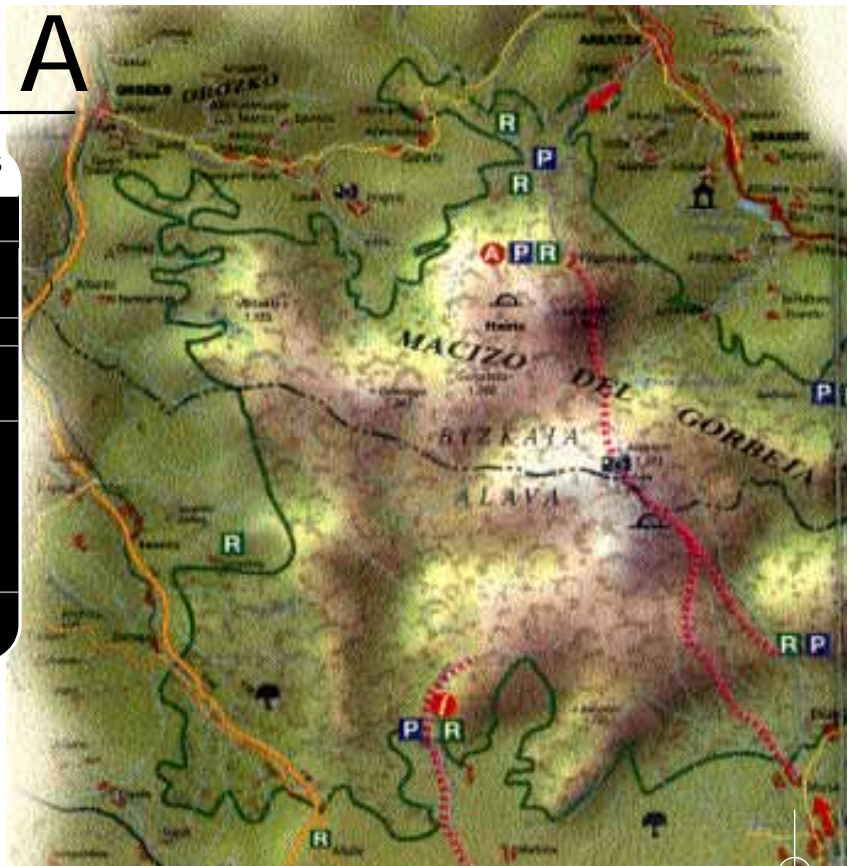


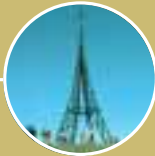
GORBEIA

TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Classification	Nature Reserve
Municipalities	Areatza, Artea, Orozko, Urkabustaiz, Zeanuri, Zeberio, Zigoitia, Zuya.
Area covered	20,016.19 ha.
Height	The highest point is Mount Gorbeia at 1,481 m, and the lowest point is to be found in Orozko at 320 m.
How to get there	The two main entrances to the Reserve are the Bilbao - Vitoria-Gasteiz road over the Altube pass and the N-240 Bilbao - Vitoria-Gasteiz via Barazar.
Information	Reserve Information Centre: Tel.: 945.43.07.09



NOT TO BE MISSED...



THE CROSS

18 m high, the cross that crowns the summit of Mount Gorbeia since 1899 has become the symbol of the Nature Reserve.



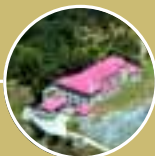
Itxina

The Itxina Biotope is remarkable for its Karstic landscape modelled by the water which has gradually dissolved the rock over the centuries, creating beautiful scenery in the process.



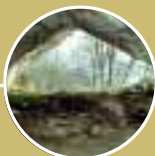
GUJULI CASCADE

This spectacular waterfall of over 100 metres high leads the waters from the streams on the high plateau towards the river Altuba.



NUESTRA SEÑORA DE ORO

Three kilometres from Murgia, the structure of the Sanctuary of the Virgen de Oro has an obviously Gothic flavour. It is surrounded by a series of crags of the same name which form a natural defence for the building.



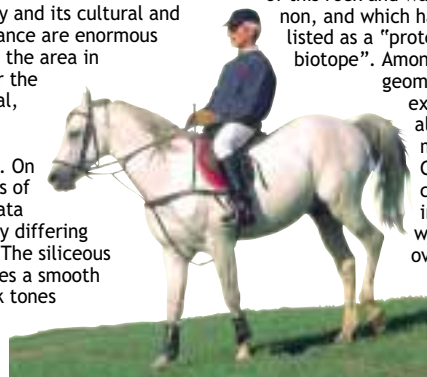
MAIRULEGORRETA CAVE

Located on the foothills of Mount Gorbeia, this cave has several caverns penetrating into the entrails of the rocky massif.

Gorbeia stands on the centre-western stretch of the Cantabrian-Mediterranean watershed, and on one of its main massifs. This is an enormous mountainous area covering parts of both Alava and Bizkaia, the highest point of which, the summit of Mount Gorbeia (1,480 m), marks the boundary between the two provinces. The boundaries of the Nature Reserve are approximately the Alaveses valleys of Zuia and Zigoitia to the south, the Altube and Barazar passes respectively to the east and to the west, and the Bizkaian valleys of Orozko and Arratia to the north. Both its rugged scenery and its cultural and affective significance are enormous for the regions in the area in particular and for the Basques in general, thus leading to a series of intense recreational uses. On Gorbeia two kinds of geological substrata give rise to widely differing kinds of scenery. The siliceous substratum creates a smooth landscape of dark tones

where the vegetation coats the ground - the best example of which is the rounded summit of Gorbeia, home to the enormous cross. On the other hand, the pale reef-like limestone gives rise to crags (Aldamin, Lekanda) and rocky surfaces with never-ending cavities, cracks, chasms and depressions. This area in fact contains samples of the entire range of Karstic phenomena, with almost 500 listed cavities on the massif. Mairulegorreta cave, with its over 12 km of galleries literally blanketed with stalactite formations, is one of the most famous, as is the "Itxina Karst", an archetype of this rock and water phenomenon, and which has also been listed as a "protected biotope". Among the

geomorphological expressions we also have to mention the Gujuli cascade, an impressive waterfall of over 100 m in height carved out of the rock



TO KEEP YOURSELF BUSY



by the river Oyardo.

Gorbeia is a livestock breeding area, and large herds of *latxa* sheep, mares and cows graze on the meadows of Arraba or Egiriñao or in the sheepfolds erected long ago, a theory backed by the many megalithic monuments to be found in the area. But there are also vast deciduous forests, particularly in the province of Alava.

There are guided tours round the Reserve. Ask about them at the Information Centre.

Hill-walking, mountaineering and mountain-biking:

Ask at the Information Centre about the best routes to follow and the most interesting sites to visit in order to get the most out of your time in the reserve.

Organised activities:

Several companies organise active tourism outings in the Reserve, all of which offer a wide range of activities: abseiling, rock-climbing, archery, hill-walking, mountaineering, orienteering, mountain-biking, multi-adventure, trekking, etc.

*Find out more at NATURLAN, 94.430.46.57
KIRIK 94.491.17.46
TROKA 94.432.04.45*

Potholing: ESPELEO AVENTURA 94.416.02.96

Horse-riding:

Three stables on the foothills of Mount Gorbeia offer you the chance to visit the whole park on horseback. Find out more about itineraries and group outings at:

*ZALDITXO 945.46.40.31
HIPICA ZELAIA 945.46.01.50
H. ERIBE 945.46.42.09*

Outstanding are the beech woods of varying botanical makeup, the Pyrenean oak, albar oak, pedunculate oak, and the narrow woods standing along the river banks, etc. Some of the beech trees are magnificent, and the vast beech forest in the area of Altube is one of the best. Deer, introduced in 1957, are found in large numbers. During the mating season, the roebucks let rip with their powerful bellowing to warn off their rivals. The reasonable state of preservation of some of the forest-covered areas is reflected in the different kinds of animal to be found among the trees, such as the birds that prey in the forest (goshawk, sparrowhawk, short-toed eagle, hobby), on the rocks (peregrine falcon, Egyptian vulture) or carnivorous mammals (polecat, wild cat, marten). The pine marten, which probably has the most successful population in the Autonomous Community here in Gorbeia, deserves a particular mention, as does the grey dormouse, which takes shelter in the cavities of old trees. And the preservation of aged trees is precisely one of the urgent needs in order to



A roebuck.

ensure the conservation of a varied forest fauna. Upstream, the clear waters of the different rivers (Bayas, Altube, Subialde) are home to the dipper. The ponds and wetlands on the other hand, house a magnificent variety of amphibians, among which are the agile frog, the Iberian frog and the Alpine newt.

In the background, the jagged Aldamin ridge, and the rounded summit of Gorbeia.





The Peñas de Aia stand out clearly in the scenery of the area lying to the east of Donostia-San Sebastián (the Donostia-San Sebastián - Irún "corridor"). Its unmistakable outline is also remarkable because of its height which, although moderate in absolute terms (833 m) is considerable if we take account of the fact that it is so near the coast (less than 10 km away as the crow flies).

The Aiako Harria (the Basque name for Peñas de Aia) massif stands in both Gipuzkoa and Navarre (it marks the boundary between the two provinces), and one of its far ends also lies on the border with the French side of the Basque Country, known as Iparralde in

Basque. In fact, the north-eastern part of the park reaches as far as the river Bidasoa. Among the mountains in the Basque Autonomous Community, the Aiako Harria massif enjoys the singularity of standing at the end of the Pyrenean Cordillera. We will no longer find plutonic rock (granite and its metamorphic aureole) towards the west on leaving behind the Aiako Harria and its area of influence. We are therefore talking about a geological singularity in the context of our province, i.e., the fact that the oldest land dates from the Primary or Paleozoic Era.

This rocky mass of solidified magma has given rise to veins of different metals which have been exploited since very

ancient times, some since Roman times, and the number of wells and mining galleries dotted over the massif can be counted in dozens. It has been calculated that there is a total tunnel length of some 15-18 km. Minerals are still extracted at Arditurri.

The coast forms a part of the neighbouring scenery, with in the foreground the bay of Txingudi, an important enclave on the migration paths of aquatic birds; the towns of Hondarribia, Irún and Hendaye, Mount Jaizkibel, the Oiartzun valley... But the Nature Reserve extends southwards, through a landscape of summits and passes along the whole boundary with Navarre: Aritxulegi, Bianditz, Aldura, Urdaburu, etc.

TO KEEP YOURSELF BUSY

Hill-walking:

There are several well-indicated paths leading up to the three summits of the Peñas de Aia. The most common way is through Aritxulegi pass.

The little Aiztondo river is particularly interesting with its waterfall of over 100 m in height.

Canyoning, horse-riding, fishing, rock-climbing:

Make the most of the park's natural resources while enjoying yourself to the full.

Ask for more information at the Tourist office in Oarsoalde: 943.49.45.21

Birdwatching:

Here we can see one of the main local colonies of griffon vulture in its own habitat.

Organised activities:

Hill-walking, rock-climbing, canyoning, etc.

IZADI ARTEAN 943.29.35.20

Paragliding:

URRUTI 943.27.81.96

The Irusta waterfall

