avenues of **Parc Beaumont**, the **Place Royale** and the modern **Halles** all tell the story of a city that has successfully blended heritage and modernity. With one of Europe's finest green spaces, Pau stands out as a garden city on a human scale – a place where you can breathe easily and feel welcome.



Boulevard des Pyrénées ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

THE JURANÇON

A few kilometres from Pau, the Jurançon hillsides give way to a different landscape: that of a vineyard on sloping terrain, facing the Pyrenees and specialising in the Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng grape varieties. Jurançon, the "wine of gold and light", is not just a wine: it is a way of life, proud and generous, just like those who grow it.



Jurançon vineyard ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

Pays de Nay and Northern Béarn

A BREAK IN THE PYRENEES

At the foot of the Pyrenees, the Pays de Nay stretches along the Gave de Pau, amongst villages, hills and the foothills. The region retains a strong artisanal identity, notably through Sonnailles Daban, which carries on the tradition of crafting cowbells for the local herds. Another iconic example of the expertise found in the Béarn foothills, Soulor 1925 manufactures footwear and leather equipment designed specifically for mountain activities.



Pays de Nay @Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

BETWEEN BASTIDES AND WINES WITH CHARACTER

Further north, the landscape becomes more undulating. The châteaux of Morlanne and Montaner dot the hills of Béarn, whilst the vineyards of Madiran and Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh form an agricultural landscape shaped by the vines.



Morlanne Castle @Pierre Carton

Heart of Béarn

UNHURRIED ELEGANCE

Between Pau and the Gave d'Oloron, the landscape takes on a gentle feel and a golden sheen. The villages of Lacommande and Lucq-de-Béarn come alive with the changing seasons and the rhythm of viticulture. The Cœur de Béarn invites you to venture off the beaten track. The Gothic churches and medieval commanderies serve as a reminder that this land was once a route for pilgrims on the Way of Saint James. Medieval Orthez invites you to push open its heavy wooden and wrought-iron doors – relics of a bygone era – to reveal its heritage. The Pont Vieux, the Moncade Tower and the old houses tell the story of the former capital of Béarn. In Monein, the Church of Saint-Girons boasts a striking roof structure, shaped like an upturned ship's hull, set amidst the Jurançon hillsides.



Orthez-Pont Vieux ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

The region is also characterised by traditional skills that are still being passed down in the workshops. The beret, a regional symbol that has become a universal icon, has long been part of the industrial history of the Béarn region and is still manufactured locally.

THE PYRENEAN Valleys

As you head south, the face of the Béarn landscape changes. The valleys narrow, the peaks come into view and the herds make their way up to the summer pastures when the weather turns fine. The mountains are not just a place for hiking, but a space for work, production and the passing on of knowledge. Ossau, Aspe and Barétous each tell a different story of the Béarn's uplands.

The Ossay Valley

As soon as you head south from Pau, the mountains gradually come into view. At the far end of the valley looms the Pic du Midi d'Ossau, its jagged silhouette towering over the pastures and villages.

At Laruns, the valley narrows. This is where many of the main routes to the mountains converge, but it is also the hub of local life: the market, shops, local producers and the starting points for the summer pastures.

A MOUNTAIN OF SHEPHERDS

In Ossau, pastoralism remains a prominent feature of the landscape.



The Ossau Valley ©Aurelien Brusini

Every spring, the herds leave the villages to head for the high-altitude pastures. The summer pasture huts are still used by shepherds during the season, and the seasonal migration of livestock sets the pace of life in the valley.

This activity has also given rise to an iconic product: Ossau-Iraty. Sheep's-milk cheese tells the story of the connection between the flocks, the mountain pastures and the expertise of the farmers and cheesemakers. Several producers open their doors, giving visitors the chance to discover how these products are made right here in the local area.



@Adrien Basse-Cathalinat



©Fotolia



Photographer : Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

LIVE ACTION EXPERIENCES

Hiking is one of the best ways to understand the geography of the valley. Head for the Ayous Lakes area for a famous view of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. There are other routes that take you on multi-day hikes, taking in mountain passes, summer pastures and mountain huts.

But you don't have to be an experienced hiker to get a bird's-eye view. In **Artouste, the little tourist train** travels nearly 10 kilometres at an altitude of over 2,000 metres, allowing visitors to experience the high-mountain scenery without having to set off on a full day's hike.

In winter, the valley is transformed. Alpine skiing, snowshoeing and other mountain activities attract visitors, while the villages continue to live in tune with the rhythm of the valley.

SPA RESORTS

The history of Ossau is not just a tale of mountaineering. In the 19th century, the thermal springs of **Eaux-Bonnes** and **Eaux-Chaudes** attracted visitors from all over Europe. Eaux-Bonnes still bears traces of that era in its architecture and historic mansions.

A VALLEY THAT TELLS ITS STORY THROUGH ITS RESIDENTS

What makes the Ossau Valley so fascinating is precisely the fact that you can move from one world to another in the space of just a few kilometres: meet a shepherd in the mountain pastures, discover how Ossau-Iraty cheese is made, walk around the Ayous lakes, take the Artouste train or follow in the footsteps of the thermal spa tradition in Eaux-Bonnes.
The Pic du Midi d'Ossau is everywhere, but the valley is more than just its landscape. It is also brought to life through the people who live and work there.

THE PERFECT BALANCE

The Ossau Valley is a promise of freedom.

- Its high-altitude lakes (Bious-Artigues, Gentau, Anglas, Arremoulit...) form a string of crystal-clear waters, reflecting the sky overhead
- Its legendary mountain passes, the Aubisque and the Pourtalet, draw cyclists and walkers with their promise of adventure and unforgettable panoramic views
- The Bénou and Castet plateaus offer peaceful vistas, where you come across herds grazing in the summer pastures and the watchful eyes of the shepherds, guardians of a tradition dating back thousands of years



PLAISIRS D'HIVER * WINTER WONDERS

THE OSSAU VALLEY AT WINTER WONDERS

From 27 November to 3 December 2026, discover the Ossau Valley at the heart of the Basque-Béarn Village, set up as part of Winter Wonders in Brussels.
An opportunity to discover the valley, its landscapes, its traditional skills, its local producers and its pastoral heritage.

→ Discover the Ossau Valley : *www.valleedossau-tourisme.com*

ASPE & BARÉTOUS



Vallée de Barétous, étape VTT Accous-Licq Atherey @P.Gaillard

The Barétous Valley

BELOW AND ABOVE THE MOUNTAIN

To the west of Béarn, the Barétous Valley winds its way up towards the Pierre Saint-Martin massif. In winter, the countryside is blanketed in snow and the resort of La Pierre Saint-Martin becomes a haven for skiing and mountain excursions.

In summer, these same slopes come alive with colour: the herds make their way up to the summer pastures and the footpaths allow visitors to explore the limestone landscapes of the mountain range.

At the foot of the mountain, the La Verna cave offers a different way to explore Pierre Saint-Martin. This vast cavern, which is open to the public, leads deep into the heart of one of the Pyrenees' major underground cave systems. A valley whose appearance changes completely with the passing of the seasons.

La vallée d'Aspe

TREADING ANCIENT PATHS

Further west, the Aspe Valley offers a more rugged landscape of forests, cliffs and mountain peaks, leading on to the Col du Somport and the Spanish border. For centuries, this historic route has linked the two sides of the Pyrenees, particularly along the Way of Saint James.

The valley still bears traces of this history of crossings and borders, notably in the form of the Fort du Portalet, built in the 19th century to guard the Somport Pass.

Further up, the Chemin de la Mâture, carved into the cliff face, serves as a reminder of how the Pyrenean forests were exploited for the French Royal Navy.



Ossau-Iraty cheeses ©Adrien Basse-Cathalinat

A CULINARY TRADITION SPANNING TWO REGIONS

Photographer : Pierre Carton



The wealth of PDOs and culinary expertise

Gastronomy is, first and foremost, a story of produce and regions. Sheep's cheese, chillies, ham, wines, free-range pork or chocolate: behind every speciality lie landscapes, producers and expertise passed down through the generations.

The Basque Country and Béarn are home to several products with protected designation of origin or protected geographical indication status, which help to showcase not only this diversity but also the links between the two regions.

PRODUCE THAT TELL THE STORY OF THE REGION

IROULÉGUY PDO

The smallest appellation vineyard in France, covering barely 270 hectares, planted in terraces on the steep slopes of the Pyrenees, around Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. A little-known but distinctive vineyard, producing reds, rosés and whites that are characterised by their mountain terroir.

JURANÇON PDO

On the hillsides of the Béarn region, the vineyards produce dry and sweet white wines, made primarily from Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng. The plots offer unobstructed views of the Pyrenees — as far as the Pic du Midi d'Ossau on a clear day.

OSSAU-IRATY PDO

Made from sheep's milk in the mountains of the Basque Country and Béarn, Ossau-Iraty is closely linked to pastoralism and summer pastures. One and the same cheese for two mountain regions – and one of the finest examples of how the border between Béarn and the Basque Country vanishes when it hits our plates.

ESPELETTE CHILLI PDO

Grown in the area around Espelette, chilli has become one of the hallmarks of Basque cuisine. Whether dried in bunches on the outside walls or used fresh, it imparts a fragrant warmth rather than a dominant spiciness.

KINTOA PDO & BAYONNE HAM PGI

Two charcuterie products that showcase the region in different ways. The Kintoa pig, a variety of the Basque Pie Noir breed, is reared outdoors in an area stretching from the Basque Country to Béarn – a pig that is as much from Béarn as it is from the Basque Country. Bayonne ham, on the other hand, is matured within the geographical area defined by its PGI, along the Adour river basin.



Espelette chillies ©Kultur Piment



The Irouléguy vineyard

This is one of the smallest vineyards in France. Around ten winegrowers currently produce wine under this AOC-classified appellation, whose vines cover the Basque hillsides in the regions of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Saint-Etienne-de-Baigorry. While the white Irouléguy has a lovely straw yellow colour with green highlights, citrus notes and hints of exotic fruit, red Irouléguy (Cabernet, Tannat) has a deep garnet colour with hints of mauve; it is very distinctive, with notes of spices, red and black berries, and aromas of woodland. In 2020, it obtained the Vignobles & Découvertes label.



Irouléguy ©Pierre Carton

A TASTE of BÉARN



BOÛ PIC
ENJOY YOUR MEAL IN THE BEARNESE DIALECT

Poule au pot @Makhlouf

In Béarn, traditional cuisine is characterised more by soups, stews and hearty meals.

Here, we're not just talking about products: we're talking about a connection, a legacy, a way of living off the land.

Béarn Pyrénées is a region where a love of authenticity is nurtured – a love of time-honoured traditions, the passing of time and the craftsmanship of the human hand. From the farm to the table, from the mountain pastures to the market, from the mill to the restaurants, the short supply chain is anything but a trend – it is a tradition.

FROM FIELD TO FORK

A TERROIR OF ABUNDANCE AND CHARACTER

At the table, the classics never disappoint: **garbure**, a hearty peasant soup; **poule au pot**, a favourite of King Henry IV; and **foie gras**, the pride of the Béarn region, which has become France's second-largest producer.

And to bring out these flavours, a white gem:
Salies-de-Béarn salt, harvested for centuries from
natural salt pans, is now prized by chefs for its purity
and its ability to bring out the best in meat and
cheese.

Flour from the **Moulin de Sabathier** gives traditional French breads and pastries their soul. This former watermill, which has been restored to working order, is open all year round: guided tours, hands-on workshops and activities allow visitors to see how grain is turned into flour.

And to finish off, some sweet treats – **pastis béarnais**, a fragrant brioche traditionally made from an extremely fine dough, is the speciality not to be missed. At local markets and in local bakeries, you can also find fruit, honey and jams produced in the valleys.

Bearnese Garbure @Pierre Carton



A TASTE of THE BASQUE COUNTRY



ON EGIN ! ENJOY YOUR MEAL IN BASQUE

Chez Mattin in Ciboure ©Ivan Rodeo Rodriguez

The Basque Country is a gourmet treasure trove of flavours, and chefs and producers alike are brimming with ideas! The Atlantic has been kind to this small patch of the Gulf of Biscay and the inland regions where the land's produce is plentiful. Here, the chefs have at their disposal all the riches and diversity that the Basque countryside has to offer. They cook, and often, like artists, they create, blending flavours and colours, adding touches that evoke nearby Spain. From Bayonne to San Sebastián, there are plenty of excellent restaurants, and the region boasts a whole galaxy of Michelin stars.

THE ORIGINAL SURF & TURF

In the Basque Country, the cuisine is a reflection of this region bordered by the Atlantic and the Pyrenees. Along the coast, the harbours and markets are teeming with fish and seafood. In the countryside, traditional dishes feature meat, vegetables, corn and chillies.

FROM THE FISH MARKET TO THE FORK

With its fishing ports at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Ciboure and Hendaye, the Basque Country has a long-standing connection with the ocean. Tuna, hake, anchovies, sardines and baby squid can be found on market stalls and on plates, simply grilled, cooked à la plancha or prepared using family recipes.

Marmitako, a stew made with tuna and potatoes, is particularly evocative of the history of Basque fishermen. A cuisine where the ingredients take centre stage and where the plancha has become an iconic cooking method.

DISHES THAT TELL THE STORY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Home cooking also has its own great classics. Axoa, made with veal, sweet chilli and Espelette pepper, is a staple of Basque cuisine. Piperade, made with tomatoes, onions and chillies, is often served with eggs and ham. Taloa, a traditional corn flatbread cooked on a hot griddle, is enjoyed topped with ham, cheese, streaky bacon or seasonal produce.



Col de Gamia restaurant ©Ivan Rodeo Rodriguez

CONVIVIAL MEALS

Markets, market halls, local producers, cider houses, restaurants and village festivals are all great ways to discover this cuisine. From fishing to family recipes, it brings together the two sides of the region and continues to evolve alongside today's producers, artisans and chefs.



Maison Accoceberry ©Ivan Rodeo Rodriguez



Maison Paries ©Gaturi_ivan-rodriguez-sveltstudio.jpg

Sweet Treats !

THE ITXASSOU CHERRY

Production has fallen significantly, but the festival is still going strong. A young female producer has been reviving production of this local variety for the past few years. A dozen other growers have also joined the cherry growers' economic interest group. The harvest takes place from mid-May to mid-June. Three growers harvest Itxassou cherries (Xapata, Peloa and Beltza: the names of the three varieties).

MACARONS AND MOUCHOUS

In Saint-Jean-de-Luz, the 'mouchous' and 'kanougas' from Maison Pariès have become classics. The first looks like a small, soft almond macaron; the second is a soft caramel, available in flavours such as chocolate, coffee or hazelnut.



CHOCOLATE

Bayonne was the first town to discover the cocoa beans brought by Jews who had been expelled from Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition at the end of the 15th century. Ever since then, chocolate has been a tradition.
1996/1997 was declared as the 'Year of Chocolate' in Bayonne, a campaign featuring a variety of events organised by several partners, notably the Guild of Chocolatiers and the Academy of Chocolate.

THE BASQUE CAKE

The Basque cake remains one of the region's most famous sweet specialities. Traditionally filled with custard or black cherry jam, today, it comes in a variety of versions, depending on the pastry chefs' recipes.



Maison Adam ©Ivan Rodeo Rodriguez

MANUFACTURING & TRADITIONNAL SKILLS

Traditions passed down through the generations

From the Basque beret to Basque linen, and from the Béarn cowbell to the makhila, the Pyrénées-Atlantiques are home to a wealth of traditional skills linked to the region's history and landscapes.

Some workshops have been in operation for several generations; others have chosen to develop these traditional crafts through contemporary design and creativity. Several companies have been awarded the 'Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant' (EPV) or Living Heritage Company label.

THE MAKHILA, THE SYMBOL OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

The makhila is much more than just a walking stick. Made from medlar wood and crafted by hand, it also has a symbolic and honorary significance. Its manufacture involves numerous stages and requires a great deal of sculpting and engraving.



In Larressore, the **Ainciart Bergara** workshop has been carrying on this craft for over two centuries and seven generations — it is the oldest makhila workshop in the Basque Country. Over the years, the workshop has presented its creations to figures as diverse as all the presidents of the Fifth Republic, Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II and Winston Churchill as, which demonstrates how the makhila serves not only a piece of art but also as an instrument of diplomacy.

TEXTILES, FROM BERETS TO TABLE LINEN

In Orthez, **Tissages Moutet** carry on the textile tradition and are now fashioning contemporary collections centred on table linen. In the Basque Country, traditional textiles are also still being produced and reimagined in local workshops. The beret remains one of the symbols of Béarn's craftsmanship. **Laulhère** continues to produce it, whilst other companies are developing this traditional accessory for a new generation.

OBJECTS THAT TELL THE STORY OF THE MOUNTAINS

In the valleys of Béarn, cowbells are a familiar sight in the pastoral landscape. On the outskirts of Nay, **Sonnailles Daban** keeps this craft – linked to livestock farming and transhumance – alive.

In Ossès, **Poterie Goicoechea** works with clay and produces pieces ranging from traditional pottery to contemporary designs.

LEATHER AND ESPADRILLES

In Mauléon, the **espadrille** – a traditional, lightweight canvas shoe with a sole made of braided hemp or esparto grass – remains deeply rooted in the history and craftsmanship of the Soule region. The area is also home to workshops specialising in leather goods and leatherwork. In Nay, in the Béarn, **Le Soulor 1925**, carries on the tradition of crafting leather footwear. Inside the workshop, you can see the manufacturing techniques at work: cutting the leather, piecing together, fitting the upper to the last, assembling the shoe and... the final touches.



PLAISIRS D'HIVER * WINTER WONDERS

THE FACES OF THE BASQUE-BÉARN VILLAGE IN BRUSSELS

— THE PRODUCERS present between 27 November and 3 January



LA CAVE D'IROULÉGUY
- IROULÉGUY / BAIGORRI

On the sometimes vertiginous slopes of the Basque Country, 27 winegrowers cultivate one of the smallest vineyards in France. Organised as a co-operative since 1952, they produce the reds, whites and rosés of the Irouléguy AOC – mountain wines with a strong character.



©Pierre Carton

FROMAGERIE AGOUR
- HÉLETTE / MENDIVE

Since 1981, this family-run business has been turning sheep's milk into Ossau-Iraty PDO in the heart of the Basque mountains. Its expertise has earned kudos around the world: its cheese has twice been crowned 'World's Best Cheese' at the World Cheese Awards.



FERME AGERRIA
- IROULÉGUY

In Irouléguy, at the foot of the vineyards, Daniel Dupuy and his team work with Basque local produce to create a range of foie gras, confits, pâtés and prepared dishes. Their speciality is foie gras with Espelette pepper, alongside generous recipes such as axoa and Basque-style chicken. A cuisine full of character, inspired by family recipes and the flavours of the Basque Country.



EGIAZKI
- SAINT-PÉE-SUR-NIVELLE

Two brothers have revived the iconic flavours and recipes of the Basque Country to create contemporary artisan spirits. Their signature drinks: Patxaran made with wild sloes, as well as the refreshing Menta and a range of creations to enjoy as an aperitif or digestif.

MAISON PARIÈS
- SOCOA / SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ

Chocolatiers and pastry chefs since 1895, five generations have passed down the secrets of Basque delicacies here. Don’t miss the famous Mouchous®, Kanougas® soft caramels, chocolate and, of course, the must, the Basque cake!





MAISON PIERRE OTEIZA
- LES ALDUDES

As a pig farmer and artisan charcutier, Pierre Oteiza played a major role in saving the Basque pig from extinction. In the Aldudes Valley, the family-run business now rears its pigs outdoors and produces hams, cured meats and charcuterie in the Basque tradition.

MAISON GRATIEN
- SAUVETERRE-DE-BÉARN

The Gratien family preserves the finest recipes from Béarn and the Basque Country: duck foie gras, poule au pot, Basque-style chicken, pâtés with Espelette chilli or green pepper, and piperade. A noble regional cuisine, free from preservatives, and ready to be shared.





CAVE DE GAN JURANÇON
- GAN

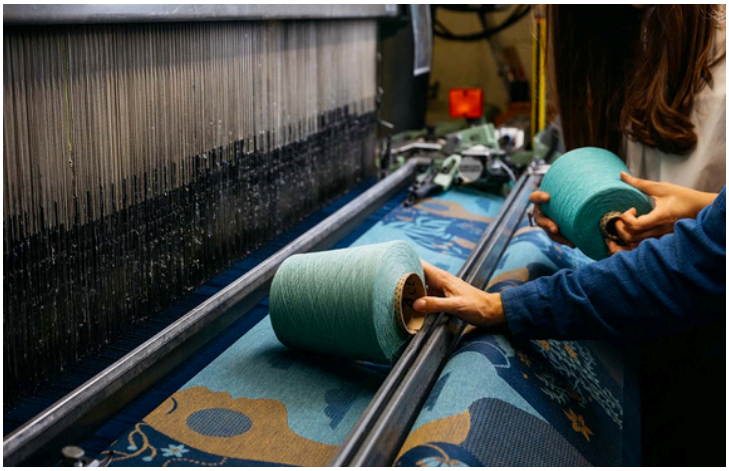
At the foot of the Jurançon hillsides, the Cave de Gan is a co-operative that brings together winegrowers from an iconic Béarn appellation. From dry Jurançon to semi-sweet and sweet white wines, it introduces visitors to wines shaped by local grape varieties and the Pyrenean landscape, at the heart of a vineyard teeming with character.

MAISON ARGAUD
- BELLOCQ

Since 1982, based in Bellocq, Maison Argaud has been preparing foie gras, confits, pâtés, terrines and prepared dishes using carefully selected ingredients, with a preference for local producers. Traditional, generous recipes with no frills, celebrating the flavours of Béarn's terroir.



— THE CREATORS



TISSAGES MOUTET - ORTHEZ

Since 1874, this family-run business from the Béarn region has been bringing colour to table linen and home textiles. In its workshop in Orthez, traditional weaving techniques and designers' creations come together to produce original pieces, made entirely in France.

AU PARAPLUIE DES PYRÉNÉES
- PAU

It all began in 1896 with a sturdy umbrella designed to accompany shepherds in the Pyrenees whatever the weather. More than a century later, the Pando family continues to produce its entirely handcrafted goods in Pau: it still takes three to four hours' work to make each piece.



LA MANUFACTURE DE BÉRETS - ORTHEZ

A symbol of the Pyrenees that has become a fashion icon far beyond our borders, the beret is crafted here to the highest standards. Sarah and her workshop carry on this textile craftsmanship, specialising in the authentic woollen beret, which can be discovered in all its shapes and colours.



MAISON IZARD - PAU

Conceived and designed in Pau, Maison Izard is committed to ethical and responsible fashion that celebrates Pyrenean wool and local craftsmanship. Sweaters, hats and accessories are designed to last, as part of a sustainable Made in France approach. Warm, contemporary pieces that reconnect with the region's materials and Pyrenean identity.



FORGE ADOUR - BAYONNE

A specialist in plancha grilling and convivial cooking, Forge Adour designs equipment that brings people together around good food and encourages them to share the pleasures of outdoor cooking, in the spirit of south-western France.

LOREA BIJOUX - BAYONNE

In Bayonne, Catherine Ithurbide transforms the traditional symbols of the Basque Country into resolutely contemporary jewellery. Lauburu, the Eguzkilore sun flower and ancient stelae are transformed into gold and silver creations, to be worn as a piece of the Basque Country.



64, THE BASQUE COUNTRY OFF THE PEG

Founded in Guéthary, the 64 brand draws inspiration from the ocean, the mountains and the Basque way of life to create clothes that evoke the spirit of holidays and freedom. Casual pieces, colours and a southern flair that can be worn all year round. For Winter Wonders in Brussels, 64 is providing uniforms for our teams at the Basque-Béarn Village: a way of proudly flying the region's colours, even in the depths of the Brussels winter!

ADRESS book



AU PARAPLUIE DES PYRÉNÉES
12 rue Montpensier
64000 Pau
parapluiedeberger.com

CAVE D'IROULÉGUY
255-285 Irulegiko Errepidea,
64430 Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry
cave-irouleguy.com

EGIAZKI
6156 zone artisanale de Lissard
64310 Saint-Pée-sur-Nivelle
egiazki.com

AGERRIA
172 rue du Fronton
64220 Irouléguy
agerria.com

FROMAGERIE AGOUR
950 route de Louhossoa
64640 Hélette
agour.com

LOREA – LE BIJOU BASQUE
11 rue Jacques Laffitte
64100 Bayonne
lorea.fr

CAVE DE GAN
53 avenue Henri IV
64290 Gan
cavedejurancon.com

64
64.eu

MANUFACTURE DE BÉRETS
4 rue de l'Horloge
64300 Orthez
beret-barnabe.fr

MAISON GRATIEN
215 chemin de Bideren
64390 Sauveterre-de-Béarn
conserverie-gratien.com

MAISON PARIÈS
9 rue Léon Gambetta
64500 Saint-Jean-de-Luz
paries.fr

MAISON PIERRE OTEIZA
500 Zelaika errepidea,
64430 Les Aldudes
pierreoteiza.com

TISSAGES MOUTET
Rue du Souvenir Français,
64300 Orthez
tissage-moutet.com

MAISON ARGAUD
1 ch de l'Espérance
64270 Bellocq
maisonargaud.com

MAISON IZARD
29 rue des Cordeliers
64000 Pau
maisonizard.com

FORGE ADOUR
66 avenue du 8 mai 1945
64100 Bayonne
forgeadour.shop

CULTURAL CONFLUENCES

Basque dances @Pierre Carton



*The **Béarn** and the **Basque Country** have a strong cultural identity, shaped by their languages, their history and their traditions. From traditional houses to folk festivals, from songs to dances, this heritage is evident both in the countryside and in everyday life. It is not confined to monuments: it is passed down, practised and evolves over the generations.*

BASQUE & BEARNESE

In the Basque Country, **Euskara** is much more than just a language: it is a key marker of the region's identity. Found in place names, bilingual signage, schools, the media and cultural events, it continues to be passed on, particularly through the ikastolas and bilingual education.

In Béarn, the **Bearnese** language, a variety of **Gascon Occitan**, also remains an important part of the local identity. It can be found in everyday expressions, place names, songs and cultural initiatives that help to keep it alive. These two languages are a testament to the cultural diversity of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques. They tell a story, but also reflect a desire to preserve and pass on **intangible heritage**.

A HERITAGE with many faces

From villages in the interior to major cities, the architecture tells the story of the two regions and how they have adapted to their landscapes.

In the Basque Country, houses in the Labourd region can be recognised by their white façades and their half-timbering, which is often red or green. In Lower Navarre and Soule, the farmhouses have different features, adapted to the local terrain and traditions. In the villages, the frontons, churches and squares bear witness to a way of organised community life that is deeply rooted in Basque culture.

On the coast, architecture takes on a different character. In Biarritz, the holiday villas, Belle Époque buildings and Art Deco structures serve as a reminder of the boom in sea bathing and tourism in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In Bayonne, Sainte-Marie Cathedral, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the Ways of Saint James in France, is one of the region's most significant landmarks in terms of religious heritage.



Villa Arnaga ©KOMCEBO



Half-timbered house in Morlaàs: Jeanne d'Albret ©Gaetan Portenart

In Béarn, the region's heritage centres in particular on the Château de Pau, the birthplace of Henry IV, as well as the bastides, castles and religious buildings. In Orthez, the Pont Vieux and the Moncade Tower serve as reminders of the history of the former capital of Béarn. In the villages, the traditional houses and village squares bear witness to a rural heritage that is still very much alive.

CELEBRATION TAKES CENTRE STAGE

In the Basque Country, as in Béarn, traditions are not merely preserved: they are brought to life through festivals, popular events and cultural practices.

VILLAGE FESTIVALS: A WAY OF LIFE

In the Basque Country, singing and dancing play an important role in community life. Choirs and dance groups keep alive a repertoire that has been passed down from generation to generation. In La Soule, 'pastorales' are theatrical performances in the Basque language, based on historical, religious or legendary tales. They bring together local residents, actors and volunteers, and are a unique cultural event.



bayonne Festivities ©Mathieu Prat



POPULAR FESTIVALS

In Bayonne, the festivities bring locals and visitors together to enjoy parades, concerts, bandas and festive traditions. In Espelette, the Chilli Festival celebrates the village's iconic produce and the growers who cultivate it.

In Béarn, local festivals and events also help to nurture the link between heritage, gastronomy and community life. In Laruns, the Cheese Festival celebrates the producers, pastoralism and the place of Ossau-Iraty in the valley's culture.

THE BAYONNE FESTIVITIES

Few festivals have as much of a buzz as those in Bayonne! The infectious enthusiasm that grips the revellers makes the Bayonne Festival one of the major events in France in July. For five days, nearly a million people of all ages, dressed in the traditional white outfit with a red scarf and sash, take to the streets under the watchful eye of King Léon, who entrusted them with the keys to the city on the evening of the official opening.



@ Adrien Basse-Cathalinat



SPORT, AVENTURES

4 SEASONS OF WILD NATURE

FROM THE OCEAN TO THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS: A FOUR SEASON PLAYGROUND

Photographer : Hugo Aussenac

From the Atlantic coast to the valleys of the Pyrenees, Béarn and the Basque Country offer a wide variety of terrains for sports enthusiasts and nature lovers.
Surfing, pelota, hiking, cycling, or mountain biking: activities vary with the landscape and the seasons. Nature is at once a playground, a place of discovery and a living environment.

Surfing in autumn, cycling along the coast in spring, hiking in the valleys in summer or enjoying the Pyrenean resorts in winter: Béarn and the Basque Country offer a variety of activities and experiences all year round.

SURFING
A STATE OF MIND

How can you talk about the Basque coast without mentioning surfing?

The **Basque Country** holds a special place in the history of surfing in France. Ever since the first surfboards appeared in Biarritz in the 1950s, the sport has grown significantly along the coast, from the Côte des Basques to the beaches of Anglet and Guéthary.

Each spot has its own unique features: the long beaches of **Anglet** are suitable for beginners and experienced surfers alike, whilst the waves at **Guéthary** attract experienced surfers. In **Biarritz**, the Côte des Basques remains an iconic spot, where the history of surfing blends with everyday life.

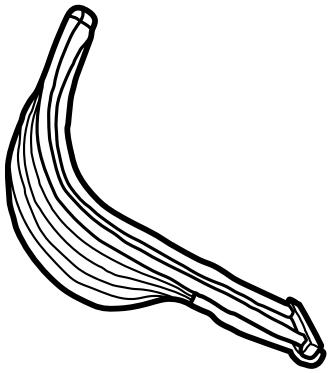


Bidart | Photographer : J-F Godart

A TOP-LEVEL SPORT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

Schools, clubs, competitions and surf culture all help to keep the sport alive well beyond the summer. The Basque waves attract surfers from all over the world, and surf schools have set up their huts on almost every beach along the coast. All you need is the motivation to sign up for a beginners' course. The swell conditions mean you can surf for much of the year, although this depends on the weather and sea conditions.

BASQUE
PELOTA



Ona Pilota in Bidart ©F.Makhlouf



A SPORT ROOTED IN THE VILLAGES

From village pelota courts to large sports facilities, Basque pelota is an integral part of the region's cultural and sporting landscape. It comes in many different styles, ranging from 'bare-hand' to 'pala' and the 'grand chistera'.

Each version has its own rules, equipment and pace of play. Some are played on a traditional Basque pelota court, whereas others take place in indoor venues such as the jaï-alaï. Clubs, pelota schools and competitions help to keep this tradition alive and pass it on to future generations.

Beyond the sport itself, pelota is also an excuse for socialising and a way of fostering camaraderie, where matches bring locals and visitors together around a tradition deeply rooted in Basque identity.

BY BIKE OR ON FOOT

ITINERARIES BETWEEN THE COAST AND THE MOUNTAINS

Cycling allows you to explore the Pyrénées-Atlantiques at a different pace, linking the coast to the mountains.

Along the coast, **The Vélodyssée** runs alongside the Atlantic and is a way of exploring the coastline by bike, taking in beaches, forests and seaside resorts. Further inland, **The Scandibérique** crosses the region as part of a European long-distance cycle route. **The Vélosud**, for its part, follows the foothills of the Pyrenees and is a fantastic way of admiring the landscapes of Béarn and the Basque Country along small roads and cycle paths.

Those who prefer more athletic activities can also follow the **mountain bike and gravel cycling routes**, particularly in the hills of the inland Basque Country and the valleys of Béarn. With a mix of small roads, forest tracks and mountain passes, the options vary depending on your fitness level and the season.


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From day walks to longer hikes, walking allows you to discover a wide variety of landscapes, at your own pace.

From coastal walks to long treks across the Pyrenees, **hiking** offers a different way of exploring the region.
Along the Basque coast, the **footpaths** allow you to walk along the cliffs, pass through villages and explore the Atlantic scenery. Further inland, the **trails** wind their way through the hills, forests and valleys, with **routes suited** to different levels of ability.

The GR10 crosses the Pyrenees from west to east and passes, notably, through **the Bearn valleys of Ossau and Aspe**. It offers a long-distance trek, taking in mountain passes, mountain huts and high-mountain landscapes.

The Ways of Saint-James is another way of exploring the region, combining walking with a chance to discover the local heritage and to meet new people.



Okabe ©Gaillard Munsch

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

PRESS

Press kits organised by region or topic are available in the press area: News and Top Picks, Gastronomie, Craftsmanship and Creativity, etc.

Link : **www.pro.tourisme64.com/presse/**

WEBSITE

A website to help you plan your holiday in the Béarn-Pyrénées Region and the Basque Country: **www.tourisme64.com**

A website for those already in the region (activities, events calendar, top tips): **www.visit64.com**

SOCIAL MEDIA

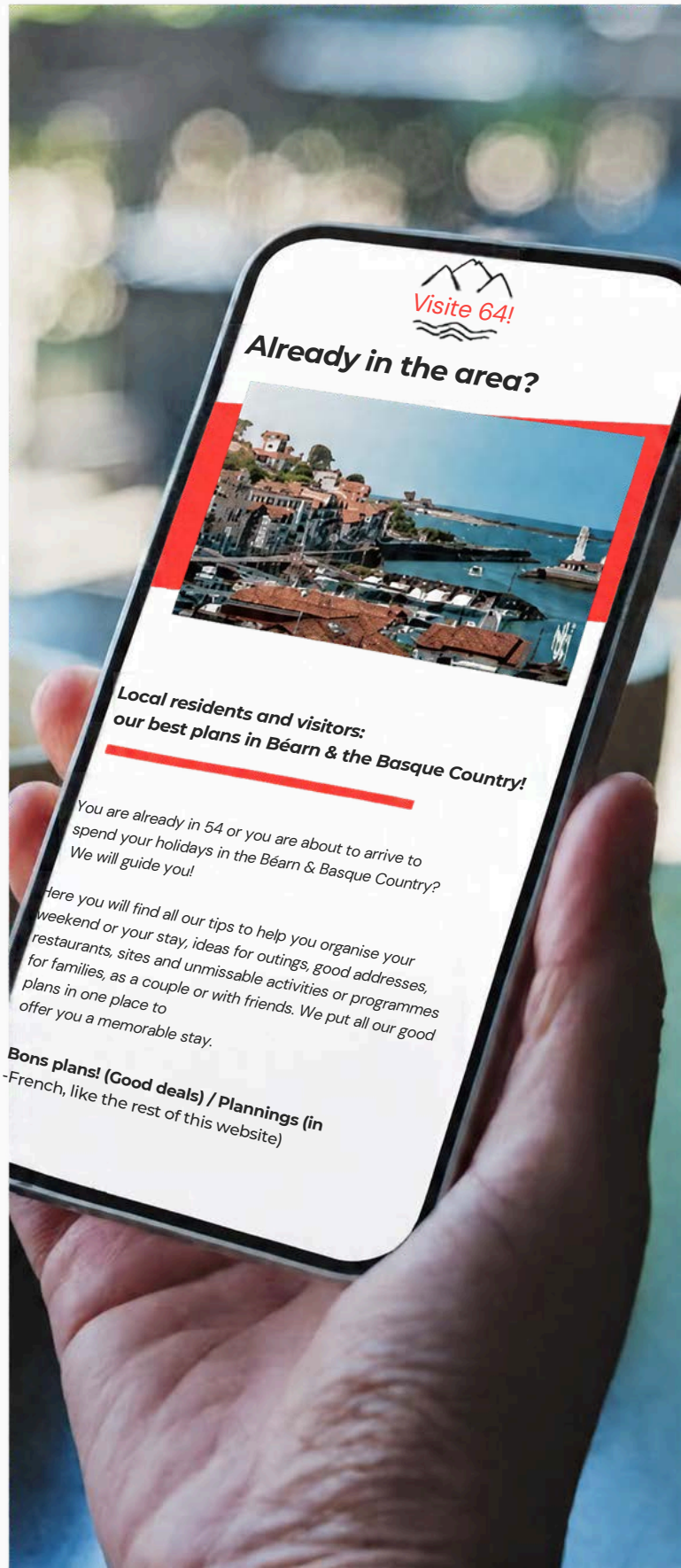
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PHOTO GALLERY

To illustrate your articles on the Basque Country and the Béarn Pyrénées, there are plenty of royalty-free photos available on http://**phototheque.pro.tourisme64.com** once you have registered.





GÎTES DE FRANCE
BÉARN AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY: WINTER WONDERS

Step through the door – your holiday starts here! From 4 to 11 December, visit Gîtes de France Béarn Pays Basque in the heart of the Basque-Béarn Village. A chance to plan your next homestay. Over 1,000 holiday cottages and guesthouses invite you to enjoy an authentic holiday, immersing yourself in the local scene and meeting the people who bring them to life.

> *Find all the information at* https://www.gites64.com/

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