



portu  
zaharra





# Welcome!

Welcome to one of the most unique places on the Bay of Biscay! This is the Puerto Viejo, the Old Port, of Algorta, in Getxo.

We invite you to stroll through its narrow streets, wander around its buildings and vantage points, and discover the Old Port's flavours and aromas.

Its streets may be steep, but the short distances and the lifts located at strategic points will ensure you can find your way around without too many difficulties and adapt the length and/or difficulty of your walk to your own tastes and interests. What's more, there are eight visitors' panels with accessible (audio) information to help you discover the local history, customs and curiosities.

Explore the rich and varied local heritage and enjoy a memorable experience, making the most of your visit to the old Port to buy a souvenir or savour the local cuisine at any one of its restaurants or at the bars serving pintxos (tapas).



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## A past with the taste of the sea

Algorta was once just a small neighbourhood where people earned their living through maritime pursuits.

The seafaring activity in Algorta's port always adapted to the specific conditions, both physical and economic, at the mouth of the Nervión estuary that opens out into a bay known as El Abra, which is the gateway to the Port of Bilbao.

One of Algorta's foremost professional assets was the experience its seamen had of the local environment and of seamanship in general. Another was the port's geographical position, dominating the entrance to El Abra and with the best look-out points for watching ships in the area.

Excluded from direct trade, which was a privilege reserved for the ports of Portugalete and Bilbao, the port of Algorta was involved in a combination of activities, with inshore fishing using small boats

and piloting services, which meant guiding the vessels navigating the mouth of the estuary and the waters of the bay of El Abra on their way in and out of the port of Bilbao.

As the port's seafaring activities grew and expanded, Algorta's seamen realised they needed an organisation to govern their work. The legal restrictions imposed by Portugalete's privileges meant that the resulting seamen's guild, La Cofradía de Mareantes de San Nicolás de Algorta, had only a token role to play.

Following its creation in the first third of the 17th century, the highest office was that of Mayordomo, who was chosen by all the members. The meetings were initially held beside the cemetery at the church of Santa María, although they were soon (1634) transferred to the Old Port; first to the chapel of San Nicolás, and subsequently, a century later, to the Etxetxu, which was custom-built for this purpose.

## Did you know...?

With their expert knowledge of El Abra, the Old Port's **PILOTS** rivalled with others in the area to guide ships across the dangerous bar of shifting sands that formed at the entrance to the river estuary, and could lead to disaster.

This involved keeping a lookout at the Erriberamune headland and taking turns to watch El Abra.



It was precisely their expertise and familiarity with El Abra that made local men into proficient **COASTGUARDS**, successfully coming to the aid of numerous ships that were wrecked along the coast. In time, a dedicated team was set up, and in the 1970s the coastguard station, the Estación de Salvamento de Náufragos, passed into the hands of the Red Cross of the Sea.



Both the inshore fishing and the pilot service undertaken by the men, as well as the activities related to the advent of tourism, created job opportunities for women in the Old Port, as **SARDINERAS** selling the daily catch in the streets, as **AYAS** (NANNIES) in the mansions in the nearby neighbourhood of Neguri, washing and ironing, or working at the hotel and spa.



The sea was, and still is, a source of wellbeing, riches, leisure and work. The end of the 19th century witnessed a new fashion among the wealthy classes that involved **BATHING IN THE SEA**, on the advice of doctors and perfectly orchestrated at the Igeretxe hotel and spa.

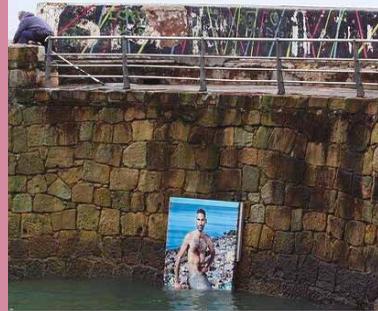


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# Don't miss...

## THE HARBOUR AND THE MERMAN

It is a tiny harbour, which dates from 1629, and following the construction of the Arriluce breakwater it fell into disuse, surviving to this day solely as a refuge for several wooden rowing-boats. It is the site for a traditional competition called the *cucaña* (greasy-pole) during the summer festivities, and also home to the merman, *Sireno de Getxo*, a dynamic work of art by an Argentinian photographer called Marcos López.



## ENJOY THE OLD PORT

Algorta's Old Port has weathered the passage of time, losing none of its charm. Today, this neighbourhood, with the brightly painted homes of its fisherfolk and narrow alleyways, is a living reflection of an important part of life in Getxo. It is also one of the favourite spots chosen by numerous locals and visitors to have a few "potes" (drinks), savour its delicious food in the form of "pintxos" (tapas) or eat at one of its restaurants, or simply stroll around and enjoy the magnificent view out over El Abra.

There are two important dates in the Old Port: 12th August, which is a festivity in honour of the patron saint San Nicolás, and dates back to past religious processions, and the celebration of Corpus Christi (May-June).



## USATEGI: FORTRESS, FLAGS AND RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS

It is no surprise that this vantage point with its stunning views out over El Abra was extremely important as a military stronghold, and together with the fortifications at La Galea, Arrigunaga and Punta Begoña it formed El Abra's main line of defence. The site was known as the Bateria de San Ignacio or of the Banderas (Flags), as the semaphore was the visual communication system used to send messages from Usategi to Mount Elorriaga, and from there to El Arenal in the heart of Bilbao.

This was also the starting point for the annual religious procession held on 12th August during the festivities in honour of the Old Port's patron saint San Nicolás de Bari.



## ETXETXU AND ERRIBERAMUNE

This privileged vantage point provided an excellent position for keeping an eye out over EL Abra, watching for ships to guide, vessels in distress, and sons, brothers, fathers and husbands returning from sea... The sculpture of the Arrantzale (meaning fisherman in Basque), by José Luis Butrón, and the one of the Sardinera, by Luis Iñiguez, remind us of this. Yet so does this unique building, the Etxetxu (18th century), which was the regular meeting place for the Guild and home to the Pilots' College, and constitutes the Old Port's beating heart, located in the midst of narrow and brightly painted houses that adapt to the unique local terrain.



## SAN NICOLÁS AND JENARATXU PARK

The former Chapel of San Nicolás was founded by the guild's seafarers and dedicated to the local patron saint. The first historical reference to its existence dates back to 1634, when it is mentioned as a meeting place for the guilds.

The chapel was deconsecrated in the 19th century, adopting new and different uses (Nautical College, jail cells, teacher's accommodation, storehouse, barracks...). The refurbishment undertaken in 1948 finally turned it into a tenement block, almost completely changing its original layout, which is now virtually unrecognisable.

From here, we can enjoy Jenaratxu Park and its views, as well as make our way to the site of Usategi's former gun emplacement. It's a short walk and we can take the lift.



## IGERETXE AND DOCTOR BILBAO

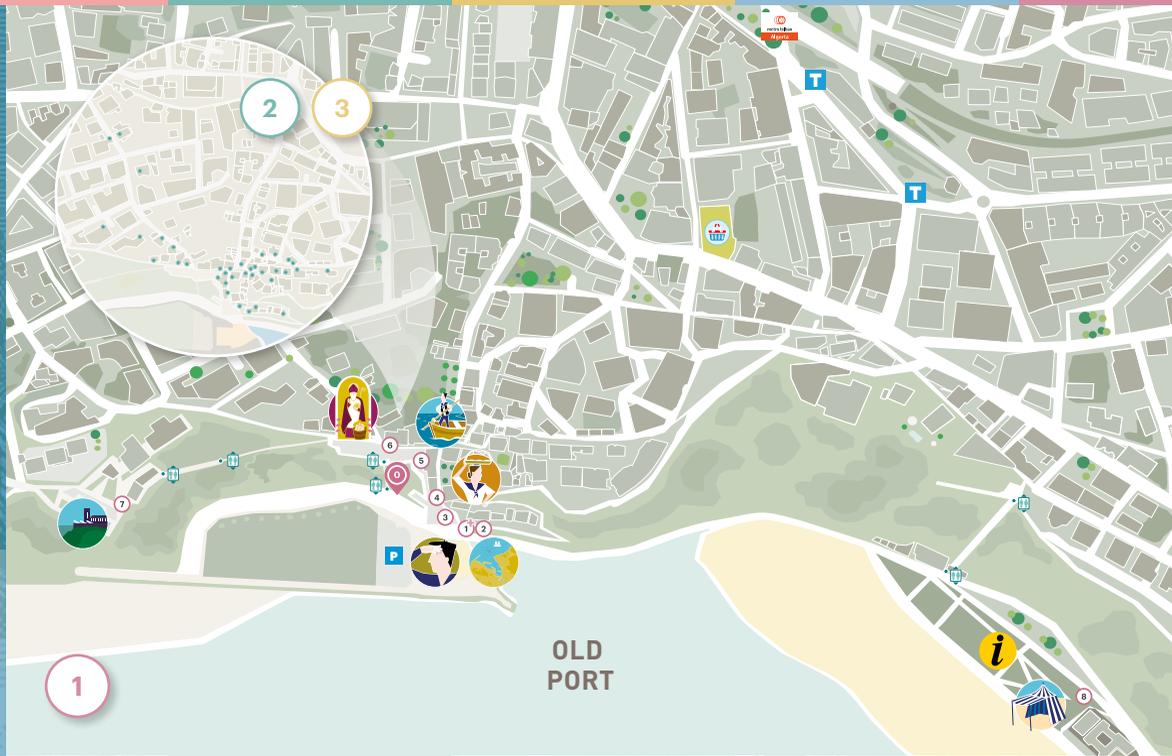
The building of the outer harbour in El Abra (1895) altered the currents in the bay and led to the gradual disappearance of the huge beach in Las Arenas. Health tourism in Getxo then moved to Ereaga Beach, with the building of the Igeretxe on the remnants of La Perla spa.

It is precisely here, with its past history of wellbeing and the sea, where we come across a statue dedicated to Dr Pedro Bilbao, who was born in the Old Port and who was ahead of his time in advocating preventive medicine, a healthy diet, and moderate physical exercise.

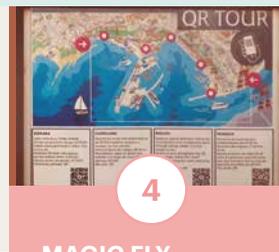
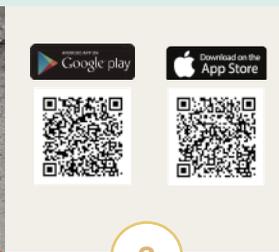
Ereaga is one of Getxo's five beaches, and it is very popular for aquatic sports such as surfing.



# And in addition... resources and suggestions



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- 6
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## 1 INFORMATION PANELS

There are eight panels to help you to find out more about the Old Port.

## 2 PLAQUES

Discover the houses names and when they were built.

## 3 APP THE OLD PORT, FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

Free app for discovering all the details about the Old Port: buildings, panels, routes...

## 4 MAGIC FLY

Scan the QR code of the Old Port's emblem and follow the instructions.

### + INFO



## 5 WALKS BROUGHT TO LIFE BY ACTORS

More information from the Tourist Office.

### + INFO



## 6 TAXI TOUR

More information from the Tourist Office.

### + INFO



## 7 EATING IN THE OLD PORT

Enjoy the pintxos in the local bars or eat at one of its restaurants, or even try your hand at cooking a local dish by purchasing a copy of the recipe book *The Flavor of the Old Port*. (i)

## 8 deapie ROUTES

Two of these routes are dedicated to much-loved characters from the Puerto Viejo, Dr Pedro Bilbao and Miren Larrea.

## PHONE NUMBERS AND USEFUL INFORMATION



### Getxo Tourist Office:

Ereaga Beach: +34 944 910 800

### Tourist Office

Puente Bizkaia: +34 615 756 290

### Local Police:

+34 944 660 202

**BizkaiTaxi** : +34 94 491 53 53

**Emergency calls**: 112

The Basque language, **euskera**, is very old and unlike any other; you will be delighted to learn a few words and have the chance to use them during your visit. Remember that the combinations TX, TS and TZ sound like CH as in Chance or Choice, and that GI and GE in euskera sound like GUI, as in Give, and like GUE, as in Guest, respectively.

### Greetings and courtesies

- **Good morning:**  
Egun on
- **Good afternoon:**  
Arratsalde on
- **Good evening/  
goodnight:** Gabon
- **Hello:** Kaixo

- **Goodbye:** Agur
- **Thank you:**  
Eskerrik asko
- **Not at all:**  
Ez horregatik
- **Please:**  
Mesedez

- **Welcome:**  
Ongi etorri
- **Enjoy your meal:**  
On egin
- **And you too:**  
Berdin, bardin
- **Sorry:** Barkatu

### Useful expressions

- **Yes:** Bai
- **No:** Ez
- **Well/Fine:**  
Ondo/ongi
- **Good:** Ona
- **Bad:** Txarra
- **Help:** Laguntza
- **Careful:** Kontuz
- **Open:** Zabalik
- **Closed:** Itxita
- **Bar:** Taberna
- **Restaurant:**  
Jatetxe
- **Market:**  
Azoka

### Food

- **Milk:** Esnea
- **Milk coffee:** Kafesnea
- **Small strong coffee  
with milk:** Ebakia
- **Black coffee:** Hutsa
- **Cider:** Sagardoa
- **Beer:** Garagardoa

- **Wine:** Ardoa
- **Water:** Ura
- **Cheese:** Gazta
- **Pan:** Ogia
- **Baby squid:** Txipiroidak
- **Winkles:** Magurioak
- **Tapa:** Pintxo

### Numbers

- **One:** Bat
- **Two:** Bi
- **Three:** Hiru
- **Four:** Lau
- **Five:** Bost
- **Six:** Sei
- **Seven:** Zazpi
- **Eight:** Zortzi
- **Nine:** Bederatzi
- **Ten:** Hamar

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