

07.02.2018

BIARRITZ

PRESS KIT



BIARRITZ

www.tourisme.biarritz.fr/en
www.congres.biarritz.fr

CONTACTS PRESSE

Isabelle EYHERABIDE – Olga DANYLYUK - Maylis GARROUTEIGT
BIARRITZ TOURISME
JAVALQUINTO – 64200 BIARRITZ
Tél : (33) 05 59 22 37 15 – (33) 05 59 22 41 71
isabelle.eyherabide@biarritz.fr – olga.danylyuk@biarritz.fr
maylis.garrouteigt@biarritz.fr
www.tourisme.biarritz.fr – www.congres.biarritz.fr

INDEX

~~~~~ Biarritz with open arms

p 4

~~~~~ History : From whale fishing to the first sea baths

p 5

~~~~~ Sport : How to keep fit in Biarritz

p 7

~~~~~ Health and well-being : The benefits of seawater therapy

p 10

~~~~~ Congresses : Modern facilities in historical sites

p 12

~~~~~ Around : The mysterious charm of the Basque country

p 15

~~~~~ Gastronomy : Typical dishes of the Basque country

p 19

~~~~~ Glossary : Biarritz A to Z

p 20

Ask for the “2018 Biarritz highlights” press kit

PHOTOS :

Free of right photos to download on

<http://tourisme.biarritz.fr/fr/espace-pro/mediatheque>

<http://ville.biarritz.fr/phototheque/>

BIARRITZ WITH OPEN ARMS

It was in the mid 19th century that Victor Hugo discovered Biarritz, a charming fishing harbour in the Basque country. Since then, Biarritz has remained one of **the most welcoming towns in France**.

Today, Biarritz stands as a very ambitious town, its development based on its great ability to attract tourists. The town orientates towards **tourism and services** for its economic development, by adopting a **dynamic cultural policy and developing activities in the low season**.

The accent is, of course, put on **business tourism with seminars and congresses**. Biarritz also comes first with **sports such as golf and surfing**, **fitness** with seawater therapy, a rich tradition of fine cuisine and prestigious hotels, and the casino. Today, it is moved to the renovated "Municipal" Casino.

There is a strong movement towards economic development and tourism without affecting the town's flamboyant and unique **architecture**. **Preservation of the environment** is one of Biarritz' priorities and the town has devised a planning strategy for itself in order to preserve its beautiful sites and way of living.

Biarritz keeps the traditions of the surrounding **Basque countryside**, a region that has managed to preserve its own charm and mysteries right up to the present day.

Biarritz has often been ahead of its time, from its heyday, in the middle of the 19th century under Napoleon III, to the charms of the Belle Époque and the Roaring 20's, and later with the post war festivities and the 60's, when Biarritz was the first town in France to practice an amazing new sport called surfing. Today, Biarritz' economic development policy is based on offering real **quality of life**.

Biarritz openly offers many possibilities to welcome its new visitors. Please see enclosed program.

FROM WHALE FISHING TO FIRST SEA BATHS



The time of the whales

The whales were the first sea bathers in Biarritz, not the elegant ladies from the 19th century.

In the Middle Ages, Biarritz was spelt Beariz. It was a small fishing port and the fishermen had a good reputation for **harpooning whales**. The animal fat was very much sought after as it was used for lighting houses. Bones and ribs were also used to make enclosures. The skin, cut up in strings, was used for making seats and helmets. Of course, people used to eat whale meat and the tongue was served as a delicacy to the famous people visiting the town.

The village site was particularly well adapted to whale fishing. The cove where the old port is now located stood well clear of the open sea. A channel gave the boats access to the bay. The gentle slope of the seashore allowed the fishermen to beach the whales when the tide was high. People would then wait until it was low tide to cut them up. The villagers worked on the beach itself where they had set up ovens to melt the fat, fires to cook and smoke the meat, and jars for keeping the oil in.

Fishermen subsisted on the whales until the middle of the 17th century when the whales moved away from the coast. The fishermen had then to go all the way to Newfoundland to find them.

Biarritz becomes a Seaside Resort

The people of Biarritz were well ahead of **Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie** as regards sea bathing. In 1609, an observer, **Councillor de Lancré**, commented on this practice that he disapproved, saying “this mix of young ladies and young fishermen that one can see on the coast, naked under their bathing costumes, swimming together in the water...” The people of Biarritz did not pay any attention to such remarks and carried on bathing, even though it was officially forbidden in 1774 to erect changing huts.

Sea bathing was only recognised as a **treatment for general aches and pains in the middle of the 18th century**.

Victor Hugo was one of the first to be enchanted by Biarritz in 1843. He was charmed by a “white village with red roofs and green shutters, set amongst grassy hills”. He was immediately concerned that Biarritz would become “fashionable” and perceptively remarked, “this day will come soon”.

Eleven years later, the Countess of Montijo who had come to Biarritz during her childhood, decided to settle there for a period of two months after she got married to Napoleon III. The Imperial couple was warmly welcomed by the cheers of the crowd and decided to stay in the Chateau de Gramont which belonged to the Mayor of Bayonne.



Soon after, Napoleon had a **summer residence** built for his wife, the “**Villa Eugénie**”, where the couple would come every year until 1868 to enjoy the climate and the sea’s invigorating effects. Following their example, many Royals discovered Biarritz. These were the **Kings of Wurtemberg, Belgium and Portugal. Russian, Polish and Roumanian Princes, Spanish Grandees and English Lords** made Biarritz a very special town where 10,000 summer visitors came each year.

High Society and Night Life

The Second Empire gave way to the Belle Époque at the end of the century and the Royals of the 1st Republic came to spend lazy days in Biarritz. In the meantime, many **stylish and flamboyant houses** were built in Biarritz and enhanced the town’s image. **Sadi Carnot, Poincaré, Clemenceau, Jules Ferry, Alexandre Dumas and Zola** met around the beaches. English aristocrats, whose ancestors had discovered Biarritz at the beginning of the century during the Napoleonic wars, came to stay there, as did **the Prince of Wales, and later Edward VII**, who spent over a year in the old Imperial residence. It was transformed into a hotel, **the “Hôtel du Palais” in 1893**. The English gave Biarritz its first golf course, the “**Golf du Phare**” and its first horse shows. **Elizabeth of Austria, known as “Sissi”** also came to Biarritz looking for comfort in the town’s atmosphere.

At the end of the 19th century, the newly **built Municipal Casino as well as the Bellevue Casino** attracted many theatre people and gamblers. **Sarah Bernhardt and Lucien Guitry**, the father of Sacha Guitry, gave shows in Biarritz. Once the shows were over, they would party all night. The refined pleasures of 19th century society life gave way to busy Parisian style nightlife in the Roaring 20’s, where people practiced the new art of charleston and large villa owners organised huge parties in their parks, such as **Natalie of Serbia’s** palace, which later became the “Royal Pavillion”.

After the Second World War, Biarritz came to life again, thanks to the magnificent parties thrown by the **Marquis of Cuevas**. Biarritz still attracted high society people such as **Farouk of Egypt, Michael of Romania and Peter of Yugoslavia**. **Movie stars such as Frank Sinatra, Gary Cooper and Bing Crosby** came to Biarritz as did **Rita Hayworth** who stayed with the **Aga Khan**.

Parties were still in full swing in the 60’s, just a touch more discreet, but as sumptuous as ever. Since the 70’s and 80’s, Biarritz is having much more to offer than just its nightlife which tempted many busier modern men.

HOW TO KEEP FIT IN BIARRITZ

A Town where it Feels Good to Be in Shape

Biarritz has long beaches, big waves, mild weather all year round and has always seduced many fresh air and sea lovers. Two sports are particularly popular in Biarritz: **golf and surfing**.



One of the major golf destinations in the world

Biarritz is a meeting point for all European golf players as there **are exceptional courses and weather conditions** which allow outdoor activities **all year round**.



16 Golf Courses

Heritage of the English aristocracy, Biarritz has **the second oldest golf courses in the European continent, the « Golf du Phare »**, created in 1888. What makes it special today is that it is located right in the town centre.

Exactly 100 years later, **the Ilbarritz-Bidart International Training Centre was opened, the only complex of this kind in Europe**, an expert facility in a superb setting overlooking the ocean. Covering over 26 hectares along the coast, it offers all the techniques necessary for amateur and professional players to improve their golf, with a training workshop including a video and a nine-hole golf route.

Biarritz has entered into golfing legend, providing the impetus for many other famous courses in the area. Today, there are **16 greens within a 100 miles radius of Biarritz**. Golf players can increase the level of their performance as they go from one golf course to another:

French Basque Country

- Golf de Biarritz le Phare
- Centre International d'Entraînement Golf d'Ilbarritz - Bidart
- Golf d'Arcangues
- Makila Golf club Bayonne Bassussarry
- Golf de Chiberta - Anglet

- Golf de Chantaco - Saint-Jean-de-Luz
- Golf de la Nivelle - Ciboure

Landes

- Golf de Moliets
- Golf Blue Green Seignosse
- Golf Club Hossegor
- Golf de Pinsolle - Soustons Plage
- Golf de Mont de Marsan

Béarn Pyrénées

- Pau Golf Club
- Blue Green Golf de Pau Artiquelouve
- Compact Golf Idron

Golf Pass

The Biarritz destination Golf Pass 2018 grants the access to the most beautiful courses, from the Basque coast up to the South of the Landes region : Biarritz le Phare, Chantaco, Arcangues, Makila Golf Club Bayonne Bassussarry, Seignosse, Moliets, Hossegor, Pinsolle-Soustons, Mont de Marsan.

You can choose from 2 to 8 golf courses.

To buy it online: www.biarritz-destination-golf.com (greenfee from 50€ during low season to 67 € during high season)

Great International Competitions

Considered as the Mecca of golf, Biarritz organises some thirty golf contests every year, some of which are at international level:

- The **Biarritz Cup**, which is the oldest, was created in 1898. Six hundred participants attend the competition each year on the "Golf du Phare". The latter is held during **July**.
- The **Golf "Makilas"**, held with seven hundred participants is held in **May**.
- **New in 2018 : Simone Thion de la Chaume 20th Trophy : from April 26th to 28th, more than 130 female international professional players will attend the Biarritz golf du Phare.**

The “Grande Plage” or Large Beach: one of the best spots in the world for surfing



Scriptwriter Peter Viertel came to Biarritz from America in **1957** with his wife Deborah Kerr to shoot his film “The Sun Also Rises”. He brought surf boards with him to practise surfing, an original sport imported from Hawaii, on Biarritz’ “Large Beach”. A spectacular sport, surfing rapidly started to attract many followers in France, including **Joël de Rosnay**. It was such a success that surfers founded the Surf-Riding Federation in 1964. A “Sports and Study” department involving surfing was included in the curriculum of the town’s high school soon afterwards.

Very quickly, the **Large Beach** gained a reputation as **one of the best spots** for surfing in Europe and now attracts surfers from all over the world.

Tennis, Horse riding, Rugby, and of course Pelota are also available in Biarritz

Ball games are a tradition in the Basque country, a region where one of the fourth greatest **tennis** champions of the pre-war period, Jean Borotra, originated from. Since then, tennis has been widely practiced by Basque people, including tourists. Created in 2003, the international **ENGIE tennis OPEN welcomes each year in September the best European female tennis players on the Biarritz Olympique courts.**

For those who are not so keen on running on a hard court, but prefer riding, Biarritz also has something to offer them with **Horse-riding Ibarritz club**. Gamblers can also bet on horses in July with the “**Hippodrome des Fleurs**” horse races.



The people of Biarritz, just like the rest of the Southeast of France, are fond of **rugby**. The Biarritz rugby experts do fully agree that this is a “hooligans’ sport played by gentlemen”. **Serge Blanco**, Serge Betsen, Pascal Ondarts were international rugby players from Biarritz.

Last but not least, Biarritz people love **Basque pelota** before everything else, a sport at which they excel. Biarritz offers many possibilities for amateur players of such a unique sport, either with bare hands or using a chistera or a pala... However, the real speciality of the Basque country is **Cesta Punta**, a more intense and stronger version of pelota, introduced in France forty years ago.

THE BENEFITS OF SEAWATER THERAPY

Seawater Therapy Becomes Fashionable

Seawater therapy has become more and more popular in France over the last few years, as many people go on programmes. Sea bathing is an ancient practice - the Greeks and the Romans were renowned for the sea baths they had installed on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean coasts. Seawater therapy became popular again during the 19th century as beach resorts sprang up. In fact, the term seawater therapy ("thalasso-thérapie" in French), was invented by a French doctor who came from the French Southwest town of Arcachon. Sea bathing in warm waters, mud and seaweed baths, tonifying showers, seawater steam baths and water physiotherapy are today the sophisticated techniques of seawater therapy. These techniques are based on the good effects of the sea air and sea water which "cleanse", invigorate and slow down the rhythm of the body, giving it a revitalising effect and, above all, giving it back all the precious minerals contained in seaweed and sea mud.



Biarritz is asserting itself more and more as a "capital" for seawater therapy and it cures 15% of people taking the waters thanks to the town's three complementary centres.



The Thalassa seawater therapy institute

In 1979, the ex racing cyclist champion Louison Bobet chose Biarritz to set up a seawater therapy institute which is adapted to modern health problems of stress and anxiety.

Integrated into the Sofitel Biarritz Miramar Thalassa sea & spa ***** (which is open

all year round), the institute has been bought by Accor in 1997.

The institute offers most modern techniques and treatments. It has a daily capacity of 300 people and offers treatments which are highly recommended for good health and general well-being for a minimum period of 6 days, these include post-surgery physiotherapy and more



recently postnatal and anti-smoking treatments. The institute has a team of 90 people including 3 specialised doctors.

Thalmar: Seawater Therapy à la Carte



Thalmar, which have offered proper treatments for over twenty years, achieved its renovation in April, 2008. Today, a wide range of seawater therapy which is à la carte and without prior appointment is available. Thalmar has a daily capacity of 450 people, all year round. In addition to proper seawater therapy equipment, there is

also a swimming pool, a sauna, sunbeds and a beauty clinic.

This institute is specialised in circulatory problems (i.e. heavy legs, bad circulation and water retention) and offer a rest and relaxation programme against stress and anxiety.

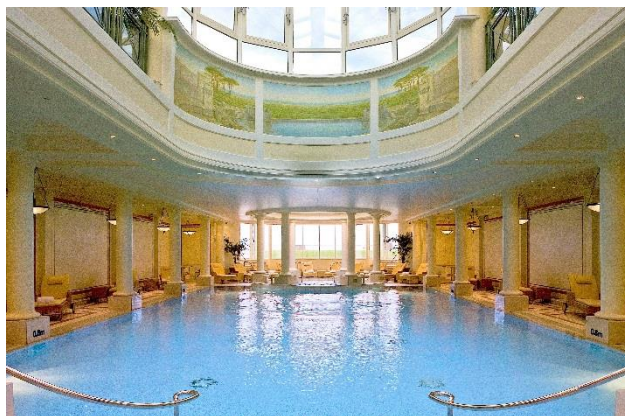
Hôtel du Palais Imperial Spa

The **Imperial Spa** and the beauty institute of the Hotel du Palais are in a complex of 2.900m² that offers various treatments for your well-being, combining physical, energetic, and mental well-being with beauty expertise by **Guerlain**. It includes:

- ° An indoor swimming pool (19m x 9m) with a breathtaking view of the ocean
- ° 9 treatment rooms, a fitness center, a cardio training

- ° 2 saunas, 2 Turkish bathes or hammam

- ° 2 shops, a relaxation room, a tea bar, a hair salon in collaboration with **Leonor Greyl Hair Care Institute**



All the body and facial treatments are performed with highly advanced products of the **House of Guerlain**.

MODERN FACILITIES IN HISTORICAL SITES

Three Congress Centres and an Exhibition Hall



Over the years, Biarritz has provided equipment and premises to satisfy the demands of a new clientele, that of business tourism. Today, the town can accommodate **20,000 congress** goers, without taking into account the seminars that are taking place in Biarritz hotels.

Today there are more than **3,500 hotel rooms** within the town and its vicinity, 350 of which are located in 5* star hotels (**the**

Sofitel Miramar, the Regina Biarritz Hôtel and SPA MGallery, the Beaumanoir and the Hôtel du Palais, which used to be the Imperial summer residence), and 532 in 4 star hotels.

For its business clients, Biarritz has three congress centres:

- The **Municipal Casino**
- The **Bellevue Centre**
- The **Gare du Midi**

What makes Biarritz a special place is that it has been able **to renovate its “historical” buildings so that their original charm is preserved**. The Bellevue Centre (which was built at the end of the last century), the Gare du Midi (in the buildings of the old railway station) and the Municipal Casino, all offer the modern facilities necessary for congresses. They are equipped with audio-visual equipment, large conference rooms, annexes, etc. in places where the original architecture has been preserved. These facilities allow business people to fully enjoy the quality of life of Biarritz as well as its unique environment.

Municipal buildings are managed by **Biarritz Tourisme, the tourism information office and congress centre**.

The Gare du Midi

Behind its Art Nouveau façade, the former railway station hides an auditorium of 1,400 seats and particularly lends itself to the launching of products and cultural events...

The Municipal Casino



The Municipal Casino made the town's history when it was built in 1929. This historical building, which was erected on the site of the original Municipal Casino (1901), helped to build Biarritz' wonderful reputation by accommodating the biggest "gamblers" and greatest artists (especially after the Second World War). **King Farouk** squandered a great part of his fortune on the gambling tables. Meanwhile, the famous **ballets of the**

Marquis of Cuevas, and also Edith Piaf, Yves Montand, Charles Trenet, etc., were appearing on the town's stages.

Partially destroyed in 1957 by a fire, the building of the Casino was gradually deteriorating. Since June 1994, the Municipal Casino has been offering besides gambling (managed by the Lucien Barrière Group), conference rooms, a party room, a theatre and, last but not least, a swimming-pool that looks out - supreme luxury- onto the ocean.

The Bellevue centre

Refurbished by the internationally renowned architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, the « Bellevue » reopened on March 31, 1999, adding to the two other congress centres in the town: the Municipal Casino and the Festival Palace "Gare du Midi".



The « Bellevue », a building of the Belle Époque style, has undergone extensive restauration in order to adapt to the contemporary demands of business tourism. The Bellevue includes, primarily:

- * an auditorium of 480 seats
- * 500m² of museum space
- * the magnificent Rotunda room and the Atlantic room with their ocean view, which allow 1,200 guests to be accommodated for gala dinners

From now on, with its three complementary premises which are all situated in the town centre within a 5-minute walk from each other, Biarritz is capable of hosting on the same day:

- * a 700 person congress at the Municipal Casino
- * a corporate convention for up to 1500 people at the Gare du Midi

* a congress for 500 people with expositions, exhibitions and gala dinners for up to 1,200 people at the Espace Bellevue

The Halle Iraty Exhibition center

Inaugurated in 2010, Iraty is the latest addition to the Biarritz panoply of event venues, particularly important because of its capacity for hosting large events. Strategically located close to the railway station, the airport and the highway exit, 10 minutes from the city centre, Halle Iraty is a versatile exhibition center to host trade shows, shows, themed evenings, product launches and showroom events, as well as conferences, conventions with or without exhibition and concerts with up to 4,500 spectators. 750 free-parking spaces for visitors



THE MYSTERIOUS CHARM OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Biarritz offers a wide diversity of natural landscapes: from Saint Martin to the Basque coast, going through the Large Beach, the seashore is an infinite source of nook and cranny to discover.

However, centuries of history have given to Biarritz an incredible variety of buildings and structures: from the Orthodox Church to the Byzantine Chapel, from the Medieval Villa to the Art Deco style of the Municipal Casino, the extraordinary architectural heritage of the town shows this past and lives with the present, especially since the creation of the ZPPAUP in 1997 (Protected Zone of the Architectural, Urban and Landscape Heritage). It has allowed the classification of 830 buildings and the enforcement of numerous restoration works.



However, centuries of history have given to Biarritz an incredible variety of buildings and structures: from the Orthodox Church to the Byzantine Chapel, from the Medieval Villa to the Art Deco style of the Municipal Casino, the extraordinary architectural heritage of the town shows this past and lives with the present, especially since the creation of the ZPPAUP in 1997 (Protected Zone of the Architectural, Urban and Landscape Heritage). It has allowed the classification of 830 buildings and the enforcement of numerous restoration works.

Biarritz is also an excellent starting point to explore the Basque country. By foot, by car or all terrain vehicles, on horseback (or pottocks, little Basque pony), numerous visits are possible to discover the hills, traditional villages, dances and, of course, the gastronomy.

A Truly Natural Region

Biarritz is a real feature of the Basque country, a region whose history has been preserved by its own people, with deeply rooted traditions and a lively language, the "Euskara", which origin is not well known. Biarritz also has a regional culture that has combined the richness of outside influences without ever denying its own identity. The Basque region has kept its own originality throughout the centuries and encompasses seven provinces, both in France and Spain.



When approaching Biarritz, one can see the **foothills of the Pyrenees**. Cheerful white houses with red or green shutters squeezed around steeples, stand out from the Pyrenees' bluish hills. Here, amongst dozing wildlife, people can enjoy going for walks or any form of outdoor activities. The sight of children playing pelota against the village walls, a flock of sheep contrasts against green

meadows, the pottocks (Basque ponies) running away at the unexpected approach of an intruder, the "toros de fuego" running into a crowd and the sound of txistu (flutes) or tambourines at the villages' fiestas should all be experienced.

Singing and dancing are an integral part of such festivities, just like pelota or the festivals where Basques compete to be the strongest man. On the markets, one can admire with delight cherries from Itxassou, chillies from Espelette, which are used to give a bit of colour to the French Basque dish piperade (a kind of ratatouille) or bottles of Izarra, from which either the green or yellow colour stands out from the red of the hams. One can also find a great selection of cheese from the Pyrenees that should be eaten with some wine from Irouleguy, an internationally renowned village.

It would take too long to mention all the wonders of the region. Here are a selected few:



- **Bayonne:** "entrance door" to the Basque country. Places to visit are the cathedral, the cloisters and the Vauban town walls.
- **Anglet:** surf destination, offers amongst the best spots of the coast. All board sports are at hand in the city. It goes from ice-skating to skateboarding and surfing. Anglet, romantic town, stir dreams with its legendary cave of the Chambre d'Amour (Chamber of Love), ultimate evidence of the tragic destiny of the two lovers surprised by the sea.
- By the rocky hills, you finally reach **Biarritz**, a real enchantment for the guest. In the old days, tiny port where fishermen harpooned whales, Biarritz is now one of the most famous cities of the coast, queen of the craziest nights since Napoleon III and Empress Eugenia chose the town as their summer residence, until the end of the 19th

century. Once, heartland of the royalty, Biarritz is now the fief of artists and famous people who seek calm and discretion.



- **Saint Jean de Luz:** a tuna fishing port where Louis XIV married Marie-Therese, the “Infant”. It is interesting to wander around the old port, along the pier and visit the old church, the Infant’s house and Louis XIV’s residence. Along the seashore, the mansion houses stand up next to the former ship-owners’ residences and the wonderful seaside villas. Most of the streets are pedestrians: it is very pleasant to roam the streets in search of coolness. For shopping lovers, it is a real paradise with its little coloured shops, its latest fashion items and its traditional craft industry. On the Louis XIV plaza, painters exhibit their works of art around the bandstand. It is not unusual that a Basque choir liven up the town centre. When night comes, the “toro de fuego” (pyrotechnic show) brings happiness (or fear) to the crowd under a rain of confetti.



- **Hendaye:** a 4 kilometres long beach with fine sand.

- **Arcangues:** a town with half-timbered red and green houses, where it is recommended to stop to visit the town’s 13th century church. Singer Luis Mariano is buried in Arcangues’ old cemetery where there are some very old and beautiful tombstones.

- **Cambo les Bains:** a spa town where Edmond Rostand had a residence built, the famous “Arnaga”.

- **Espelette:** a village to visit in October for the Chilli Festival, the Pottocks’ Fair held in February and the village itself which is charming all year round.

- **Ainhoa:** a walled town found on the way to the pilgrim town of St. James’ Way (“Camino de Santiago” in Spanish), Ainhoa has some very beautiful 18th century local houses.



- **The Ibardin road:** a road where, if you are lucky, the Pottoks (small pre-historic semi wild horses) can be seen.



- **The Rhune:** a mountain that offers a breathtaking view of the ocean, the Landes Forest, the Pyrenees and the Bidassoa valley. Beware of the “Betisoak” wild cows!
- **Saint Jean Pied de Port:** its citadels and the Vauban town walls should be visited.

The Basque country goes all the way to Spain, near the town of **San Sebastian** with its elegant bay and picturesque streets. The local plazas have their tremendous ferias in **Bilbao** (1h30 driving) or Pamplona that compete with the French town of Bayonne. The Basque country is a truly natural region.



TYPICAL DISHES OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY



If it has things in common with the traditional Southwest cuisine, Basque gastronomy still has its own original characteristics inspired from the ocean and regional products.

The very famous “Bayonne ham” (“Jambon de Bayonne” in French) has to be named in first. Before savouring the ham, it has to dry for at least six months depending on the ancestral rules. It has to be accompanied by a glass of Irouleguy wine, which, already in the 11th century, delighted the pilgrims of St. James’ Way. Today, vineyards spread across the mountains’ steep and sunny sides which surround the Baïgorry valley. The original grape varieties of the Basque country

mould this tasteful wine.

One also has to discover some other specialities: “baby eels” (“pibales” in French), cod-fish, hake, “Chipirons” or grilled squid and “axoa”, veal stew with peppers and chillies. All these dishes are the pride of the Basque gastronomy. It is tasty but also spicy thanks to the Espelette peppers (a variety of chilli pepper). They bring joy in every single dish.

Likewise, one will enjoy filets, foie gras, Marengo cheese (made from the milk of sheep) served with a delicious black cherry jam, and the “cojones”. It is a very special dish made up with stuffed testicles of the heroic bull from the arena.

Some sweet treats at the end of the meal are not to be missed: chocolates (a very long tradition that comes from the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula settled in the region in the 17th century), the traditional Basque cake, the “túrron”, a sort of nougat and the “muxus”, a kind of macaroon filled with almond paste. In Basque, its name means “kiss”.

All these delicious dishes and many other typical delicacies are to savour in the traditional “bodegas”, cider houses or typical restaurants of the region. However, Biarritz and its surrounding area offer also numerous prestigious sites for more conventional dinners as for example the Hotel du Palais and the Casino.

BIARRITZ A TO Z



Atalaye: located on a headland by the sea, today called the Atalaye plateau. From this vantage point the town's people used to signal the approach of a whale.

Aurresku: a Basque ritual welcomes (a dance of honour).

Biarritz' mild climate: one of the most striking features from the whole range of attractions offered by the resort. It is a place where summer is never too hot and the winter never too cold.

Bodega: an inn where tapas (Spanish appetizers) can be eaten.

Cesta Punta: a given name for a distinct type of pelota. It is a very spectacular game, played with a "large glove" against three walls with a covered front wall called Jai-Alai.

Chipirons: squid often cooked in its own ink.

Chocolate: a local industry started by Spanish and Portuguese Jews when they were expelled from the Iberic Peninsula during the Inquisition.

Euskara: given name for the Basque language, the origins of which dawn from the beginning of time.

Force Basque: traditional games played by opposing village teams. The rules of the games are of a rural nature.

Front wall: a wall used for pelota games, usually situated near the villages' churches and traditionally painted pink. It is the centre of Basque villages.

Gare du Midi: Biarritz town's old railway station, which was inaugurated in 1911. This art nouveau monument is now the "Palais des Festivals" building.

Haize Egoa: the South wind. It often blows in autumn, bringing mildness and an incomparable light to this season.

Hydrangeas: these pink, blue, purple or white flowers form part of the character of the town of Biarritz, and can be found everywhere.

Izarra: a green or yellow liqueur which is made from herbs collected from the Basque mountains.

Joko Garbi: a Chistera game (spelt Xistera in Basque), which is played freely against the town's walls.

Kanougas: chocolate toffee made according to a family recipe of a famous Biarritz chocolate maker, which is still kept secret today. It is a real delight!

Lighthouse: the lighthouse of Biarritz was erected in 1834. It is 73 metres high and has 248 steps. Overhanging the Hainsart Cape, Biarritz' lighthouse marks the separation point between the Landes' sandy coast and the rocky side of the Basque country.

Longboard: the longest registered surf board, it has to be at least 2.74 metres long.

Makila: a shepherd's stick made from medlar wood. The knob of the stick can be unscrewed and used as a weapon. The makila is decorated with metal, such as copper, silver and even gold, and engraved with the motto of its owner.



The Sea Museum: founded in 1933, not to be missed!

Napoleon III: if Empress Eugenia made Biarritz fashionable, then Napoleon III certainly contributed to the town's development and richness by carrying out important planning changes.

Ongi Etorri: "welcome" in Basque.

Piperade: a typical Basque dish made with scrambled eggs, tomatoes and chilies.

Quality of life: the true meaning of this word cannot be appreciated until one visits Biarritz.

Rocks: they give the site its exceptional beauty. Each of the rocks has its own name, which a true local would know. The most famous : the Virgin rock

Saint Martin: the town's patron saint represents the welcoming tradition of Biarritz. The first church of Biarritz, which was erected around the middle of the 12th century and restored in 1541, was named after Saint Martin.



Tamarisk: it is impossible to miss them, there are everywhere in Biarritz. Planted along the seaside, they are hardy and can resist both the West wind and the sea breeze.

Txistu: a three-holed flute, the instrument which forms the basis of Basque music.

Uhaina: the Basque word for “wave”.



Villas: they are one of the major charms of Biarritz' architecture. Built from the end of the 19th century to the 30's, the villas have greatly contributed to Biarritz' particular style and identity.

Windsor: the Duke and the Duchess of Windsor were always faithful to Biarritz. The town pays tribute to them each year by organising its famous Windsor Ball.

Xistera: a name given to the leather and woven wicker glove that one wears to play Cesta Punta. In French, the spelling is “Chistera”.

Yachting: the only sport that cannot be practiced off the coast of Biarritz, despite the town's adequate port. But, St Jean de Luz in the South and Bayonne, located in the North of Biarritz, are only too happy to welcome yachtsmen.

Zikiro: a piece of lamb cooked on the glowing embers of a fire.

