

# VITORIA GASTEIZ

green capital

Press

Press Pack. Vitoria-Gasteiz





Brullería Square



### 1. Enogastronomy,

specially in 2014 because we are Spanish Gastronomy Capital (Sweet Route, Delikatessen, Pintxos in Vitoria-Gasteiz).

### 2. Vitoria-Gasteiz's old Quarters

a monumental site.

### 3. Guided tours

to the restoration work in Santa María Cathedral.

### 4. Museums

Archaeology and Fournier Playing Card Museum. BIBAT.

### 5. Parks on the Green Belt,

especially Salburua. Ataria, Salburua Wetlands Interpretation Centre.

### 6. Arfium Centre for Contemporary Art.

### 7. Renaissance mansions

### 8. Medieval walls of Vitoria-Gasteiz.

### 9. Saint James' Way in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

### 10. Romantic Route



Machete Square



## VITORIA-GASTEIZ, THE CAPITAL OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital of the Basque Country, is located in the middle of the Llanada alavesa or Plain of Alava, on the N-1 main road which links Madrid with the rest of Europe.

It is a modern city with service industries and 242.673 inhabitants, which has harmoniously combined its historic past, reflected in an interesting cultural heritage, with examples of avant-garde architecture.



## HISTORY

The city was founded in 1181 by King Sancho VI of Navarre under the name of Nueva Victoria, over a pre-existing hamlet known as Gasteiz. It was a walled town which represented an advanced defence system of the Kingdom of Navarre. After 1200, the town formed part of Castile and 1202 saw the town's first urban expansion, with three new streets on the western side of the city being built. In the same century, a second enlargement was made with the opening of another three new streets, this time on the eastern side of the town.

Vitoria-Gasteiz is a city built on a human scale; the features which define it constitute the importance given to all matters related to the environment, the pedestrianization of large areas of the centre, a wide variety of cultural activities, good provision of public services (civic centres) and magnificent sports facilities which make it a city thought up and designed for living in.



Arches by the architect Olaguibel



Vitoria-Gasteiz is a witness to the passage of time, to the events and experiences of its people and to architectural styles. The route through the streets from the heart of the Old Quarters, where the town originated, to the suburbs offers a spectacular view of history.

## HISTORIC CITY CENTRE, A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

The Historic Centre of the city is one of the most beautiful and best preserved not only of the Basque Country but also of the whole of the north of Spain. Declared a collection of historic monuments in 1997, strolling around its streets enables us to get to know the process of development of the city through its past.

The almond-shaped Gothic quarter houses examples of different artistic styles embodied in its beautiful Gothic churches, Renaissance palaces, their Baroque façades and the magnificent example of Neoclassical architecture represented by Los Arquillos.

## GOthic

The towers of the four Gothic churches in the Old Quarter (San Miguel, San Vicente, San Pedro and the Cathedral of Santa María) define the profile of the capital. San Miguel was the first to be built and houses the chapel of the Virgen Blanca (White Virgin), patron saint of the city. Attached to the low walls of the town, San Pedro was raised as part of defensive works, while San Vicente was the last to be built. With a unique layout in Araba/Álava, this church preserves a parapet walk, which is accessed through the tower, that leads to the timber structure that supports the temple's naves. The Cathedral of Santa María is immersed in a complete restoration process but can still be visited. The visiting programme, 'Open for Work' enables visitors to access the interior and the tower, wearing a helmet, to discover all its greatness.



España Square



## RENAISSANCE

The prosperous Renaissance also left its mark with the Mansions of Villa Suso, Montehermoso, Bendaña and Escoriaza-Esquibel, today transformed into a conference hall, a cultural centre-museum, respectively, except for the Escoriaza-Esquibel mansion, which is undergoing an interior restoration process. Montehermoso became an Episcopal See and attached to it lies the Former Registry of the city, today an exhibition hall. Bendaña Mansion used to be an old sixteenth-century mansion built from a tower house that hides a large arched courtyard.

## BAROQUE

From the baroque, we preserve the mansions of the Marquis del Fresno and the Marquis de la Alameda, although the best example of this movement is the altarpiece in the church of San Miguel by Gregorio Hernández.

## NEOCLASSICAL

Following the baroque period, neoclassical elements began to appear outside the walls of the town. The architect from Vitoria, Olaguibel, devised a number of small arches that overcame the slope of the hill enabling

the city to embark on its expansion from the Middle Ages to the contemporary period. This is one of the most singular works, which leads to the neoclassical Plaza de España, dating from the late eighteenth century.

## URBAN EXPANSION

At the end of the 18th C. and 19th C. the city grew southwards. New streets were planned and the Parque de La Florida was built, a romantic garden from where a magnificent walk, La Senda, starts. Passing through parks and green spaces, the route will enable us to enjoy examples of historicist architecture as represented by the buildings we will find along the way. (Museums, the Ajuria Enea Palace, which is the residence of the President of the Basque Government) represented in the buildings which we find along it. This walk of over three kilometres in length links the heart of the city with the residential area of Armentia where we may visit the Romanesque Basilica of San Prudencio.

The university campus area, located to the south, is worthy of special mention, as it has managed to successfully combine the old and the modern in harmony, such as is the case of the buildings that house the municipal and provincial archives, the Koldo Mitxelena library and the different faculties.



Cathedral of Santa María



## CATHEDRAL OF SANTA MARÍA

Vitoria-Gasteiz has been a pioneer in showing off its heritage from a dynamic standpoint and with the public's interaction in the restoration project of St. Mary's Cathedral. Following along the same lines, the Alava capital is now putting its heritage on display via a series of unique tours during which the visitor, who is provided with a helmet, becomes an archaeologist or engineer who discovers the delights of the past and the current restoration process. The aim of the initiative, which has been devised under the name 'Open for Building Work,' is for the visitor to feel a part of the restoration and preservation process of aspects of heritage. The philosophy of looking at a monument from the door is now a thing of the past. Vitoria-Gasteiz, whose historic old quarter was declared a Conjunto Monumental (set of historic buildings) in 1997, invites the visitor to investigate its heritage from its very foundations.

Paulo Coelho, Ken Follett, Mario Vargas Llosa, Arturo Perez Reverte and a long list of writers and intellectuals have been seduced by the history and centuries-old secrets hidden in this building.

## TOURS OF THE CITY WALLS

Together with a tour of the restoration work at St. Mary's Cathedral, the well-known guided tour of the city walls enables us to get to know part of the fortifications that were built in the 11th century around Gasteiz, before King Sancho the Wise founded Vitoria in 1181.

The section that has been recovered currently forms part of an ambitious project that attempts to cover the entire wall once surrounding Gasteiz.



BIBAT Museum



Museums based on the perspective of contemporary architects and cultural centres housed in mansions, towers or co-cathedrals. It is in these unique spaces where culture is put on display in Vitoria-Gasteiz. Museums that offer visitors a double experience: their own architectural style and the wealth of the collections put on display based on the history, art, nature and the industrial tradition of the capital of Alava.

## BIBAT MUSEUM

Bibat houses the Fournier Playing Card Museum of Alava, located in the Renaissance Mansion of Bendaña, and the Archaeological Museum of Alava in a new building by the architect, Patxi Mangado.

### *Archaeological Museum of Álava*

The Archaeological Museum of Alava protects, maintains, displays, disseminates and manages the archaeological heritage of Alava, from prehistory to the Middle Ages.

### *Fournier Playing Card Museum of Álava*

The Fournier Playing Card Museum of Alava offers a historical, technical and thematic visit to the evolution of playing cards. The museum's collection features packs from a number of backgrounds, some manufactured in Vitoria-Gasteiz by Heraclio Fournier and others from around the world.

## NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM OF ÁLAVA

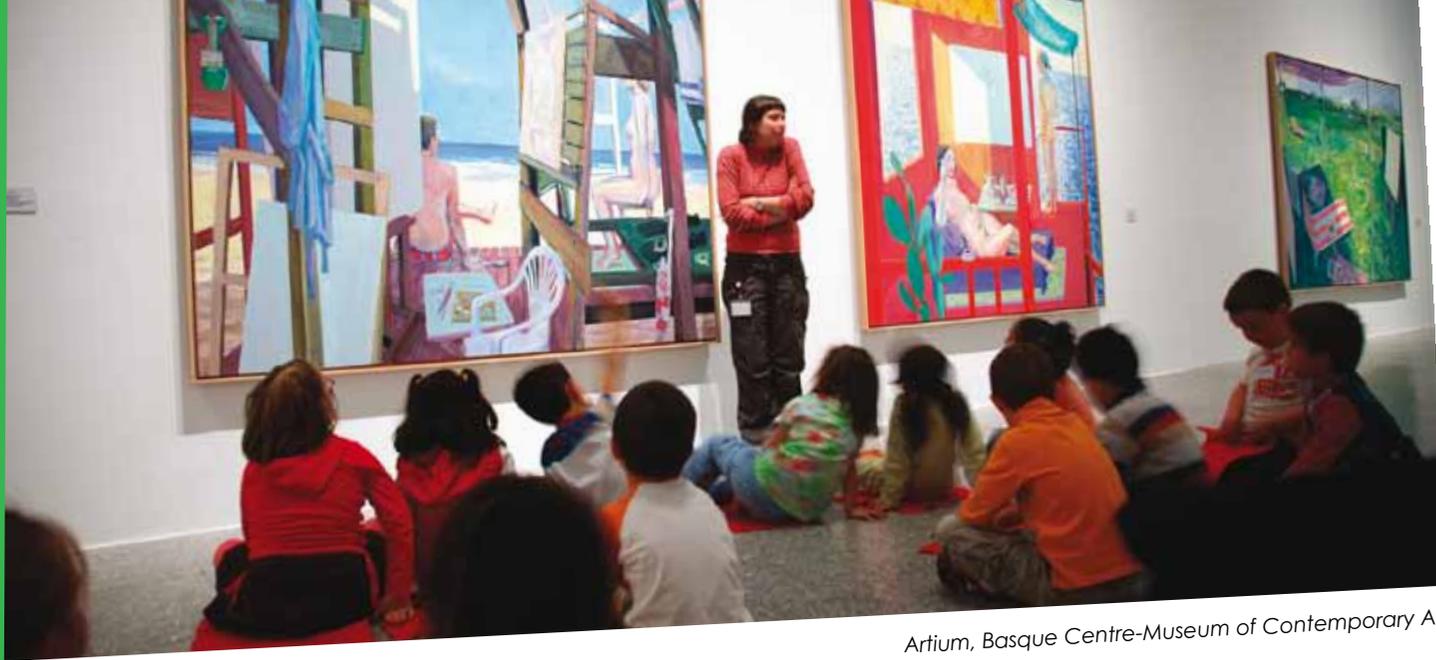
An exhibition of Alava amber deposits from the Cretaceous, one of the most important paleontological sites in the world, fossils from the Mesozoic seas of Alava and a collection of Spanish mineralogy of the twentieth century come together in the Natural History Museum of Alava. It also houses a sample of natural botanical and zoological elements from the region.

## DIOCESAN MUSEUM OF SACRED ART

The museum is located in the ambulatory of the New Cathedral. The collections include religious art from the diocese - Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque items in five sections: stone, wood, altarpieces, linen and silver. These collections originated from the Provincial Council of Alava, the Diocese of Vitoria and its churches.

## THE ARMS MUSEUM OF ÁLAVA

The weapons and items in this museum cover the development of arms since the beginning of mankind until the early twentieth century. Carved stone, arrowheads, swords, knives, daggers, bows, European and Asian armour... Special mention is given to the Battle of Vitoria.



Artium, Basque Centre-Museum of Contemporary Art



## THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS OF ÁLAVA

The Museum of Fine Arts of Alava, located in the Augustin Zulueta Mansion, houses the largest collection of Basque art. It covers the period from 1850 to 1950 with works by Francisco Iturrino, Dario de Regoyos, Elias Salaverria, Ignacio Zuloaga and Juan de Echevarría. It also displays Spanish art from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with pieces by Vicente López, Federico de Madrazo and Carlos de Haes, among others.

## ARTIUM, BASQUE CENTRE-MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Artium Basque Centre-Museum of Contemporary Art comprises one of the foremost collections of contemporary art of its kind in the Basque Country, with over 3,500 works of art. Dalí, Miró, Tapes, Chillida, Barceló, Oteiza or Serra and others from more recent generations feature in this collection that provides an ambitious exhibition programme, accompanied by an intense agenda of activities related to contemporary culture, and for children.

## THE LANTERN MUSEUM

This is a unique museum that houses beautiful polychrome glass items used in the procession of the Rosario de los Faroles (Rosary of Lanterns) that takes place every August 4, at dusk, through the streets of the city.

## OPEN AIR MUSEUM

The city has numerous sculptures located in the street which make it an open air museum. Among them are represented some of the best known contemporary Spanish sculptors. From Oteiza to Ibarrola, via Chillida, Casto Solano, Nestor Basterrechea and many others.



Salburua Park



In 1995, the city signed the Charter of Aalborg of European Cities towards sustainability. It was the first city in Spain to adopt the 21st Agenda, a tool which lays down the steps for progress in the sustainable development of territories.

The determined will on the part of Vitoria-Gasteiz to undertake initiatives in progressing towards the model of a sustainable city has resulted in its being granted numerous national and international awards. We shall make special mention of some of these.

### 2013

- Spanish Gastronomic Capital 2014.

### 2012

- Vitoria-Gasteiz European Green Capital 2012.
- Queen Sofia Award for municipal accessibility.

### 2010

- José Celestino Mutis Biosphere Awareness Award to the capital of Alava and the green belt. September 2010.
- Civitas Award - highest European transport award for citizen participation.
- Europa Nostra award for the Overall Restoration Plan of the Walls.

### 2008

- IDAE Award to sustainable urban planning in municipalities with over 50,000 inhabitants. This prize is awarded by the Institute for Diversification and Energy Saving (Instituto para la Diversificación y el Ahorro Energético) and was presented, on 6 February, to the mayor, Patxi Lazcoz, by the Minister of Industry and Trade, Joan Clos.
- Prize from the First Competition of Projects for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (Category: city councils). This prize was presented to the Councillor of the Environment, Alba Cañadas, on 25 February, by the Minister, Cristina Narbona.



Salburua Park



## 2007

- Archival Award for the recovery of the Old Quarters of Vitoria-Gasteiz (presented on 30 January, in Madrid).
- 'Sustainable City' prize, awarded by the Environmental Forum Foundation (Fundación Forum Ambiental) to acknowledge 'comprehensive policies' on environmental issues (presented in Barcelona by Princess Cristina to Idoia Garmendia, on March 1).
- 'Bioenergy 2007' Prize, awarded for the municipal commitment to the use of bio-fuel (presented in Madrid by the director of the Nuclear Safety Council, María Teresa Esteban, to Idoia Garmendia, on March 2).
- Urban Environment Accessibility Award, for the moving walkways project in the old quarters, presented in Comillas (Santander) within the framework of the IX Bi-annual Conference on Architecture and Town Development, by the Housing Minister, Carmen Chacón to Juan Carlos Alonso on 26 July.

## 2006

- Best Local Practice Award in relation to climate (best transport initiative based on the loan of bicycles), FEMP-Gijón (presented on 3 October).
- ONCE Award for adding tandems and tricycles for the disabled to the free bike service.
- National Interior Trade Award (local government category) for the manner in which the City Council has promoted retail businesses, awarded by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. (The prize was presented in January).
- Olaguibel Prize awarded by the Basque Navarre Official College of Architects for work performed on the recovery of the temple.



Vitoria-Gasteiz Tram



## 2005

- Sustainable Town Planning Award granted by the Salón Inmobiliario of Madrid to the municipal company Ensanche 21 (presented on 26th May).
- Special prize at the 3rd Energy Awards granted by EUDEL (Association of Basque Municipalities) and Ente Vasco de la Energía-EVE (Basque Energy Body), presented on 17th June.
- The UN invites the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz to take part in the acts held for the World Environment Day in San Francisco and in the 'Green Cities' declaration.

## 2004

- 'Sustainable City' Green Flag Award for the 8th year running, for residue management policies.

## 2003

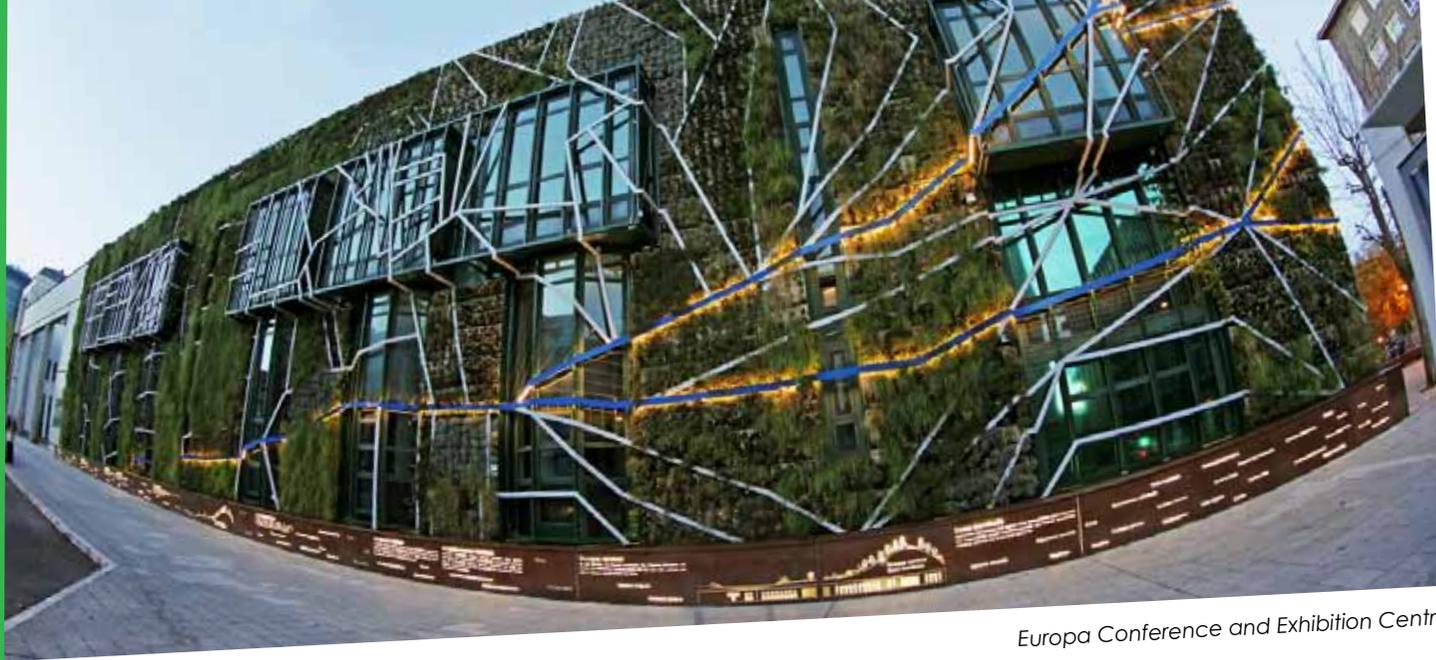
- Accesit awarded by the Spanish Residue Club to municipalities of over 50,000 inhabitants which have obtained the best results in sustainability policies.
- 'Sustainable City' Green Flag Award for the 7th consecutive year.
- Europa Nostra award for the Restoration of Santa Maria Cathedral.

## 2002

- Award of the 1st Competition in Childhood Rights and Municipal Policy, for the programmes involving Childhood Participation and Family Mediation, organized by the FEMP and the Spanish UNICEF Committee. It was presented in November.
- 'Sustainable City' Green Flag Award for the 6th year running, 2002.

## 2001

- Gold mention of the Green Flag – Sustainable City Award. It was presented in December.
- Award of the 1st Competition in Childhood Rights and Municipal Policy, in the category 'Promotion of Comprehensive Childhood Policies,' organized by the FEMP (the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) and the Spanish UNICEF Committee.



Europa Conference and Exhibition Centre



## 2000

- City, Town Planning and Ecology Award, granted by the Basque-Navarrese Group of Town Planners.
- The UN selects the Green Belt of Vitoria-Gasteiz as being among the 100 best courses of action in the world in the Third International Competition of Good Practices.
- 5th National Congress on the Environment grants the City Council of Vitoria-Gasteiz the National Environmental Education Award.
- 'Sustainable City' Green Flag Award for the fourth year running, to the cleanest city.

## 1999

- Award 'To the Environmentally-friendly Municipality 1999' (shared with the Majorcan town of Calviá), awarded by the daily newspaper Expansión and Arthur Andersen. This award forms part of the Environment and Company Awards which are annually granted by the two aforementioned enterprises in collaboration with the IESA company from Barcelona. The Minister of the Environment, Isabel Tocino, presented the award on 18th March.
- 'Sustainable City' Green Flag Award, awarded by the Independent Consumer Association and presented by the Minister of Health, Romay Becaría.

## 1998

- Within the framework of the Iberflora 98 fair, the Institute of Gardening and Landscape Art Studies granted the City Hall of Vitoria-Gasteiz an honorary award in recognition of its work in the field of urban landscaping and landscaped areas.
- 'Environmentally-friendly Road Sweeper' award to the cleanest city (for the second year running), awarded by the Independent Consumer Association and presented by the Minister of Health, Romay Becaría.
- 4th National Congress on the Environment gave the City Council a special mention as a sustainable city.

## 1997

- XIII 'Alimara' Tourist Promotion Award' to the 'Vitoria-Gasteiz in all senses' tourist guide, published by the City Council. Received on 25th April. Awarded by the Barcelona Tourist and Hotel and Centre.
- 'Environmentally-friendly Road Sweeper' award to the cleanest city, awarded by the Independent Consumer Association and presented in October of that year by the Minister of Health, Romay Becaría.
- On 23rd December, the Basque Government declared the Historic Quarter of Vitoria-Gasteiz to be a Conjunto Monumental (set of historic buildings).



Path in the Green Belt



### 1996

- City chosen as an example on a national level for expounding its environmental experience at the Habitat II summit held in Istanbul in June.
- Model city of sustainability on a European level. 2nd European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns held in Lisbon in October.
- The civic centres of Vitoria-Gasteiz, chosen as a model for the European Forum on Urban Safety held in Villetta (Paris) in October.
- 'Real Fundación de Toledo Awards' for the Special Integrated Restoration Plan of the Medieval Centre of Vitoria-Gasteiz, for success in terms of the set of actions embarked on involving the restoration of the city's Medieval Old Quarter.

### 1994

- Silver Plate for Merit in Sports, received on 21st December of that year. Awarded by the Sports High Council of the Ministry of Education.
- Pink Triangle Award to the Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz for being the first public figure to open a Registry of Civil Unions both for heterosexual and homosexual couples. Presented on 21st June 1994. Awarded by the Gay and Lesbian Collective of Madrid.

### 1993

- Sports Quality 92 Award. Received on 21st May 1993.
- City of Barcelona Sports Award.
- Finalist again for the Príncipe de Asturias Award in Sports.

### 1992

- 1991 Basque Sports Award. Presented by the Lehendakari (Basque President) on 12th March 1992, awarded by the Department of Culture of the Basque Government.

### 1991

- Finalist for the Príncipe de Asturias Award in Sports.

### 1982

- Europa Nostra Award for restoration of the city's Historic Old Quarter.



Secret Water Garden



Vitoria-Gasteiz has 42 m<sup>2</sup> of green space per person, occupying first place in Europe in terms of consolidated green space. Over 150.000 trees and around 70.000 bushes make the city a huge botanical garden.

A large green belt comprising Salburua Park (with its wetlands and Ataria, the Salburua Wetlands Interpretation Centre), Zabalzana Park, Olarizu Park, Armentia Park, Alegría River Park and the Zadorra River Park surrounds the city. These constitute an authentic natural lung for the city and a suitable place to enjoy the nature through itineraries designed to be followed on foot or on bicycle.

The green belt has enabled nature to be integrated into the city, promoting the connection between urban green spaces and the natural areas of the agricultural surroundings. This has entailed a marked increase in biodiversity. Owing to their proximity to the city, they have become major areas of expansion and recreation for the urban population, with great scientific and educational potential.





Armentia Park



## OLARIZU PARK

Open fields that have become pasture for grazing livestock, the iconic hill with its cross and the paths provide the park with its identity. It is the home to the Centre for Environmental Studies (CEA), which develops activities related to the natural environment.

## ARMENTIA PARK

This park consists of a natural gall-oak forest between the city and the Vitoria Mountains. It is ideal for taking a walk along the paths and exploring the cycling and horse-riding trails with the possibility of stopping for a break at the many resting areas.

## ZABALGANA

Zabalzana represents the contact between the city and the agricultural world, with sweeping views over the Plains of Alava and the surrounding mountains. Fields, forests and artificial ponds, small hills and mountains blend in perfect harmony with rest areas, paths and a natural forest.

## SALBURUA

Wetlands that are on the List of Wetlands of International Importance and considered the most significant interior wetlands in the Basque Country. Home to two bird observatories that are open to the public and from where a wide range of wildlife can be observed.

## ZADORRA RIVER PARK

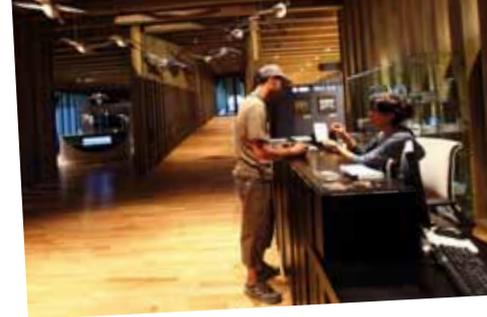
This park comprises the Lopidana viewpoint and the Urarte Gardens (dedicated to organic gardening), as well as fields, green hills, paths for pedestrians and cyclists, rest areas...

## ALEGRÍA RIVER PARK

This park is tucked away between the river Zadorra and the Salburua wetlands. Here, you can enjoy 11 hectares of land ready-prepared for walking along the banks of the Alegría river. It has special relevance as an environmental corridor stretching between two valuable ecosystems. It also shelters some of the species that are at most risk of extinction such as the European mink.



Ataria, Salburua Wetlands Interpretation Centre



## ATARIA

Ataria, the Salburua Wetlands Interpretation Centre, is undoubtedly one of the most special and emblematic locations on the Green Belt. Located in the north of Salburua Park, Ataria is the main point of access and features a building and fields.

Ataria is an area that is open to the public, supported by a wealth of resources and services - exhibitions, classrooms, observatory... - that organises activities connected with leisure and entertainment, interpretation, dissemination and communication, studies and research... The objective of Ataria is to promote knowledge on wetlands and display their values, and, consequently, the importance of biodiversity and natural heritage. Furthermore, Ataria aims to become a forum for discussion and the brainstorming, where the public may become involved and share in the management of the park and in the preservation of biodiversity.

## URBAN PATHS AND WALKS AROUND THE GREEN BELT OF VITORIA-GASTEIZ

The city is carrying out different actions, among which special mention should be made of the 'Urban paths and walks around the Green Belt of Vitoria-Gasteiz, due to its social importance. An ambitious project which will equip the city with paths in which the main ways of getting around will be for pedestrians and cyclists. These routes will link up the city centre and outlying districts with the rural and natural area of the municipality.

## BICYCLE & BIKE-TAXI HIRE SERVICE

Some accommodation establishments in the city (hotels, agro-tourism and apartments) offer a bicycle hire service to enable guests to visit the city in a different way.

There are also companies that hire bicycles and deliver them wherever customers need them.

Another interesting option is to take a bike-taxi to move around the city in a sustainable manner.



Magialdia International Magic Festival



The city offers a wide range of cultural events and festivities that take place throughout the year. Among these, special mention should be made of the following:

## JANUARY

- Flamenco Cycle. Siglo XXI
- Parade of the Three Wise Men
- Children's entertainment exhibition
- Mountaineering Event

## FEBRUARY

- World Wetlands Day
- Children's Shows at 'Txoroleku'
- Basque Cinema Week. Zinemastea

## MARCH

- Carnival
- City of Vitoria International Badminton Open
- Gasteiz On Fashion Show
- Sinkro Electroacoustic Music and new technologies Festival

## APRIL

- IV Napoleonic Market
- San Prudencio Festivities - Drumming Event (27 and 28 April)
- Book Fair
- Special Easter Tourism Programme
- Alava Pintxo and Rioja Alavesa wine week

## MAY

- II International Poetry Festival 'Poets in May'
- Gastroswing (from 30 d;May to 1 June)
- Martin Fiz Marathon
- World Biodiversity Day
- International Museum Day

## JUNE

- Big Band Festival
- Kaldearte, International Street Art Exhibition
- XIII Azkena Rock Festival (20 and 21 of June)
- Vitoria-Gasteiz Eco-rally
- Environment Festivity
- International Games Festival



Performance on the night of the candles



## JULY

- 38th Vitoria-Gasteiz Jazz Festival (from 13 to 19 July)
- 'Blusa' Day (25 July)
- 'Titereando' Puppet Theatre
- Summer Tourism campaign
- Vitoria-Gasteiz International Chess Open
- Spanish Mid-distance Triathlon Championships
- Festival of Nations
- Gasteiz Cup Tournament
- 'Dibertikale' Entertainment for children, festivals, magic and theatre.

## AUGUST

- Virgen Blanca Festivities (4 to 9 August)
- Humour theatre festival (Araia)
- International Organ Festival (Rioja Alavesa)

## SEPTEMBER

- VI FesTVAl - Vitoria-Gasteiz Radio and TV Festival (1 to 6 September)
- Magialdia - International Magic Festival
- Vitoria-Gasteiz Medieval Market
- Olárizu Field Party
- Gasteiz On Fashion Show

## OCTOBER

- Green Night
- Periscope - World Press Photo (13 October to 14 November)
- International Theatre Festival
- World Bird Day

## NOVEMBER

- International Theatre Festival
- National Bonsai Fair
- Carmelo Bernaola International Music Festival
- 'Baby Project' Theatre

## DECEMBER

- Night of the candles
- Christmas: Ice Rink, children's playground, nativity scene route, parades...
- International Christmas Gymnastics Gala
- Alava Cazuelita (Casserole) and Rioja Alavesa Wine Week
- Goxo-Goxo Christmas
- Ardoa Zaharrear
- Sun (shopping urban night)
- 'Cortada' Vitoria-Gasteiz short film festival
- Mendi Film Festival
- San Silvestre race



Flower Offering during the Virgen Blanca Festivities



The most noteworthy ones among all of those taking place throughout the year are:

### **27th and 28th of April. SAN PRUDENCIO FESTIVITY**

Patron saint of Alava. The fiesta gets underway the day before with the cooks' tamborrada (drumming parade) in Plaza de la Provincia, and continues on the Saint's Day with a religious procession on the Armentia meadows, where numerous festive acts are held.

### **25th of July. SANTIAGO FESTIVITY**

The blusas, dressed in traditional attire, liven up the streets on this day. A historic garlic fair takes place on Cuesta de San Francisco.

### **4th to 9th of August. VIRGEN BLANCA FESTIVITIES**

The fiestas commence on the 4th of August at six o'clock in the afternoon with the traditional loud bang and descent from heaven of Celedón (the representative character of the city's fiestas). From this moment onwards, music, activities and spectacle fill the streets of the city 24 hours a day.



Lowering Celedón during the Virgen Blanca Festivities



## Bajada de Celedón (The descent of Celedon)

### TXUPINAZO

The txupinazo, or firing of the skyrocket, is the joyous signal that the fiestas are officially under way. Every 4th of August around 80,000 people congregate at 6 in the afternoon in the Plaza de la Virgen Blanca to receive the Celedón. This character, represented by a puppet dressed in traditional regional costume, descends from the bell tower of the San Miguel church over the crowded square to chants, cheers and applause. On reaching a balcony on the other side of the square the puppet is suddenly replaced by a real man, the signal the people are waiting for to let the fun begin. This is an emotional moment and the real symbol of the Fiestas de La Blanca.

## PASEÍLLO DE BLUSAS

Groups of Blusas (men) and Neskas (women), so called due to their distinctive traditional clothing, are a differentiating aspect of the Fiestas de la Blanca. They don their distinctive outfits and make their way through the streets to the bullring and back every day to witness the exceptional bullfighting. The parade is accompanied by the music of the charangas, street bands that provide a spectacular sound track to the long afternoons of fiesta in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

## GIANTS

The procession of giants fills the streets with tradition during the Fiestas. These figures are more than three metres tall and represent legendary characters, among which the four kings of the card pack stand out, as indeed they should in the city that gave birth to the Fournier pack. The mere sight of these striking figures astonishes children and adults alike, especially when, accompanied by the sound of the txistu (flute), they walk the streets dancing and twirling.

## THE LAMP PROCESSION

An imposing display of light and glass that makes its way through the central streets of the city every 4th of August starting at ten o'clock in the evening. The lamps, kept in the Lamp Museum during the rest of the year, are carried by members of the brotherhood of the Virgen Blanca whose image is the star of the procession.



Establishment in San Antonio Street



Vitoria-Gasteiz surprises visitors with unique small business, shops that offer a unique and unconventional experience. From the most charming shop to the trendiest, enjoy the city and go shopping.

Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Gastronomic Capital 2014, not only offers excellent cuisine, you can also buy products of unquestionable quality to remind you of our local flavours. Rioja Alavesa wine, refreshing txakoli from Alava, delicious pastries, Arróniz variety oil, honey from the Alava Mountains, Alava haricot or preserves that enclose the most delicious flavours...

And if you want something really typical, a deck of Fournier cards, Alava ceramics... are good choices to take back with you.

#### ENSANCHE NEOCLÁSICO

- 1 GENERAL ÁLAVA
- 2 SAN ANTONIO
- 3 DATO
- 4 SAN PRUDENCIO
- 5 MANUEL IRADIER
- 6 FUEROS
- 7 INDEPENDENCIA
- 8 PAZ
- 9 POSTAS
- 10 OLAGUIBEL

#### ALMENDRA MEDIEVAL

- 11 CORRERÍA
- 12 ZAPATERÍA
- 13 HERRERÍA
- 14 CUCHILLERÍA





Pintxos



Good gourmet dishes are based on quality ingredients and expertise in the kitchen. Vitoria-Gasteiz is a city that has been cooked with care and that, in 2014, won the Spanish Gastronomy Capital award. Its recipe consists of top restaurants and grills; 'pintxo' routes - typical miniature samples of Basque cuisine -, the 'pintxo-pote' phenomenon, candy tours, delicatessen routes, wine bars, events surrounding the creation of traditional and modern culinary initiatives, a large number of professional and well-known cooks, such as Diego Guerrero, from Vitoria, who has managed to obtain two Michelin stars for El Club Allard (Madrid), awards, high quality products...

As the Capital of wine, Rioja Alavesa wines and 'txakoli' provide this recipe with international recognition and, as the European Green Capital; it encourages people to visit the city, to sample it.

And if you want to take a piece of Vitoria-Gasteiz with you, we shall also describe the delicatessen shops, wine bars and baker's that will dazzle you with the flavours of their products; truffles, San Prudencio and Virgen Blanca tarts, traditional preserves, baskets of fruit, fresh products...

## GASTRONOMIC FAIRS

**MARCH:** Gasteiz On Fashion Show Catwalk Pintxos, Vitoria-Gasteiz .

**APRIL:** Pintxo and Rioja Alavesa Wine Week and the Festivities of San Prudencio (typical menu, snails and sautéed 'perretxikos'), Vitoria-Gasteiz.

**JULY:** The Garlic Market, Vitoria-Gasteiz. Salt Craft Fair, Salinas de Añana.

**SEPTEMBER:** Olarizu Field Festival, International Potato and Chorizo Championship, Festival (Pintxos Route) and Medieval Market , Vitoria-Gasteiz . Rioja Alavesa Harvest Festivity.

**OCTOBER:** Alava Haricot Fair, Pobes.

**NOVEMBER:** Contest of Gastronomic Associations of Alava, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

**DECEMBER:** Ardoaraba, Goxo-goxo Fair, Night of the Candles and Christmas Market, Vitoria-Gasteiz.



Baskonia Bakh Sports Centre



One of the distinguishing features of the city are its Civic Centres, places with cultural and sporting facilities. The city has 12 centres in different neighbourhoods in addition to two more that are being planned for the new neighbourhoods of Salburua and Zabalgana.

These facilities allow citizens and visitors to practice a wide range of sports. Swimming pools, basketball courts, running tracks, ice rink, 'fronton' courts and an Adapted Physical Activity Centre.

The city has top quality sportsmen and women and teams in numerous sporting disciplines. Caja Laboral Baskonia and Deportivo Alavés, together with the sportsmen and women Martín Fiz, Almudena Cid and the mountaineer Juanito Oyarzabal, have put Vitoria on the map around half the world.

## MAIN SPORTING EVENTS

### MAY

- 6th Araba Rugby Cup (9 to 11 May)
- 12th International Marathon Martín Fiz (11 May)
- Women's Race

### JULY

- 19th Gasteiz Cup
- Vitoria-Gasteiz 2014 Triathlon (13 July)

### DECEMBER

- 37th Vitoria-Gasteiz Half Marathon
- International Rhythmic Gymnastics Festival
- Vitoria San Silvestre Race (31 December)



Auditorium of the Europa Conference and Exhibition Centre

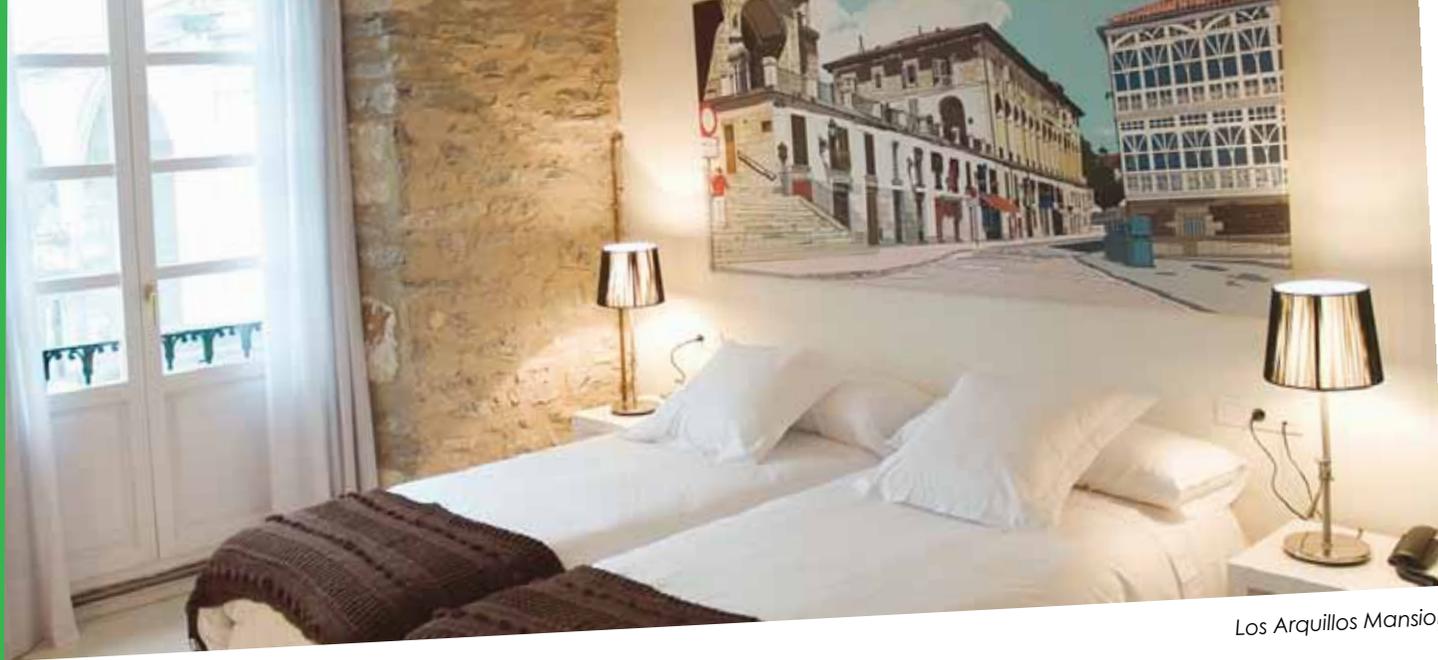


Service capital and centre of operations for business and meetings, its outstanding location and complete infrastructure for holding congressional events make it a major meeting point.

Its development and professionalism was acknowledged in its being granted the annual OPC Spain award in 1999 section on Congressional Centre. It has, among other infrastructures, the modern and functional Europa Conference Centre and the beautiful Renaissance Villa Suso Palace, located in a medieval area. Likewise, the Former Water Tank, a large, singular area located in the Montehermoso Palace, offers great versatility in terms of holding events.

Most hotels in the city provide areas fitted out for conventions, meetings and other events.

- The city is a member of the Spain Convention Bureau.
- The Conference Centre belongs to the Association of Conference Centres of Spain (APCE)



Los Arquillos Mansion



## THE CITY AND ITS ACCOMMODATION

The city has an excellent network of hotel accommodation. In the vicinity of the city, we can also find a parador and a campsite with capacity for 250 persons.

Vitoria-Gasteiz also has a charming 90-bed youth hostel.

The province of Araba/Álava also provides rural accommodation of undeniable quality and charm.

## HOTEL BEDS IN VITORIA-GASTEIZ

CATEGORY	No. of ROOMS	No. of BEDS
Hotels *****	147	282
Hotels ****	517	1084
Hotels ***	298	576
Hotels **	310	667
Hotels *	104	179
Guesthouses **	101	165
Guesthouses *	65	105
Apartments	185	547
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.727</b>	<b>3.605</b>
Hostel	19	90
Camp Sites	--	250
Country houses & apartments	--	44

[www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/turismo](http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/turismo)

**VITORIA  
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Udala

**EUSKADI**  
BASQUE COUNTRY