





## THE WAY THROUGH GIPUZKOA TOWARDS FINIS TERRAE

Confronted with an expanding Islam, a fabulous legend arose from the outer reaches of Europe which would have great repercussions throughout the Old Continent. The sepulchre of the apostle St. James, the only burial of a disciple of Jesus in Western Europe, became a powerful beacon of the West, attracting and captivating the whole of Christianity, and becoming a prominent place of worship and pilgrimage.

It was the 9th century. The coast of Gipuzkoa, linked to Atlantic Europe by both land and sea since Roman times, started to receive pilgrims who took advantage of the existing commercial routes on their way to Santiago. Many arrived by sea and started on foot from one of the many ports along the Cantabrian coast. Others started their journey from the continent, Aquitaine or even more distant lands, and after stopping at Bayonne, would make it to the Bidassoa River in Hendaye. It was a difficult route, since the terrain was steep and sparsely populated, but the presence of the Muslim armies to the south made it the only possible land route to the desired destination.

A landscape much different from today's surrounded this ancient path. Leafy forests covered the mountains, and vast wetlands stretched across the valleys and river estuaries. The pilgrims had to ford the rivers further inland on foot or by boat, and were generally exempt from payment.

On the eastern bank of the Bidassoa River was the very old Zuberoa Priory, a convent with a pilgrim's 'hostal', a place to rest before continuing on the Way of St. James through the territory of Gipuzkoa. The passage was crossed by boat until the 13th century, when a wooden bridge enabled the crossing to Irún. Hendarribia was another port of arrival for the pilgrims coming by sea from far away lands. The large numbers of people along the way led to the construction of many churches, chapels and hospitals, and to the development of burgeoning coastal towns in Gipuzkoa, founded over the course of two hundred years after 1180. Associated with the worship of St. James and marking the holy path, numerous chapels were erected in honour of hospitable saints such as Saint Martin of Tours, Saint Roch, Saint Sebastian, Saint Pelayo, Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Anthony. The pilgrim hospitals were located along the route, present in practically every town along the way. Calvaries and place names round out the legend of the Pilgrims' way, representing its ancient tradition.

## PILGRIM'S WAY OF ST. JAMES - COASTAL ROUTE-GIPUZKOA

Today the Pilgrims' Way of St. James - Coastal Route recovers part of its original vitality. It now passes through a much more populated land, and there are a number of bridges to cross the rivers. There are also a lot more pilgrim facilities and services than before.

This route can be easily followed through a well-marked path, which is normally far from high-traffic roads. It is also suitable for mountain biking and provides easier options for some of the roughest parts. The sections detailed below, of different lengths and durations, may be linked in different ways to make up a series of stages to fit your needs. Each section described here ends at a town with lodging for pilgrims.

## EN ROUTE POUR LE FINIS TERRAE À TRAVERS GIPUZKOA

Depuis les confins de l'Europe, en lutte contre un Islam expansionniste, surgit une légende fabuleuse mais d'une grande répercussion sur tout le vieux continent : le sépulcre de l'apôtre Saint Jacques, unique tombe d'un disciple de Jésus dans tout l'Occident européen, se dresse comme le puissant phare de l'occident capable d'attirer et de captiver toute la Chrétienté, se convertissant ainsi en un haut lieu de culte et de pèlerinage.

Nous étions au IXe siècle et le littoral de Gipuzkoa, relié depuis l'époque romaine à l'Europe atlantique par les voies de cabotage, commençait à accueillir les pèlerins de passage qui, sur leur chemin, profittaient des voies commerciales existantes. Beaucoup arrivaient par la mer et commençaient leur chemin à pied depuis l'un des ports du littoral cantabrique. D'autres venaient du continent, d'Aquitaine ou de beaujolais plus loin, et après avoir fait étape à Bayonne, se dirigeaient vers le fleuve de la Bidassoa, à Hendaye. C'était un chemin difficile, à travers un environnement abrupt et peu habité, mais la présence des armées musulmanes au sud le convertissait en l'unique itinéraire terrestre possible pour atteindre la destination tant convoitée.

Un paysage très différent à celui d'aujourd'hui encadrait l'ancien chemin: des forêts touffues couvraient un espace montagneux, et de grands marécages occupaient les vallées et les embouchures des rivières, qu'on traversait soit par les gués situés vers l'intérieur ou bien en barque, dont l'utilisation était gratuite pour les pèlerins. Sur la rive orientale du fleuve de la Bidassoa était situé depuis des temps très anciens le Prieuré de Saint Jacques de Suberua, un couvent qui comprenait un hôpital de pèlerins et qui permettait de reprendre des forces avant de poursuivre le chemin jacobéen à travers les terres de Gipuzkoa. Le passage du fleuve se faisait initialement en barque, jusqu'à ce que à partir du XIIIe siècle, un pont en bois vint faciliter la traversée jusqu'à Irún. Fontarabie (Hendarribia) était un autre port d'arrivée des pèlerins qui arrivaient par la mer depuis des terres lointaines. L'affluence de personnes tout au long du chemin amena la construction de nombreux ermitages, églises et hôtels, et l'essor des localités mésangaises du littoral de Gipuzkoa, ensemble de cités fondées à partir de 1800 sur un intervalle de 200 km. Rattachées au culte de Saint Jacques, jalonnant le chemin, de nombreux ermitages furent érigés en l'honneur de saints hospitaliers comme Saint Martin de Tours, Saint Roch, Saint Sébastien, Saint Pelayo, Sainte Marie Madeleine et Saint Antoine. Les hôpitaux de pèlerins étaient situés tout au long du chemin et présentaient dans presque toutes les localités. Calvaires et toponymes complètent l'héritage du chemin et viennent corroborer l'ancienneté de sa tradition.

## LE CHEMIN JACOBÉEN PAR LA CÔTE - GIPUZKOA

Aujourd'hui, le Chemin de Saint Jacques par la côte recouvre en partie la vigne de ses origines. Il traverse actuellement un environnement beaucoup plus peuplé qu'autrefois et les ponts enjambant les rivières sont maintenant une constante. Il compte aussi plus de services et de commodités pour le pèlerin.

Il peut être facilement parcouru suivant un itinéraire signalisé, habituellement éloigné des voies de circulation. Il est également apte aux VTT et offre des alternatives pour les tronçons qui le sont moins. Les tronçons différents ci-après, de différentes longueurs et durées, peuvent s'enchaîner de manière pour former une série d'étapes à votre mesure. Chaque section décrite aboutit dans une localité dotée d'une auberge de pèlerins.



## Hondarribia-Irun → Lezo → Pasai 16,2 km

From Hendaye there are two ways to cross the Bidassoa River and begin the route through Gipuzkoa: either towards Irun or by boat on a pleasant trip to Hondarribia. Both beginnings link up to the same path a little later on at the Santiago chapel.

Upon arriving at Irun, the church of Nuestra Señora del Juncal is worth a visit, with its replica of the Virgin of Juncal, an important 12th century Romanesque work, considered the oldest in Gipuzkoa. The trail from Irun to Santiago is not marked. However, simply follow the path towards Hondarribia until reaching the stream in Amute, and after crossing the bridge, take the path on the left, which soon leads uphill until you reach the chapel.

Hondarribia's walled old town and the fort of Charles V, which prevails over the town, are worth a visit. From here, follow the signs leading to the chapel of Santa Engrazi, with steps on its right side that mark the start of the path to Santiago. Through a rural landscape you'll climb up to the 16th century Guadalupe sanctuary, next to the fort of the same name. There is a crossing that gives us two options: either follow the path to the top of Mount Jaizkibel, reaching 543 meters on a trail dotted with towers, or continue half-way up the hill on the southern side of the mountain along an easier path. Close to the end of the crest, the main path drops down to Lezo, a milestone on the coastal Way of St. James, as seen by the scallop shell on the wall to the left of the portico of the Santo Cristo basilica (17th century). Shortly from here, the trail takes you to Pasai Donibane.

À Pasai Donibane, l'ermitage Santa Ana, du XVIIIe siècle, nous offre une vue fabuleuse sur la baie et son port. A remarquer aussi l'église Juan Bautista ou le calvaire situé près de l'embarcadère, où les pèlerins s'arrêtent pour prier. Une navette continue de permettre le passage des pèlerins et des visiteurs de l'autre côté.

À Pasai San Pedro commence l'un des tronçons les plus spectaculaires de la côte de Gipuzkoa, avec



## 2 Pasai → San Sebastián 7,6 km

In Pasai Donibane the chapel of Santa Ana, dating back to the 18th century, provides us with a wonderful panoramic view of the bay and its port. The church of Juan Bautista is also worth mention, as is the calvary located near the pier, where the pilgrims would stop to pray. A boat service still carries pilgrims and visitors to the other side.

One of the most spectacular sections of the coast of Gipuzkoa begins at Pasai San Pedro, where the path approaches the sea cliffs. On the highest cliff stands the La Plata lighthouse, a fantastic watchtower over the port entrance. Further on, in the heart of Mount Uria, the path climbs up near the old watchtower, used since medieval times to spot whales. The path drops down to the city providing the pilgrim with incomparable views.

À Pasai Donibane, la côte de Gipuzkoa commence par le chemin de la baie de Pasai San Pedro, qui suit le chemin de la côte en provenance de Saint Sébastien jusqu'au point où une barque passe les pèlerins, exempt de paiement sur ordre royal, jusqu'à l'autre côté de la ria. Après un bref trajet le long de la ria, nous atteindrons le mont Talamendi, avec ses vues magnifiques sur la côte et ses remarquables vignobles de Txakoli. Nous arrivons bientôt à Zarautz, qui accueille, à côté de l'église de Santa María la Real, la tombe d'un pèlerin anonyme du XVIe siècle.

À Pasai San Pedro commence l'un des tronçons les plus spectaculaires de la côte de Gipuzkoa, avec le chemin bordant les falaises. Au point le plus élevé se dresse le Phare de la Plata, fantastique vigie sur l'entrée du port. Plus loin, en plein mont Uria, le chemin grimpe vers une ancienne tour de guet, utilisée depuis l'époque médiévale pour la localisation des baleines. Le chemin descend vers la ville en nous régalant de vues imprenables.

À Zarautz → Getaria → Zumaia 9,5 km

Continuing along the Paseo de La Concha seaside promenade, you'll see Palacio Miramar, a stately mansion built in 1888 over the ruins of an old convent which had served as a refuge for many pilgrims over the years. After reaching the end of the bay, the path climbs up to a rural area called Igeldo, which has maintained its traditional character. Following easy trails and paths, we reach the first of the Orio country houses, until a path with some of the original cobblestones still in place leads us to the ancient chapel of San Martín, anteroom to historic Orio.

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