

ON FOOT

Vitoria-Gasteiz: the pedestrian city

We'll start our tour of the peaceful Vitoria-Gasteiz in the PLAZA DE LA VIRGEN BLANCA, epicentre of the city throughout the year, and not only when Celedón descends to mark the beginning of



the local festivities. With the Parish Church of San Miguel in the background and houses with pretty balconies on either side, the plaza itself offers a monument to the Battle of Vitoria.

Let's enter the old quarter to the left, along the Calle Herreria, taking note of the Palacio de los Alava-Esquivel and of the PARISH CHURCH OF SAN PEDRO with its impressive Gothic doorway. A little further along the same street is the slender TORRE DE DOÑA OTXANDA, a crenellated tower containing one of the several little museums to be found in Vitoria, that of Natural Sciences. Clim-

bing the stairs beside the Seminario, seek out the PLAZA DE LA BRULLERIA to the left, with its bolatoki (bowling-alley), surrounded by 15th and 16th century buildings: the Casa Armera de los Gobeo (Museo de Arqueología), El Portalón, an ancient medieval-looking inn in brick and wood, and La Torre de los Anda.

Very near here is the highest point in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the CATEDRAL DE SANTA MARÍA or the Catedral vieja, the triple Gothic doorway of which bears details of biblical scenes.

The beautiful Renaissance mansions of Escoriaza-Esquivel and Montehermoso are to be found in the Calle de Fray Zacarías Martínez.

Making our way down beside Santa Ana via the Calle de Las Escuelas will bring us out at the PALACIO DE BENDAÑA, a building of Gothic-Renaissance transition, now occupied by the curious Museo Fournier de Nai-

In the Calle Cuchillería we will come to the CASA CORDON, a medieval tower-house which, although modified on numerous occasions, still sports a cord carved in stone round one of its doorways. Turning to the right on this same street, we will come to the CHURCH OF SAN VICENTE, with elements dating from between the 8th and 18th centuries.

Making our way down the stairway beside the sturdy PALACIO DE VILLA SUSO, we will come to the spacious



Plaza del Machete, the buildings of which are arcaded at the back, thus serving as a viewpoint from the area known as LOS ARQUILLOS.

Continuing through Los Arquillos, we will come to the CHURCH OF SAN MIGUEL, famous for the sculpture of the Virgen Blanca located between the two arches of its doorway. This church also has an interesting Baroque altarpiece.

Coming down to the Plaza de la Virgen Blanca we'll find ourselves in the pedestrian precinct, and will continue along the Calle Postas to the elegant Neo-classical PLAZA DE ESPAÑA

with its perfectly square ground plan. The Town Hall is located on the northern side of this square.

Further along the Calle Postas, with its Correos or Post Office building, we'll come to the PLAZA DE LOS FUEROS. Retracing our steps a little, we'll turn on to another pedestrian street, dedicated to Eduardo Dato, a bustling shopping area and popular local meeting place. You'll be surprised at the sculptures on this street.

Turning onto the Calle Florida will bring us out at the edge of La Florida park, the starting point of a 3-kilometer walk leading to the Basilica de Armentia. We will leave from the PASEO DE LA SENDA, with its hundred-year old trees, and continue along Fray Francisco de Vitoria, past its many mansions. Among these are the Museo de Armería, with its collection of weapons from different periods, the PALACIO DE AJURIA-ENE, official residence of the *lehendakari* of the Basque Government, and the MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES.

Making our way back through the pleasant PARQUE DE LA FLORIDA, we will visit the Neo-gothic CATEDRAL NUEVA or DE MARÍA INMACULADA with its Museo de Arte Sacro.



ORIGINAL. Cards since the 14th century until the present day can be seen in the Museo Fournier: one of the best collections of its kind in the world.



PERFECT. That's the opinion of the experts regarding the solution adopted by 18th century architects in their endeavour to solve the height difference between the old quarter and the new part of town.



VISIBLE. In a niche on the Church of San Miguel, the pleasant polychromed image of the Virgen Blanca, patron saint of the city, can be seen from the square of the same name.



ABSTRACT. That's the appearance of the Plaza de los Fueros, designed by Eduardo Chillida and Peña Ganchequi, with its granite steps, its areas for *herri kirolak* or Basque sports, and its fosse.



BALANCED. The Museo de Bellas Artes, in the Palacio de Augusti and its garden, combines Spanish painting (17th and 18th century) with works from the Basque school and contemporary oeuvres.



ROMANTIC. Ponds, hillocks, trees and a bandstand co-exist in La Florida Park, unchanged since the 19th century.

