

# ON FOOT

## Donostia-San Sebastián: Ancient and modern

Beaches surrounded by mountains, any amounts of places to visit on foot, an old quarter with flavour and stately buildings. It's not surprising that the Royals chose Donostia-San Sebastián as their summer home.

We'll start our walk in front of the BUEN PASTOR CATHEDRAL. Look out for its 75 metre Neo-gothic spire. Immediately behind the Cathedral is the KOLDO MITXELENA CULTURAL CENTRE, where you'll find the latest in books and exhibitions.

Crossing the pedestrian Plaza de Bilbao with its circular fountain will bring us out at the river Urumea and the profusely decorated MARIA CRISTINA BRIDGE with structures reminiscent of Parisian constructions at each of its four corners. Make your way over this bridge and turn immediately left onto the PASEO DE FRANCIA for a quiet stroll between the reflections of the river and mansions with a decidedly French influence.

Coming back over the river Urumea via Santa Catalina Bridge will take us into the AVENI-

DA DE LA LIBERTAD, a stately avenue packed with shops and banks.

Turning down the pedestrian Calle Txurruka will take us to the PLAZA DE GIPUZKOA, a pretty arcaded square with gardens, home of the Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa (Gipuzkoa Regional Council). Look for the monument in memory of the musician Usandizaga between the trees.

Just near here are the Okendo gardens, which stand between two important early 19th century buildings, the HOTEL MARIA CRISTINA and the TEATRO VICTORIA EUGENIA.

On the other side of the Zurriola you'll come to an unusual building comprising 10,000 glass panels. The city's new Convention Centre and auditorium, Rafael Moneo's PALACIO KURSAAL, looks proudly out over the Zurriola beach.

Retracing your steps you'll come to the BOULEVARD, a busy street separating the newer part of town we've just visited from the Parte Vieja. We'll make our way into the old town via the Calle Narrika.

The arcaded PLAZA DE LA CONSTITUCION, one time Town Hall headquarters, is the hub of local celebrations, including the Tamborrada Drum Parade. Just beside SAN VICENTE CHURCH, the oldest in the city, is the MUSEO DE SAN TELMO, an ancient convent restructured as a museum on Basque culture and containing a number of enormous paintings by José María Sert.

The Calle 31 de Agosto, the only one to survive the terrible 1813 fire, leads to the BASILICA OF SANTA MARIA DEL CORO, the city's patron saint. From here you can visit the picturesque HARBOUR and the new AQUARIUM, or its neighbouring Museo Naval.

Returning through the harbour and round the splendid La Concha Bay, are the Alderdi-Eder gardens and the large building presently housing the TOWN HALL. The Gran Casino was a huge attraction

for aristocrats from all over Europe from 1887 until gambling was banned.

If you've got time, take a peaceful walk along the PASEO DE LA CONCHA to the English-style PALACIO DE MIRAMAR, or continue past Ondarreta until reaching the iron and granite of the PEINE DE LOS VIENTOS (The Windcomb) ensemble.



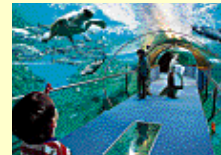
**FORGOTTEN.** So much seaside promenade tends to make the visitor forget the river Urumea. Note that the locals love its French-flavoured walks and elegant bridges.



**BULLFIGHTING.** The elegant Plaza de la Constitución used to double as a bull ring, hence the numbers above the different balconies, which were rented out as boxes.



**VENERATED.** San Sebastián and the Virgen del Coro, male and female patron saints of the city. The arrow-riddled Saint Sebastian can be seen in a sculpture on the doorway, while the Virgen del Coro is depicted in oil on the altarpiece of the basilica.



**PROTAGONISTS.** Although there are over 3,000 fish in the oceanarium, the biggest attractions are the two sharks and a whale skeleton.



**ENGLISH.** Queen María Cristina commissioned the Miramar Palace along the lines of an English < in a city with a strong French influence.



**BEAUTIFUL.** The combination of the area developed by Peña Ganchegui with the three iron sculptures by Chillida and the waves of the sea make the Peine de los Vientos a magic spot.

