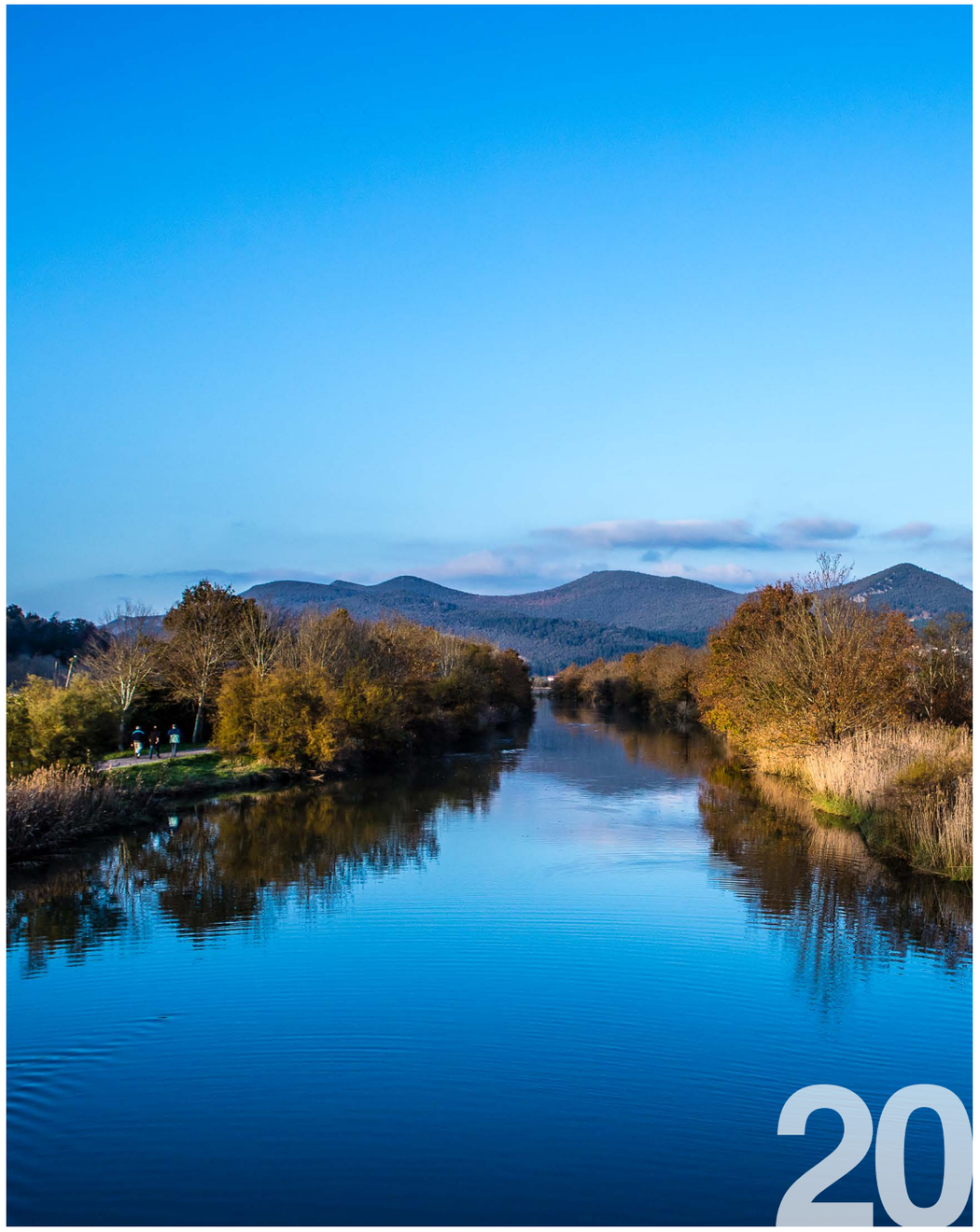
GERNIKA





















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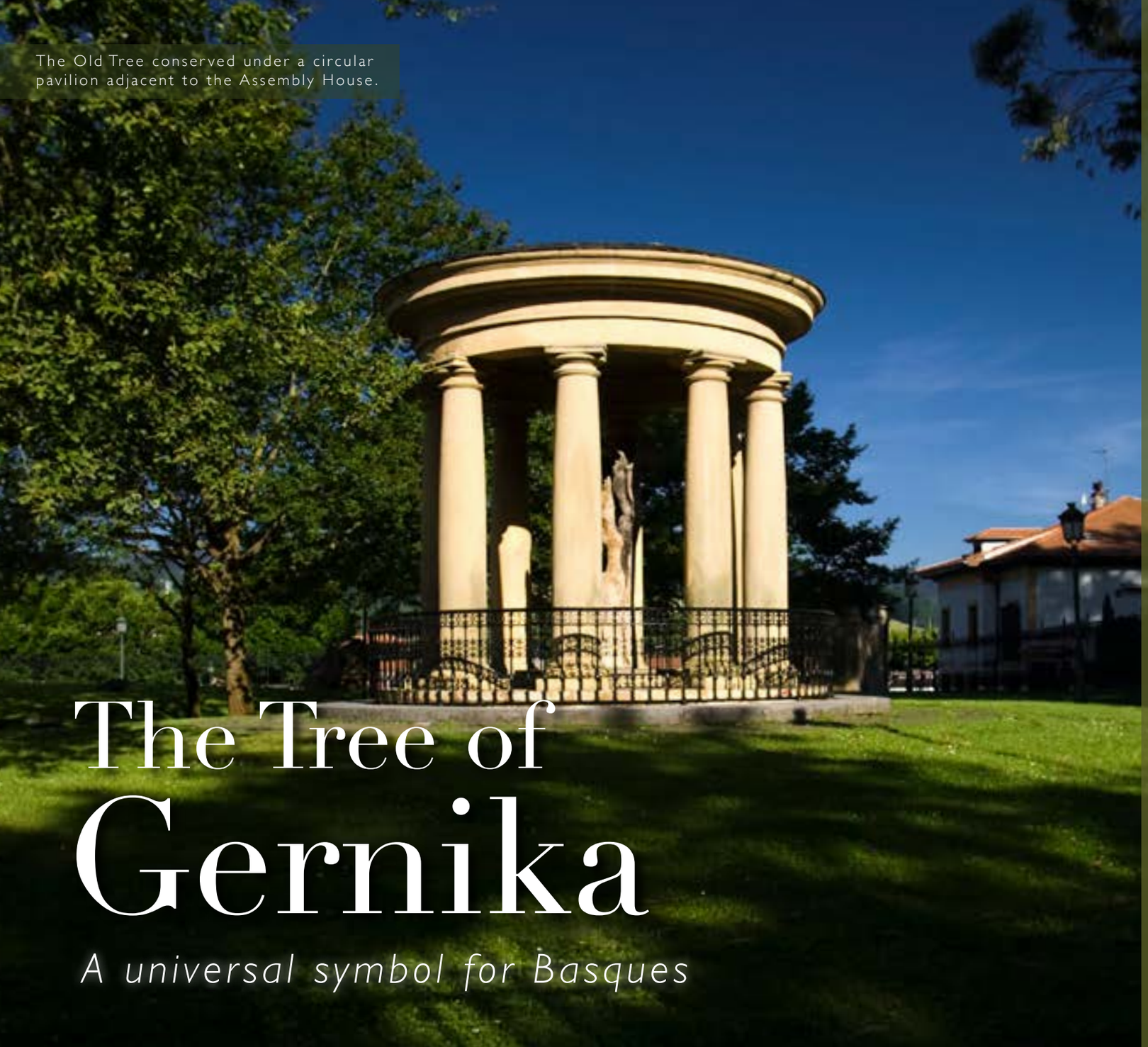


"Gure Aitaren Etxea" E. CHILLIDA

Since time immemorial, *Gernika* has been a place laden with symbolism and significance for all Basques: a symbol of democracy and historic rights. Nothing could have hurt the Basque Country more than the destruction of Gernika, the town where the first Basque Premier was sworn in under the famous Tree.

The international press told the story of the bombing of Gernika as high-impact, front-page news, stressing the disproportionate force of the attack against such a small, defenceless target. The bombing inspired Picasso to paint his *Guernica*, a masterful depiction of the horrors of war and perhaps the most famous painting of the 20th century.

It was on 26 April 1987, the 50th anniversary of the bombing, that work began in the town to instil the values of a culture of peace and reconciliation. It was a task that was to be recognised by UNESCO, which awarded Gernika-Lumo the Cities for Peace Prize for Europe. Since 2005 the "Gernika Peace and Reconciliation Award" has been presented annually to continue fostering the values of a culture of peace from this small *Basque town, which looks to the future without forgetting its past*.



The Old Tree conserved under a circular pavilion adjacent to the Assembly House.

The Tree of Gernika

A universal symbol for Basques

The Assembly House and *Tree of Gernika* are living symbols of the history of the Basque people. As the headquarters of the ancient parliament of Bizkaia, this building next to the great oak is a meeting point for all the territories that make up the Basque Country and for their shared cultural and ethnographic traditions.

- In the early years of the feudal domain or Seigneury, the people of Bizkaia would hold assemblies in the shade of various oak trees around the territory, but gradually the custom became to meet in a single location, under a single tree: **The Tree of Gernika**.

- In the ancient parish of Lumo, centuries before the founding of the town of Gernika in 1366, there stood a chapel in an oak grove known as Gernikazarra ("Old Gernika"), from which the town took its name. Over the centuries that grove shrank until only one tree was left: the Tree of Gernika. The chapel was replaced by the Church of Santa María la Antigua, on the site where the **Assembly House** now stands.

- In the garden, under a pavilion, stands the dead trunk of the oldest remaining **Tree of Gernika**, though it was not the first. The only way to keep the lineage of an oak alive is to grow saplings from its acorns, so that when one tree dies a descendant can replace it.

- The current **Tree of Gernika** is relatively young: it was planted in 2015 to replace a predecessor that stood for only ten years. The tree before that provided shade for the Assembly House for over 140 years.

The Assembly House of Gernika



"An ancient people with deep roots..."



Ever since the Middle Ages assemblies have been held at the **Assembly House** to draw up the laws and legislative codes of Bizkaia. Each municipality in Bizkaia would send one representative to Gernika to discuss specific problems affecting each location. The decisions reached at these parliaments provided the basis for a code of rules with the force of law which were applicable in the Seigneury of Bizkaia. The feudal Lord of Bizkaia was also bound by these rules.

- In the 14th century the title of Lord of Bizkaia passed to the Kings of Castile, but when they led General Assemblies here they did so not as kings but as Lords of Bizkaia. The Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, came to Gernika to swear to uphold and observe the laws passed by the assemblies of the Seigneury. Their visit is depicted in a tapestry on display in the plenary hall of the assembly House.

- The **Assembly House** and the area before the Tree are still the venues for many significant events, such as the swearing in of the Basque Premier and the Chief Councillor of Bizkaia. A plaque on a nearby monument recalls the words of José Antonio Agirre at his swearing in as the first Basque Premier in 1936, which have become the standard form of words used by his successors.





The Gernika *Monday* market

Gernika has one of the few remaining traditional produce markets in the Basque Country. It dates back over 650 years to the founding of the town. In 1366 the founding charter of Gernika granted the town the right to hold a weekly market. People still flock to Gernika every Monday from all over the Busturialdea area to buy and sell fresh produce. The atmosphere is happy and colourful, and until recently the day ended with jai-alai matches on the town court, which many professional pelota players have described as the best in the world. This court, designed by Secundino Zuazo, is one of the finest examples of 20th century modernist architecture in Bizkaia.



As the old saying goes, Monday in Gernika is a day to enjoy:

> "*lunes gernikes, kolperik ez*"

A bit of history ...



The official name of the municipality is **Gernika – Lumo**, but not many people know the origins of the second part of the name. In the Middle Ages Gernika was just the harbourside neighbourhood of the parish of Lumo. It stood on a number of major trade routes. The strategic location occupied by Gernika was one of the factors that led the Lord of Bizkaia at the time, Count Tello, to grant it a town charter, splitting it off from the Parish of Lumo and thus greatly reducing the size and importance of the latter. The granting of the charter sparked a long history of legal disputes between Gernika and Lumo. These disputes were eventually brought to an end on 8 January 1882, when they were merged into a single municipality.

The Last Monday

On the **Last Monday in October** Gernika holds its biggest agricultural fair of the year, and indeed one of the biggest anywhere in the Basque Country. This traditional Basque-style market occupies the whole town centre and attracts thousands of visitors every year, drawn by the quality of the products on sale and the festive atmosphere.



Guide for making the most of the *Last Monday in October*:

1. Get there early, and travel by public transport if possible.

2. Be prepared to do a lot of walking: there are over 300 stalls and a huge variety of delicacies to taste. It can be tiring, as the festivities go on all day.

3. Try the typical local foods such as *talo* (cornflour tortillas) with chorizo or black pudding and Idiazabal cheese snacks, washed down with a good *txakoli* wine or a bottle of cider. Leave room for dessert: *gâteau basque* is a delight for the palate.

"...tradition as a way of life"



The First Monday

The Basque Best of Pyrenean Breed contest takes place as part of the **First Monday in October** cattle fair in Gernika. The event brings together over 100 animals in various categories. For two days Gernika becomes a focal point of the primary sector and a showcase for a breed developed as a meat animal.

The events begin on the Sunday with the selection of the best animals, and the awards are presented on the Monday. On both days the event also features tastings of meat from the breed, which bears a designated quality label. Visitors can also purchase local products such as cider, txakolí wine, bread, gâteau basque, cheese and craft ware from the stalls set up around the marquee where the cattle judging takes place.

26-04-1937

Gernika was the target of the first large-scale carpet bombing raid (between 31 and 41 tonnes of bombs were dropped), staged as a military experiment using an attack pattern that was to reappear elsewhere in Europe during World War II.

The bombing of Gernika took place on market day, Monday 26 April 1937. At 4:20 pm the bells of the Church of Santa María began tolling to warn the people that enemy aircraft were on their way. Most of these aircraft belonged to the German Condor Legion, though some were from the Italian *Aviazione Legionaria*. They had taken off from airfields in Vitoria, Burgos and Soria. After the warning the people of Gernika rushed to the various air-raid shelters that had been built in the town, and remained there until the raid ended almost four hours later.

The bombing was ceaseless, with wave after wave of attacks planned with the following tactics:

- The first wave of bombers accompanied by fighters was used to frighten the population into running for the shelters in the town centre. The fighters then circled the town strafing to prevent anyone getting out.

- The first bombs dropped were conventional unitary bombs weighing between 50 and 250 kg, which were used to destroy buildings. These bombs fell through the roofs and formed huge craters when they hit the ground. This left the wooden frames of the buildings exposed.



- Next, incendiary bombs were dropped. These weighed between 1 and 2 kg. They had steel casings and contained an alloy of magnesium, aluminium and zinc that reacted violently on contact with other metals, causing uncontrollable fires with temperatures up to 1500°C. The resulting huge fire in Gernika was visible from villages many kilometres away.

- Finally, survivors trying to get out of the town centre were strafed by low-flying fighters at altitudes of less than 50 m. They focused on the roads in and out of the town, circling to keep the people within the perimeter of fire. Gernika town centre was made up of narrow streets with houses built close together, so the fire spread all the more easily.

A story that stands the test of time...

The Palacio de Alegria: home to the Museum of the Basque Country. Set amidst the Assembly House, the Park of the Peoples of Europe and the Santa Clara convent, this museum explains the history of the Basque people through their culture and deep-rooted traditions, such as that of meeting under the Tree of Gernika. It also has a section devoted to illustrious personages from Basque history. It features sketches, engravings, oil paintings, scale models, maps and nautical instruments.







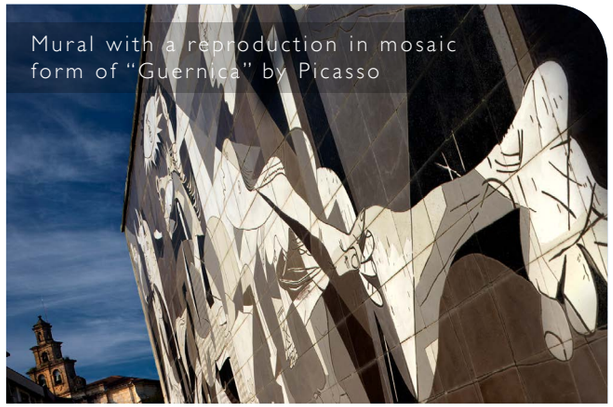
The Peace Museum looks at the history of Gernika-Lumo and the Spanish Civil War, the bombing raid and the example-setting lesson in peace given by the survivors of that tragedy in finding reconciliation with their aggressors, and other reconciliation and peace mediation processes around the world.

The "Memory Trail" is a route around the town featuring panels at various points with accounts by survivors. It takes visitors to the places that were wrecked in the bombing, such as the market square, the old municipal pelota court and the railway station. It also takes in the surviving air-raid shelters. The Astra shelter was used by the employees of factories in the town and the Pasealeku area, where you can get an idea of how the people of Gernika must have felt during the raid.



Cutting edge and *art* remind us of our past

"Guernica". The tiles of this mosaic make up a copy of the work of genius that sprang from the imagination of Pablo Picasso, inspired by the air raid on the town on 26 April 1937. The inscription below the mural expresses the desire of local people for the original painting to be on show in Gernika. **"Guernica" Gernikara.**


Mural with a reproduction in mosaic form of "Guernica" by Picasso

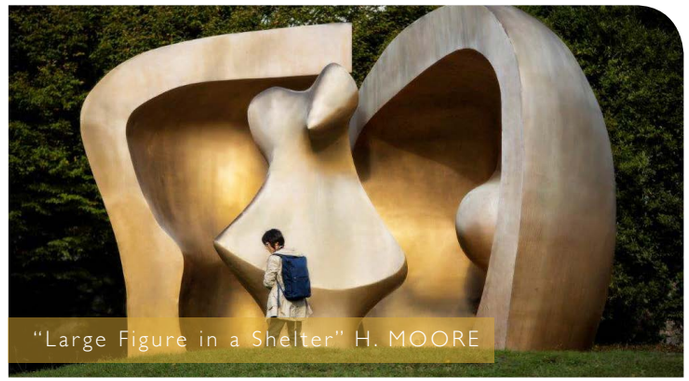

"Agonía de Fuego" N. BASTERRETXEA

"Agonía de Fuego" ("Agony of Fire") is a work by Basque sculptor **Nestor Basterretxea** that stands on the site where the first bombs dropped by German and Italian planes fell on the town. This abstract sculpture stands 8 m high. It comprises a number of diagonal plates of Cor-Ten steel on a large central element, and is intended to symbolise the precise moment when the bombs went off.

The set of sculptures by **Eduardo Chillida** and **Henry Moore** that stand in the Park of the Peoples of Europe symbolises Gernika-Lumo's role as a City for Peace.

"Gure Aitaren Etxea" ("Our Father's House") by **Chillida** was designed so that the Tree of Gernika, which symbolises Basque freedoms, could be seen through the "window" cut into it. Next to it stands **Henry Moore**'s *"Large Figure in a Shelter"*. This sculpture is part of the War Helmets collection that Moore began during World War II.


"Gure Aitaren Etxea" E. CHILLIDA


"Large Figure in a Shelter" H. MOORE

A stroll around Gernika



Jose Maria Iparragirre, *who wrote the popular song "Gernikako Arbola".*



Jose Antonio Agirre, *the first Basque Premier.*

Urdaibai

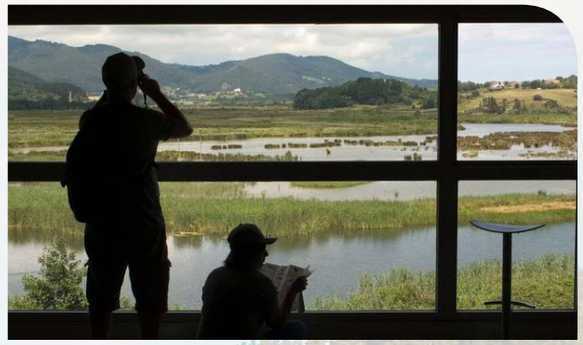
Nature walks from Gernika...

The Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve is a nature reserve which was declared a site of great environmental interest by UNESCO in 1984. One of its most attractive areas is the estuary of the River Oka, in the very heart of the Reserve. It is the largest, best preserved natural area in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, measuring around 1000 hectares below the tide line from the sandbanks of Laida (Ibarrangelu) to the town of Gernika-Lumo.

Close to the town centre stands the starting point of a 14 km circular trail around the estuary, which crosses from one bank to the other via a pedestrian/cycle bridge and runs from Gernika-Lumo to Kortezubi and Forua, and to the Murueta Punte lookout point. From this trail, walkers and cyclists can see how various species of animals and birds cope with the falling and rising tides and with the different habitats that have resulted from the coexistence of natural landscapes and human use of the area.

Not to be missed:

- **Urdaibai Bird Center**, a living museum of nature where visitors can enjoy birds and observe their migratory journeys. This unique observatory overlooks the marshes in the heart of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve.



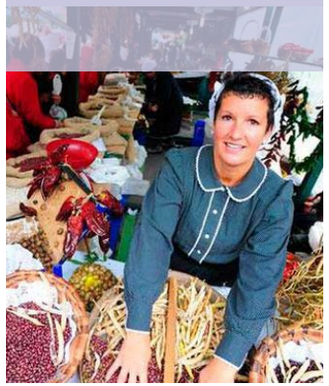


- **Ekoetxea Urdaibai** features photographs, audiovisual material, interactive presentations and tours to highlight biodiversity and its functions. After taking in the various exhibition areas, visitors can stop off at the Madariaga Tower lookout point, which offers spectacular views. Binoculars or a telescope can pick out details of the island of Izaro, Laida beach and the marshes.

10 Unforgettable Gernika experiences...

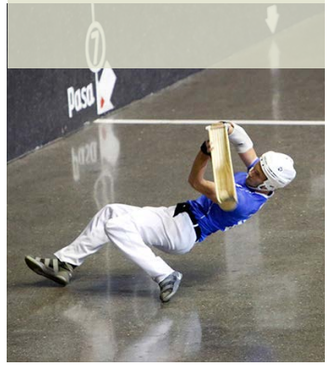
1 Last Monday in October

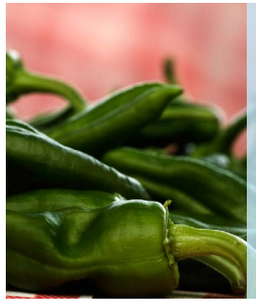
Come & see it and tell your friends



2 Jai Alai

Pelota matches on the best court in the world





3 Gernika green peppers and bean-stew with all the trimmings

Don't miss the chance to try them

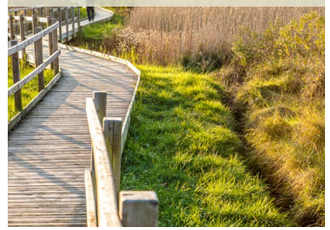
4 Pasealekua air raid shelters

Witnesses to the bombing of Gernika



5 Walks through Urdaibai from Gernika

A stroll to delight the senses





6 The First Monday in October cattle fair

A show of the highest quality

7 Gernika shopping

Everything close at hand





8 Euskal Jaia

Basque culture and festivities: fun with its own identity

9 The Gernika City for Peace Prize

26 April Anniversary of the bombing



10 The Northern Route

Our stretch of the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago. ¡"Buen camino!"





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GERNIKA LUMO

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