

VITORIA-GASTEIZ AS AN EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE



MEDIEVAL

Vitoria



Vitoria-Gasteiz
Ciudad Educadora
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DLH

EPO

itinerary

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MEDIEVAL Vitoria

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The participation in the Historical-Artistic's Itinerary Programme is going to give you the opportunity to get better acquainted with your city: its origins, its evolution, the socioeconomic, urbanistic and artistic characteristics of each historical period, and to compare them with the characteristics that it shows nowadays.

By getting to know it better, you will appreciate it more, you will try harder to take care of it and you will be better equipped to suitably use the services that it offers you.

1. PRESENTATION

Today, you are going to take a tour called Medieval Vitoria, which physically corresponds to the Old Town of the city. This area is also known as the Old Quarter, and the Historic District.

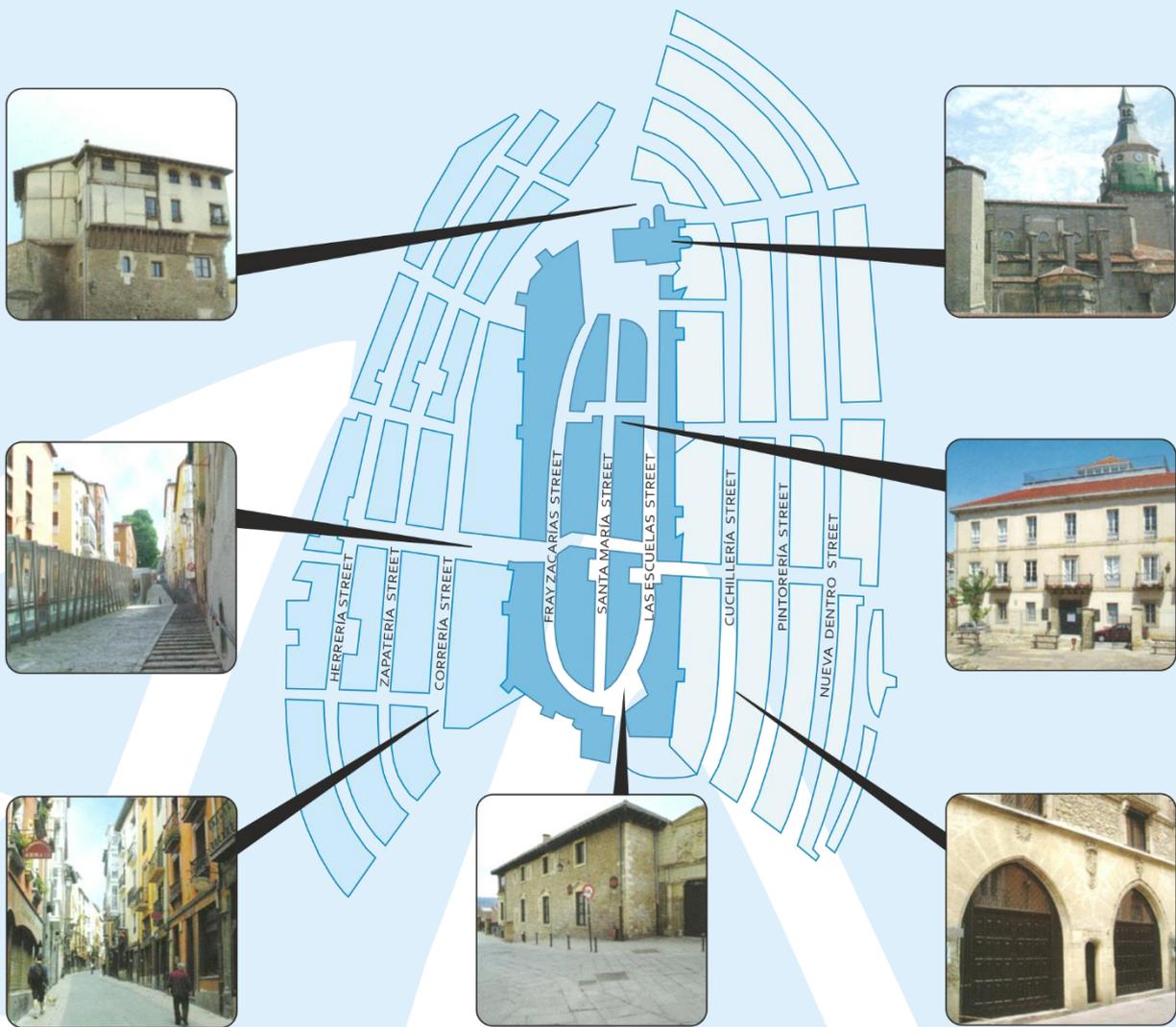
This itinerary is going to allow you to get know the origins of our city. In its beginning –one thousand two hundred years ago-, Gasteiz was a small village that was renamed Victoria in the middle of the 12th Century by the King of Navarra, Sancho VI the Wise. In the year 1181 that same King granted the citizens of Victoria a regional *Fuero* (“Regional Code of Laws”) and later, in the year 1431, the King of Castile, John II, also granted them the title of city.

As you can imagine, since then and up to the present day, this area of the city has gone through many of changes. You are surely asking yourself: What has remained of the old Gasteiz?, And of the first Victoria?, Who were its first citizens?, How did they live?, What has happened during all these centuries?

To know our medieval city is to find the answers to these and other questions that we ask ourselves as we enter the wonderful and mysterious time warp.

But you should not forget that the Old Town, apart from being a special historical area, is also a neighbourhood of the city with its own characteristics. During this itinerary you are also going to learn the current characteristics of this emblematic neighbourhood of our city.

2. ITINERARY



3. PLAZA VILLA SUSO

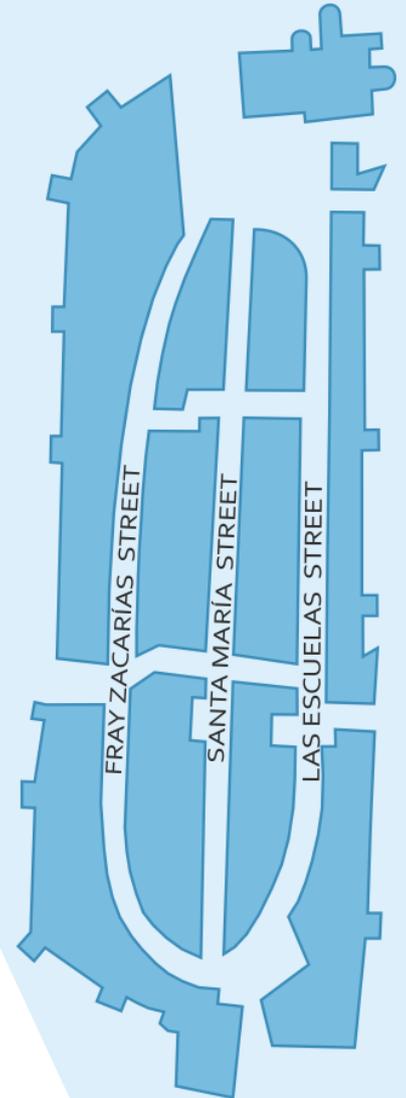
As you can see, part of our city is settled on top of a hill. The rest of it spreads out on a wide plain.

On the highest area of this hill the old village of Gasteiz was settled. The village got a defensive wall at the beginning of the 12th Century. Shortly after Sancho VI renamed it Victoria and granted to it a *Carta de Fundación* ("Foundation Charter").

At the beginning, Victoria was formed by three lineal streets that correspond with the current streets of Santa María, Las Escuelas and Fray Zacarías Martínez. At the north of the village or *villa* the fortress-church of Santa María stood up, and at the south, the castle of San Vicente.



Plaza Villa Suso



This area, also known by the name of Villa Suso, Villa Navarra or el Campillo, has experienced many transformations over the centuries.

Thanks to the archaeological excavations that have been carried out in Santa María Cathedral and in its surroundings, we are aware that in this space, a peasant settlement dating back to the 8th Century already existed. The old population worked in agriculture and livestock breeding and built their houses with wood and clay. Next to the house there were small cabins to store the grain and the animals, a threshing floor and a small vegetable garden. Years later, the houses were built on top of a base made of stone that prevented the wood from rotting. In the 11th Century, this peasant settlement surrounded itself with a large defensive wall made of stone that also had defensive towers.



As you are going to see, nowadays, in this area there are not many buildings left from the Middle Ages. Many of the primitive houses were replaced in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries by stately mansions and palaces or by our *Casas de Alforja* (“Saddlebag Houses”).

4. SANTA MARÍA STREET

Is the central one of the three streets that formed the centre of the primitive village of Gasteiz. Nowadays, coexisting in it, there are buildings that were built in previous historical times and others that are more contemporary.

GONZÁLEZ DE CHÁVARRI HOUSE-PALACE

This building, which was built in the 17th Century, has had different functions throughout time; episcopal palace, military headquarters, prison...In 1985, it was bought by the City Hall and was renovated as a Community Centre for the neighbourhood.



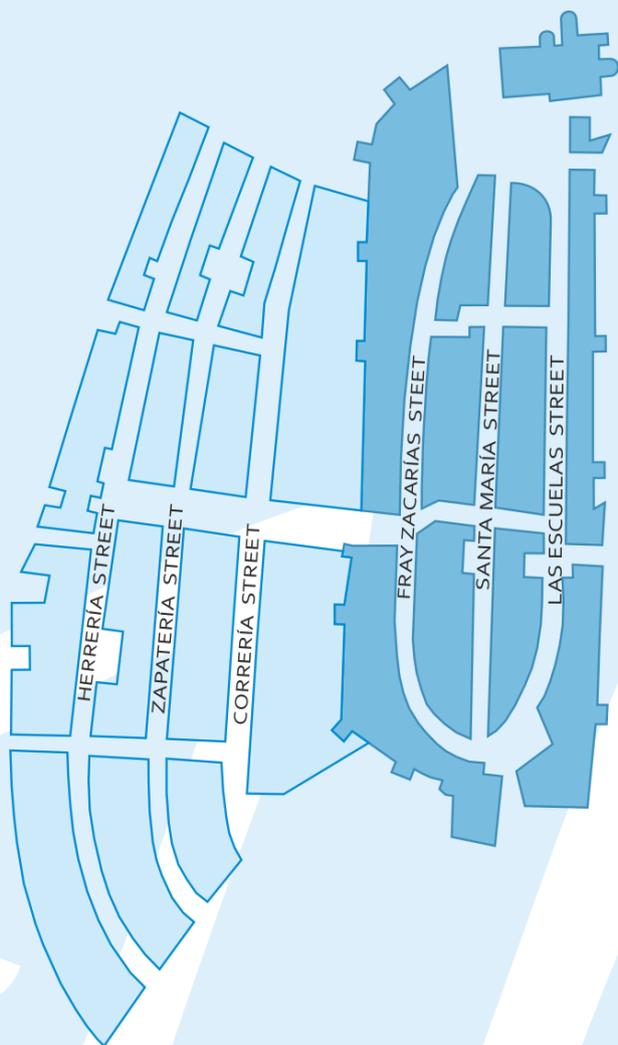
*González de Chávarri House-Palace
(current Campillo Community Centre)*



Santa María Cathedral

SANTA MARÍA CATHEDRAL

It started off as a small fortress-church of the so-called *villa* of Navarra. During the 13th and 14th Centuries, the current church was built following the gothic style trends. In the following centuries elements from other styles have been added, both in its interior as well as in the exterior construction (facade, bell tower...) This church achieved great importance and finally, in 1862 it became a cathedral.

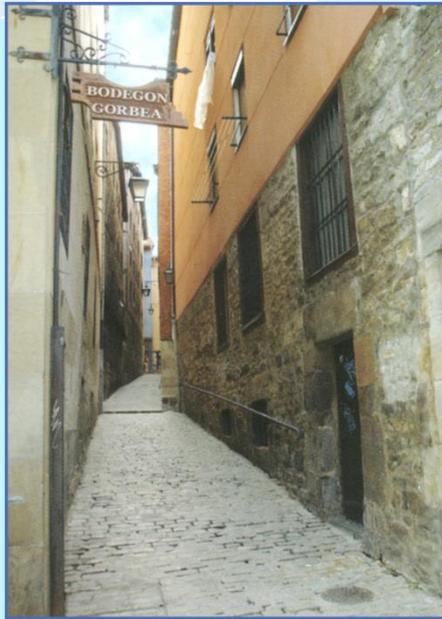


5. CANTÓN DE LA SOLEDAD

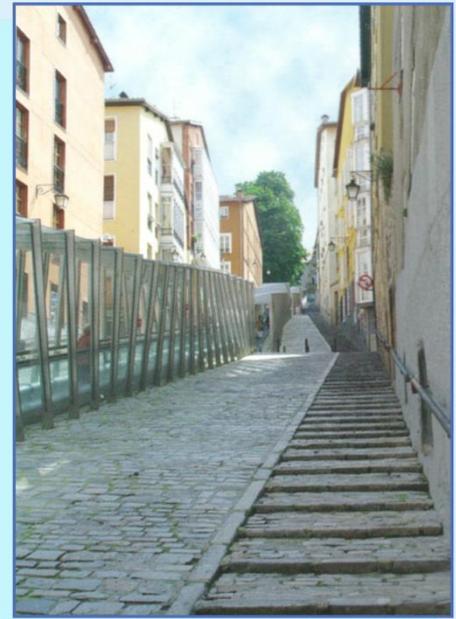
You are going to enter the area that corresponds with the first expansion of the medieval *villa*, an expansion that was promoted by Sancho VI of Navarra, the same king who renamed the primitive Gasteiz as Victoria. Three new streets were built (Correría, Zapatería and Herrería) and also *cantones* (“slopes”) or alleys that connected them transversally and allowed to access up to the higher part of the town. This happened around the year 1181, the year in which that king granted a *Fuero* (“regional code of laws”) to the city.

The expansion of the city made it necessary to build a new line of defensive walls, this time on its west side close to the Zapardiel river, which acted as a natural moat. This river currently flows, canalised, under the Diputación and Siervas de Jesús streets. Afterwards, San Pedro Church and more towers were attached to the defensive walls.

The *cantones* (slopes) were widened and renovated to improve the hygiene and urban conditions of the Old Town: the floor was paved, the domestic drains were canalised underground and the width given to the *cantones* (a house on each side was demolished) allowed more air and light to enter. However, if you go to the *Cantón de San Roque*, you will see how those primitive *cantones* used to be.

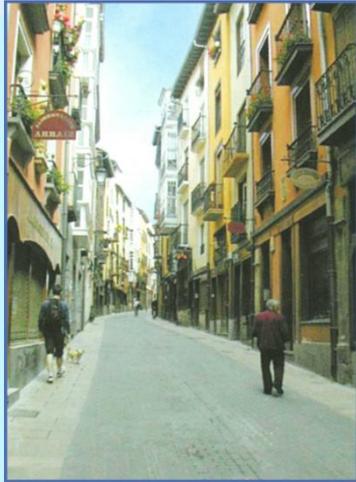


Cantón de San Roque



Cantón de la Soledad

6. CORRERÍA STREET

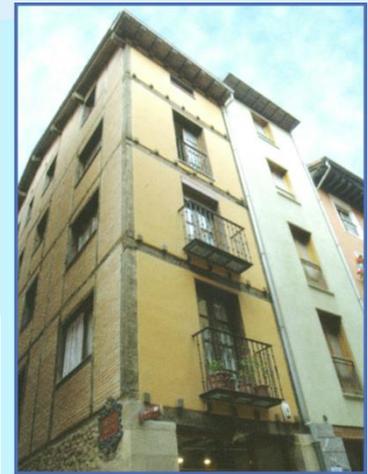


Correría street

The need for space progressively forced to the construction of narrow and deep houses. This is why they are called *Casas de Alforja* (“Saddlebag Houses”). The narrowness of the facades allowed for an increase in the number of buildings per street, and the height of up to three or four floors, to increase the number of flats. These were houses whose construction adjusted to the artisanal economy: houses on the upper floors and workshops and shops on the street floor.

The names of the streets in this first expansion of the *villa* allude to the settlement in the city of artisans and merchants that grouped together by streets and areas depending on their trade. The people belonging to the same profession organised in guilds, which were associations that looked out for their professional interests and which had their own regulations.

At the same time, the inhabitants of Victoria grouped together in neighbourhoods, creating associations of neighbours that lived in the same street or segment of the street between the *cantones*. This associations were used to protect and take care of the common matters (cleaning, vigilance, fire prevention...).



Casas de Alforja (“Saddlebag houses”)

7. PLAZA DE LA BURULLERÍA

The area where you are now is known as the Medieval Corner because of the high number of medieval buildings that are located here:

THE ANDA TOWER (end of the 15th Century)

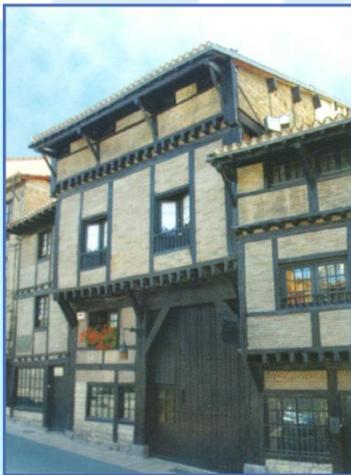
This tower of defensive character is located in what used to be a strategic place for the defence of the city at its north-end. It belonged to the Anda family, native to the Cuartango Valley, and who settled in the *villa* in the 15th century.

In spite of the transformations that the tower has undergone, the traditional elements of defensive construction are still visible at its base: machicolation, arrow loop, structural strength...

Currently, it is a building with flats.



The Anda Tower



El Portalón

EL PORTALÓN (end of the 15th Century or beginning of the 16th Century)

It is a lodging house with a big door that allowed the entrance and exit of travellers with their carriages and mounts to protect them from the harshness of the weather and the possibility of robberies.

The various floors of the building served for very different uses: stables, cellars, shop, dining room, bedrooms...

Its constructive elements correspond with the ones that are characteristic in medieval popular houses, especially because of the materials that were used: a stone base, a wooden framework and a brick facade.

Currently, it is a renowned restaurant.



Gobeo-Landázuri House

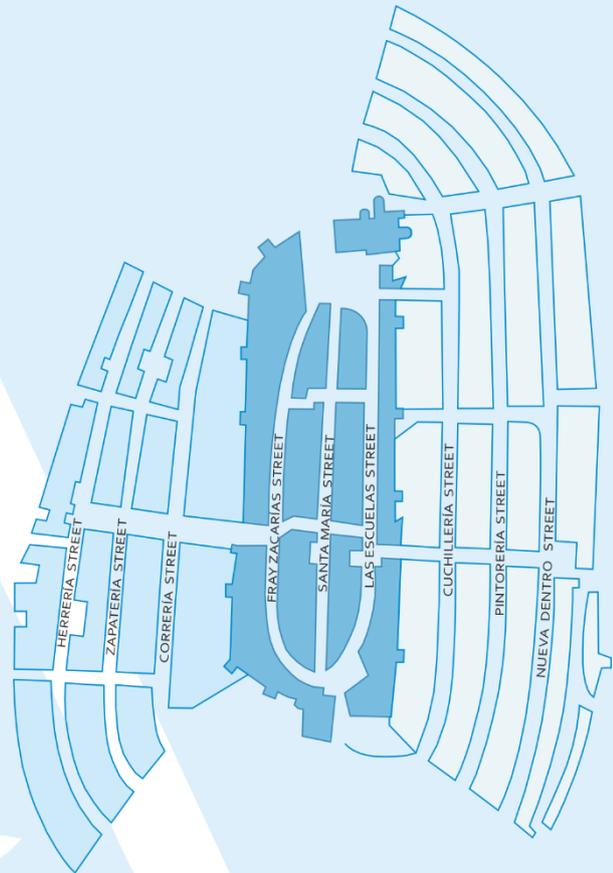
GOBEO-LANDÁZURI GUNSMITH HOUSE (end of the 16th Century)

It was built as the house of the Gobeo-Landázuri family. In 1960 it was renovated to host the Museum of Archaeology, which remained in this building until its transfer to the Bibat museum.

8. CUCHILLERÍA STREET

You have just entered inside what was the second expansion of the medieval town. It was promoted by Castilian king, Alfonso X the Wise, in 1256, urbanising the eastern hillside. Three new streets were built: Cuchillería, Pintorería and Judería (currently, Nueva Dentro) and also the same number of *cantones*.

The resulting urban space in the middle of the 13th Century was not widened again until the end of the 18th Century.





Interior of the Bendaña Palace

BENDAÑA PALACE (16th Century)

It is a Renaissance palace in which characteristic elements of a defensive structure are visible (defensive tower, machicolation...) and also some elements of a stately and residential construction. (large windows, facade decoration, arcade galleries...)

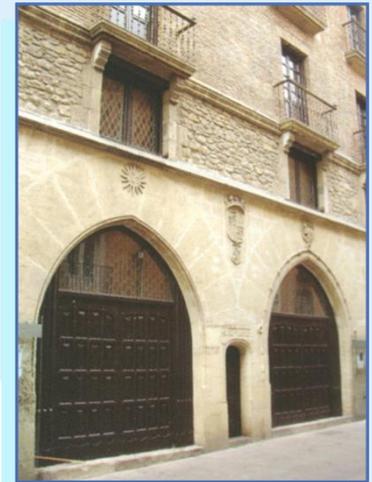
In its interior, after a renovation, you can visit the Bibat Museum, which hosts the Playing-Cards and the Archaeological Museums.

THE CORD HOUSE (15th Century)

It was the residence of an important convert Jewish merchant family: the Sánchez de Bilbao.

In its interior there is a defensive tower from the 13th Century, around which, Sánchez de Bilbao family built his house.

The ornamental elements on the facade stand out: the Franciscan cord around the door, the Royal coat of arms, and the commercial stamp of the house...



The Cord House

Among the social and ethnic groups that lived in the city during the Middle Ages, the following stood out:



a) The popular classes: They were made up of artisans and small shop-owners and also peasants, the latter being in fewer numbers.

b) The nobility: They came from the rural environment, and became settled in the city from the 14th Century. Immediately, a powerful and influential social class was born, especially in the Modern Age as they united in marriage with the richest businessmen of the city.



c) The Jews: Despite being secluded to a specific area of the city: the Judería Street (currently, Nueva Dentro), they were very influential because of their commercial and artisanal activities. In the context of our city, they also had a great importance in the field of medicine.



d) The clergy: It was made up of the priests of the parish churches and the friars of the convents. It was a very numerous and influential social group for the life in the city, not only in the religious sphere, but also in the cultural, social and political ones too.

According to the 2018 census, 23% of those living in Casco Viejo have been born abroad; In particular, they come from more than 30 countries. Regarding nationality, 19% have foreign nationality.

The Old Towns of many cities have been areas with uncomfortable housing and facilities. Also, they used to be neighbourhoods with little services for their inhabitants. But this situation is changing; More importance is being given to its renovation than ever.

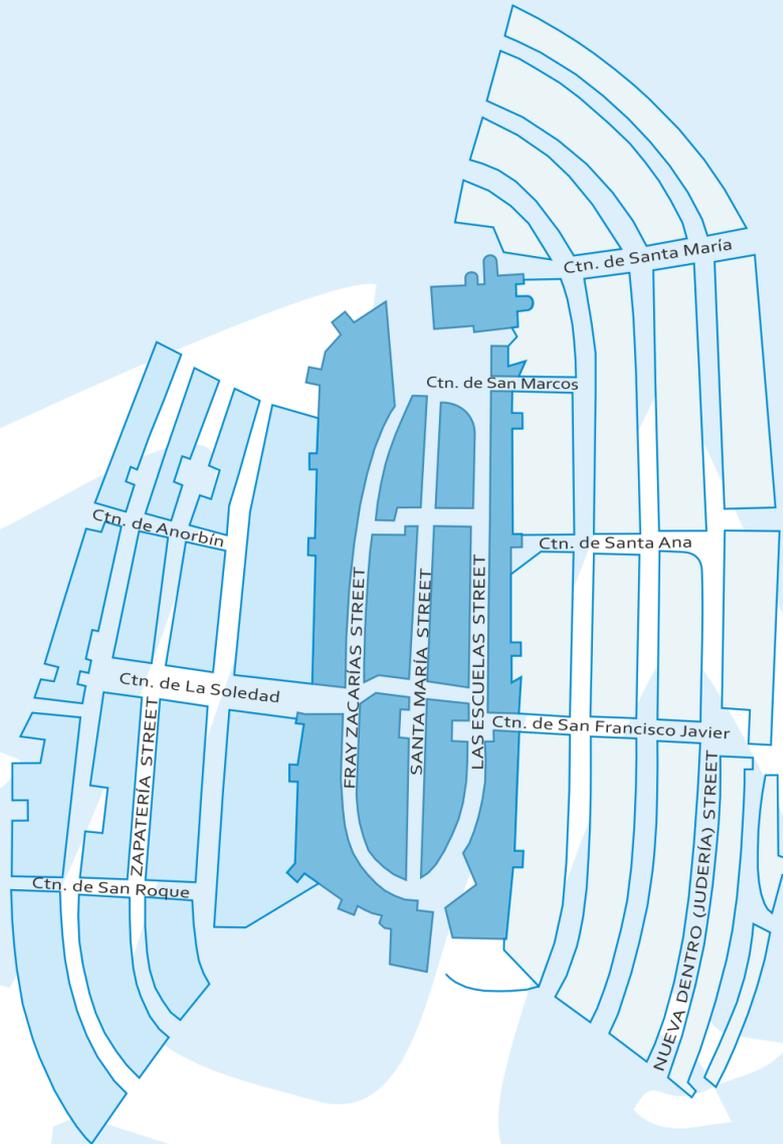
In the case of our city, the City Hall has been carrying out for years a series of actions (physical, social, economic, cultural...) aimed at obtaining better living conditions.



Cuchillería Street

9. ACTIVITIES

9.1. LOOK at this map of the Old Town and DO the following exercises:



- ✓ Pay attention to the name of the streets and the *cantones* that are on the map and complete it with the ones that are missing.
- ✓ Colour in different ways the three areas that we have explained during the itinerary: the centre or higher part of the city where the first primitive Gasteiz was born, the first expansion towards the west carried out in 1181 and the second expansion, in 1256, towards the east.
- ✓ Mark on the map the following buildings: San Miguel Church, Montehermoso palace (where is located a cultural centre, and also The Basque Language House, Oihaneder Euskararen Etxea), the public Medical Center, El Campillo Community Centre, Luis Aramburu Municipal Music School and temples of different religions.

9.2. COMPLETE this text about the characteristics of the urbanism of the medieval area.

Choose the right word for every gap: *Zapatería, hill, San Vicente, east, concentric, contour, almond, cantones, Fray Zacarías Martínez, Judería.*

At the beginning of the 12th Century Victoria had three lineal streets that correspond with the current streets of Santa María, las Escuelas and At the north of the villa the fortress-church of Santa Maria was located and at the south, the castle of In 1181, three new streets were built (Correría, and Herrería) and connected them transversally. In 1256 three new streets were built (Cuchillería, Pintorería and) and as many cantones. The result has been an Old Medieval Town of streets that align on both sides of the (to the west and the) following the lines of the topography, which has the shape of an

9.3. RELATE the medieval streets with the activities or professions that were carried out in them.

STREET	ACTIVITY, PROFESSION

9.4. **WRITE DOWN** which social group lived in each type of house.

- ✓ *Casas de Alforja* (“Saddlebag Houses”):
- ✓ Tower-Houses:
- ✓ Palaces:
- ✓ Stately Mansions:

9.5. **WRITE** some of the functions that, throughout history, have some of these buildings had:

PLACE	FUNCTIONS
Doña Otxanda Tower	
Bendaña Palace	
The Cord House	
El Portalón	
Villa Suso Palace	

9.6. COMPARE the different cultures and religions that existed in the Medieval Vitoria with the ones that exist nowadays.

9.7. RESEARCH the name and address of the following buildings or services that this neighbourhood has.

- ✓ Health Centres:
- ✓ Community Centres:
- ✓ Sports facilities:
- ✓ Religious buildings:
- ✓ Museums:
- ✓ Cultural Centres:
- ✓ Offices and services of various institutions:
- ✓ Other services that had grabbed your attention:

What differences do you find between the services of the Old Town and the ones that you can find in your neighbourhood?

9.8. **OBSERVE** the information on the following chart of the population that lives in the Old Town and **ESTIMATE** the percentages per continents of origin.

Population of the Old Town per country of origin (1)		
COUNTRY OF	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SPAIN	6.974	81
MOROCCO	403	4,7
ALGERIA	167	1,9
NIGERIA	134	1,6
PAKISTAN	101	1,2
COLOMBIA	79	0,9
PARAGUAY	68	0,8
RUMANIA	46	0,5
CHINA	40	0,5
SENEGAL	39	0,5
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	31	0,4
PORTUGAL	29	0,3
BRASIL	28	0,3
VENEZUELA	27	0,3
ITALY	25	0,3
ECUADOR	24	0,3
BOLIVIA	23	0,3
MAURITANIA	21	0,2
UKRAINE	17	0,2
PERU	16	0,2
GEORGIA	16	0,2
OTHERS	255	3,1
TOTAL:	8.578	100,0

(1) Source: Municipal Register of Inhabitants 1.1.2018

9.9. DEBATE IN CLASS

Think about proposals that could help to improve the living conditions of the people that are living in the Old Town and discuss them with the rest of your classmates.

10. GLOSSARY

ARCADE GALLERY: Space covered by a series of arches or columns along the wall of a facade or patio.

ARROW-LOOP: Little narrow window that was built to attack, shooting arrows or other kinds of projectiles.

BASE: Body or lower part of a building or construction.

(TO) CANALISE: To regularise or strengthen a riverbed or any other water flow to give to it the desired direction.

CANTÓN ("SLOPE"): Alley

CASA DE ALFORIA ("SADDLEBAG HOUSES"): Traditional medieval houses in Vitoria and other cities. They typically are very narrow and deep, allowing to open on the facade just one or two windows.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY: Activity related to commerce.

COMMERCIAL STAMP: Stamp that identifies a merchant or a business company.

CONVERT JEW: Jew that has converted to Christianity.

CORBEL: Part of the roof that stands out from a building's line of facade and projects itself to the exterior.

EPISCOPAL: Belonging to or relative to the bishop.

FRAMEWORK: Wooden frame that is used to build a wall, partition or floor.

GOTHIC STYLE: Artistic style that developed in Europe during the three last centuries of the Middle Ages, starting since the revolution of the Romanesque style. In Architecture, its main characteristic is the employment of the ogive or pointed arch.

GUILD: Association of the masters, skilled workers and apprentices of the same profession or trade, ruled by ordinances and special regulations.

MACHICATION: Projecting element on the higher part of a wall, tower or door, with a parapet and a floor that makes it possible to observe and stalk the enemy.

MOSQUE: Building where Muslims practise their religious ceremonies.

NEIGHBOURHOODS: A group of neighbours that lived in the same street or segment of the street between *cantones* and formed an association to protect and take care of common matters (cleaning, vigilance, fire prevention...).

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