



**PIRATES, WHALERS AND
NAVIGATORS HAD THEIR DAY.
NOW IT'S YOUR TIME TO
ENJOY LEKEITIO.**

ENJOY YOUR MOMENT



**Lekeitio
Udala**



**Lekeitioko
Udala**

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Lekeitio is a town located in a small estuary surrounded by mountains and protected by an island which can be reached on foot twice a day. Lekeitio has always been and still is mostly about the sea and that means fishing, trade, culture, identity and a very interesting history.

Whalers, pirates, merchants, artisans, explorers, dock workers, fishermen and even an Austro-Hungarian empress have walked its streets. While they are no longer here, they have left their mark and this can be seen when taking a stroll through its old town, the area around the wall or the docks. They had their moment and they took advantage of it.

Now it's your turn, enjoy it!



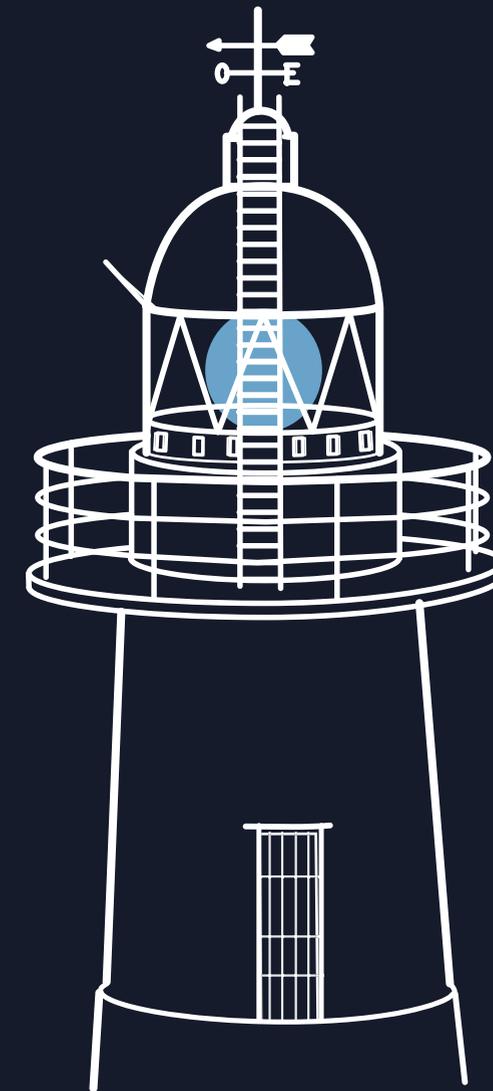
EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY



BILBAO
BIZKAIA
be basque

SANTA KATALINA

Today with our satellites, electric beacons and communication, localisation and orientation systems we can't imagine the importance that lighthouses once had. Their light could be the difference between reaching port and being shipwrecked.



IX-XVII: WHALERS AND NAVIGATORS

The Basque fleet was the first to commercially hunt whales. From the 8th century until the 12th, it dominated the hunting and trade in whales. Thanks to them, Lekeitio experienced great prosperity.

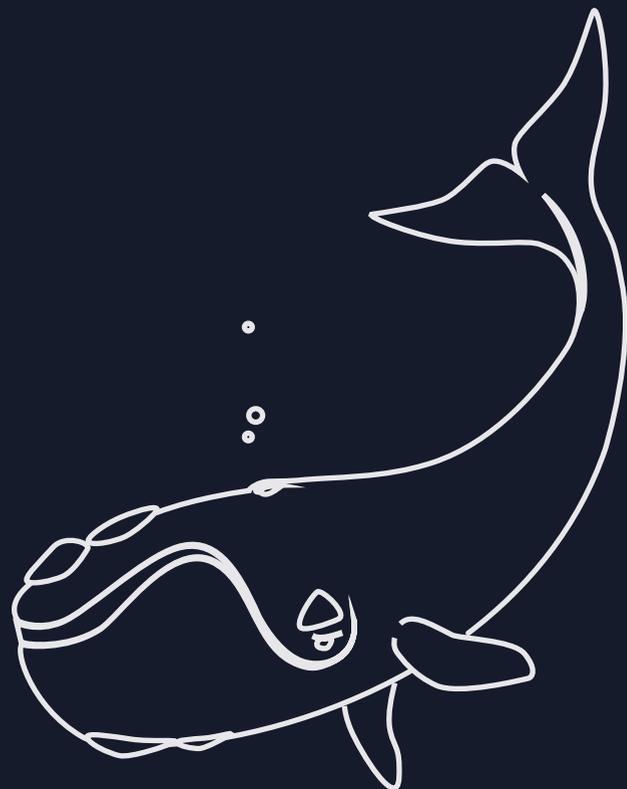


The Whalers

The typical Basque whaling ship stood out for its higher sides due to having two castle-like structures and three masts.

They were more suited to crossing the ocean and also had a greater cargo capacity than the ships in that era.

Two of those old shipyards, where in their day the best boats in the world were built, still survive in Lekeitio.



The magic potion

Basque sailors didn't drink water but instead had cider (2.5 litres per person per day) which, combined with their diet, helped them avoid scurvy.

XXV-XVIII: MERCHANTS AND PIRATES

The people of Lekeitio created a large trade network that spanned from the Nordic countries to the Mediterranean. We have always been seafarers and merchants. But in those days, being a seafarer and a merchant often meant privateering and even piracy when circumstances so demanded.

Iñigo de Artieta (Merchant and privateer)



Non Gogoa, Han Zangoa

Which means something like "put your foot where you have intentions" is an old Basque saying that was appropriate for sailors, merchants and pirates in an era when the world was still big. Something we can see in the basilica of Lekeitio. It is very rich in religious heritage brought back from overseas: alabaster, tombstones, Flemish altarpiece ... in addition to the size and architectural richness of the building itself.

Letter of Marque

The Letter of Marque was a document by which the monarchy guaranteed immunity to sailors who armed their ships and attacked merchants from rival kingdoms.



XIX: ARRANTZA (FISHING)

From the nineteenth century, free trade was limited by the progressive transformation of monarchies into states and the consolidation of borders, customs duties and so on.

Lekeitio was still linked to the sea but this time focused on fishing. This was a non-industrial activity that still remains important symbolically and economically.



Variety and quality

In Lekeitio, coastal fishing allows the locals to enjoy a wide variety of fish that are combined with vegetables from the surrounding fields.

THE HAPPY TWENTIES

The 1920s were an explosion of optimism after the First World War. Technological, social and economic progress helped encourage the appearance of a new development: tourism.

This followed the inertia shown by the European bourgeoisie, who took refuge on the Basque coast during the First World War. The 1920s saw the consolidation of tourism that in addition to money also brought with it ideas and culture.



Empress Zita

Following the end of the First World War and after beginning her exile in Portugal, Empress Zita took refuge in Lekeitio with her entire family. They lived in Uribarren Palace for 7 years, until they finally moved to Belgium.

LEKEITIO TODAY

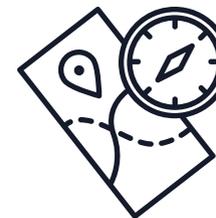
Nowadays, Lekeitio is a friendly destination where you can take part in sports activities and enjoy the scenery, its gastronomy, its heritage and more.

In the same streets and taverns where pirates, merchants, whalers and fishermen once told their stories of faraway places, you can now find surfers, fans of sailing, fishing or trekking or just curious travellers from all over the world.



So now that you have arrived in Lekeitio and you've dropped off your bags, where do you start? There is a lot to see and do, but what should you not miss?

In this section we give you all the suggestions you need to make the most of your stay. What to do, what to see, what to eat and some practical advice.



**... AND NOW
WHAT?**

EATING AND DRINKING

**DON'T RUSH,
THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME
AND YOU CAN ALWAYS
HAVE ANOTHER**



You have come to a place where everything is celebrated by eating and drinking. The Basque cuisine is world-renowned, but in addition to its haute cuisine what grabs the attention of experts is that cooking is a part of all areas of life. It features in the local gastronomic societies (txokos), the bars, the houses and in many conversations.

PUB CRAWL

If you are already familiar with the Basque Country, you will know that a typical way of socialising there is to go from tavern to tavern having "potes", which are small quantities of beer (zurito) or wine (txikito). This activity (txikiteo) is usually accompanied by pintxos (small snacks) and long conversations that can often end with singing. In Lekeitio you have several "txikiteo" areas where you can enjoy a wide range of "pintxos".

THE ROUND AND THE KITTY

In Basque taverns the custom is to pay for everything that has been ordered together. The round is usually more or less the same, but the pintxos vary with the bar. There are two ways to organise this payment, by round or by having a kitty. In the first way, each person pays in one of the taverns and in the second, everyone puts some money into a common fund and someone is in charge of managing the money and paying the bill.



HELP YOURSELF TO PINTXOS

In the Basque Country, pintxos are not usually ordered from a menu but are instead to be found in a refrigerated cabinet. Don't be shy, take your chosen pintxos without being embarrassed and don't bother to ask anyone. When you go to pay for the round, tell the staff which pintxos you have eaten and settle the bill.

You will find a great variety, such as Spanish omelettes, salted fish, baby cuttlefish, small sandwiches, fried squid rings and more. In Lekeitio, each bar has its own speciality. Check them out!

FOUR SAUCES YOU SHOULD TRY BEFORE YOU LEAVE

In Basque cuisine there are many dishes and sauces, but these four are the ones that you should not miss.

1. VIZCAÍNA

It's red and it's very good, but you'd be wrong in thinking it contains tomatoes, (some say that you can throw a bit of tomato in).



2. PIL-PIL

Simple, mild and delicious, a miracle of traditional low temperature cooking. The name is a Basque word that means slow boil. (as opposed to gal-gal -medium boil- or bor-bor -very strong boil).



3. NEGRA

This is the typical sauce made from squid. It often seems strange to those who have never tasted it when they see a black casserole, but they soon change their mind once they try it. Delicate, mild and very different from anything you've tried before.



4. SALSA VERDE

This is usually used for hake in a dish that outside the Basque country is called Basque hake ("Merluza a la vasca" in Spanish). However, it is not only used with hake and for the Basques it is simply salsa verde (green sauce). The secret to its colour is the parsley.



SOMETIMES CLICHÉS ARE TRUE

In addition to pintxos, in Lekeitio you can also eat in a more traditional way. Sitting down, with plates and cutlery and enjoying one of the best-known cuisines. There are menus and styles for all tastes and budgets.



TXAKOLI AND CIDER

Txakoli is a young wine (although there are some that have been aged), which comes as a red but is normally a white wine. It is a very good accompaniment for fish.

Cider is another typical Basque drink. It is made with locally sourced apples. Basque cider differs from other ciders because of the apples used and the use of lower temperatures in its preparation, which gives it its characteristic flavour.



FISH

Lekeitio is still a fishing port and therefore products from the sea are abundant, fresh and varied. Grilled, baked, with sauce (a la vizcaína), pil-pil or in any other way, you can't leave Lekeitio without trying the fish.



DESSERTS

You can order the "karamelo gomazko", which is sucked and stuck onto the "Mingorri", a figure similar to the devil, as part of a parade that takes place at Easter; home-made ice cream; 1888 chocolate fountains; "Aittitta Makurra" chocolates; and of course, "La Colineta", a typical local Lekeitio cake. You can also enjoy other typical cakes: Basque cake, rice cake, Carolina...

WHAT TO DO

GEESE TO THE WATER



Beaches, port, forests and mountains. Lekeitio is the perfect place to go for a bike ride, go rowing and take part in water and land sports. But it is also the perfect place to enjoy the silence of the mountain, the peace of the sea and the starry skies far from the light pollution of the big cities.

STEP BY STEP, GENTLE SPORTS

Lekeitio, with its sheltered port, its tidal river and its estuary with its inlet protected by Cape Santa Katalina and Garraitz Island, is a great place to practice water sports.



SURFING, CANOEING...

In Lekeitio you have the opportunity to go surfing, kayaking, enjoy SUP and also coasteering. Don't worry if you're not an expert, you can take courses, hire guides and even rent the equipment.



CYCLING, TREKKING...

If trekking or cycling are your thing, don't worry, from Lekeitio you have different routes including those that follow the coast or go up the river Lea to Munitibar.



GR 123

If you prefer road biking, you can climb Gontzugarai until you reach Bolibar (the birthplace of Simón Bolívar) where you can visit its old Collegiate Church of Ziortza.

THE RIGHT TIME

TO BUY FISH IN THE PORT

If you take a look at the port in the morning you will see some fish stalls and it is unlikely that you will find anything fresher.

It is a small portion of the fish that the little boats have unloaded that same morning and that has been set aside to sell locally.



HAVE A COFFEE GAZING OUT TO SEA

Have a cup of coffee or whatever you fancy with a slice of cake or a pintxo while gazing out to sea. You can do it from the terrace of the Uribarren Jauregia, from one of the bars on Karraspio beach, from the terraces of the port, or even on the dock itself, from the tala. If you are lucky and it coincides with your stay, you can enjoy the spectacle of the famous stormy northwest wind, while safely looking out of the window. It is one of those pleasures that are difficult to explain, but if you have the opportunity you should try it.



FISHERMEN AND GEESE

Dress in blue, buy yourself a fisherman's shirt and immerse yourself in the local festivities in Lekeitio. They take place at the beginning of September and the high point is the "Antzar Eguna" (Day of Geese). On that day that crews from the town launch the old boats that they have repaired and painted in the previous weeks and enter the port to take part in a competition of skill, tenacity and also a bit of luck, in which the aim is to keep hold of a goose that is hanging from a rope (don't worry, real geese have not been used for many years).

TYPICAL PRODUCT AND CRAFT

You might want to take a little piece of Lekeitio home. The typical fisherman's clothes, a beret or the typical sailor jerseys, a wooden milk container (kaiku), ceramics and more. In Lekeitio there are several places where you can find these items, that memento to take home, some decorative, some practical, some that are a bit of a treat and of course, there are also ones that can be eaten.

WHAT TO SEE

NOTHING TO DO. MAKE THE MOST OF IT

Lekeitio offers you many worthwhile settings. It has cliffs, tidal plains where you can see the flysch, an island that you can walk to if you take advantage of the low tide, an estuary to go up, mountains, forests, pastures and more.

THE OLD TOWN, THE PALACES AND THE WALL

Lekeitio has two neighbourhoods in its old town: First there is the arrantzale (fishing) neighbourhood surrounding the port and, second, there is "Dendarikale", the street of the merchants. In both areas there are palaces, manor houses and buildings of more modern construction dotted about. This part of the town stretches to the basilica, the town hall and the square (formerly a sandy inlet). It is the most sheltered part, furthest from the port and also the connection with the roads that come from the inland areas.

THE ARRANTZALES NEIGHBOURHOOD AND THE PORT

This is the most interesting part for visitors. Although it may seem complex, there is a simple layout with a street parallel to the line of the dock, called Arranegi, and several perpendicular streets that cut across the neighbourhood. You will see that it is a picturesque neighbourhood, there are some mansions and also buildings linked to the old economy of the sea, but above all it is full of fishermen's houses.

If you look closely you can see a high wall between the streets called Itxaurreondo and Azpiri. This is not part of the old city wall, it is a wall built to protect against fires. It is taller than the houses built against it and its job was to protect the houses on one side of the wall from a potential fire on the other side.

THE STREETS DENDARIKALE AND ARRANEGI

Dendarikale, which in Spanish is known as Calle Tendería, is the main road in the old town of Lekeitio. It linked two of the gates in the wall and was on the route that connected the Lea valley with the coast. The older houses show the old structure of a store or workshop below and housing upstairs. Many also have a beautiful garden on the land that separates them from the wall. Although at the beginning there are shops and taverns, Arranegi is a very different street. The ground floors of the houses were not designed as shops, but as fish markets and for storing fishing equipment. All the streets that go down to the port lead off this street. In another era it was also home to the women in charge of waking up the sailors and fishermen before dawn, who roamed the street with their oil lamps, giving voice to their warnings.

With or without a telescope, with an astronomical chart or just taking a casual look, enjoy seeing the stars and watching the sunrise and sunset. From Santa Katalina, from San Juan... However, remember that even in summer, on the Basque coast it gets cool at night.



PHOTOS THAT YOU WILL WANT TO TAKE

There are many good places to take a picture, but not all of them are very obvious. Garraitz Island, Karraspio, the lighthouse of Santa Katalina, the slopes to Otoio or Lumentza, the cliffs. If you wait until sunset, just before the sun goes down behind Otoio, you will have the perfect light.

THE WAVES

Although Lekeitio is generally a calm inlet, during spring tides, storms and summer gales it is possible to see the spectacle of the waves crashing against the dock, entering the inlet or literally swallowing up the beaches.

The force of the Bay of Biscay in all its power can be seen in those moments. This is a show where the most important thing is to keep safe.



THE BASILICA

The fact that Lekeitio used to be wealthy can be seen in its streets, its palaces, its churches but above all in its basilica.

This is a beautiful Gothic church that some believe was part of the wall. It has a beautiful Baroque altarpiece considered one of the finest in the peninsula.

Both the exterior of the basilica and the interior are worth a visit and a moment of relaxed contemplation.



SANTA KATALINA LIGHTHOUSE

This is a beautiful place to visit and is also suitable for groups and families with children. Besides giving an interesting explanation of the marine culture of Lekeitio, it has a simulator in which you can experience being out at sea with a lighthouse. It is a lighthouse but also a place for a nice walk, a beautiful setting and it has a great interpretation centre for children. It has a simulator in which you can visit the lighthouse by sea and interesting information about what the sea used to mean to Lekeitio and its people.



THE ISLAND OF GARRAITZ HAS A SECRET

If you are in Lekeitio and are looking out over the sea you will see Garraitz Island, which is also called San Nicolas after the convent that once stood on it.

It is an island and therefore you can only reach it by swimming or using some kind of boat, but there is a secret. If you wait for low tide, you will see that you can reach it from Karraspio beach (in the photo).

Make the most of your time but before venturing out, find out what time high tide is or you will be stuck there for six hours before you can walk back.



THE KAXARRANKA

Basque dances are one of the most interesting expressions of Basque culture. Some argue that many of these have created the foundations for ballet, since the kings of Navarre took them to their court when they became kings of France.

However, in Lekeitio you will only see one type, called Kaxarranka, and in this the “dantzari” dances with a flag in one hand and a hat in the other, dancing on a kutxa (wooden chest) held by eight oarsmen.

EMAKUMEEN AURRESKUA OR EGUZKI DANTZA

Originally it was danced three times on summer solstice and that is why it is called “Eguzki dantza” (the “Sun Dance”). Today it is danced only once, in the festival of San Pedro, in which the Kaxarranka is also danced.



SURROUNDING AREA

OGEIA

Although it is located in the municipality of Ispaster, it is worth going to see the tidal plain of Ogeia. This is a rocky beach where the forest comes down to the sea. At high tide it almost disappears, but at low tide it is possible to take a stroll and appreciate the flysch.

Also, if you look around you will see that the wells and hollows the provide refuge for a multitude of living beings between tides.



CLIFFS, BEACHES AND SMALL TOWNS

If you like to take a walk, the coast that surrounds Lekeitio it is full of surprises, cliffs, tidal plains, some coves only visible at low tide and more.

If you have a car, or don't mind using the bus (Bizkaibus), you can visit the surrounding villages. Inland there is Markina, Bolibar and on the coast there is EA, a charming little town, and Elantxobe, a town that hangs off the back of the rock of Ogoño that will surprise you.



FOLLOW THE WAY

The Way of St. James crosses the region, through the inland areas. So, within just a few kilometres you can see the Gothic Collegiate Church of Ziortza (in Bolibar), the Church of San Miguel de Arretxinaga with a megalith encircling its altar (in Markina-Xemein) and the historic centre of Markina-Xemein, with its palaces, tower houses and stone pavements.



FARMHOUSES

Around Lekeitio there are municipalities with rural neighbourhoods that will allow you to understand the essence of Basque farmhouses, the landscapes of forests, crops and farms. Ispaster, Amoroto and Mendexa are good examples of our communion with the landscape.



GLOSSARY

HOW DO YOU SAY?

GREETINGS

Hello: Kaixo, although the mythical aupa prevails on a daily basis.

Goodbye: Agur.

Good morning: Egun on.

At midday: Eguerdi on.

Good afternoon: Arratsalde on.

Good evening: Gabon.

See you later: Gero arte.

See you tomorrow: Bihar arte.

BASIC COURTESY

Please: Mesedez.

Many thanks: Eskerrik asko o mila esker.

You're welcome: Ez horregatik.

Sorry: Barkatu.

USEFUL

Yes/ No: Bai/Ez

I don't understand: Ez dut ulertzen.

Open: Zabalik.

Closed: Itxita o Zarratuta.

Good: Ondo o Ederto.

A lot/a little: Asko/Gutxi.

IN THE BAR

Coffee with milk: Kafesnea.

Espresso with milk: Ebakia.

Espresso: Utza.

Cider: Sagardoa.

Beer: Garagardoa. Zurittoa
(a small glass of beer).

Wine: Ardoa. To indicate that you want red, you must order "black wine" (Ardo beltza), "red wine" (Ardo Gorria) for rose and white (Ardo zuria) for white.

Water: Ura.

Enjoy/ bon appetit: On egin.

Good/ ¡bad: Ona/Txarra.
