

**MARIBEL'S GUIDE TO HONDARRIBIA ©  
THE BASQUE COUNTRY**



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## WEB RESOURCES

### INFORMATION ON THE WEB

- Basque Country Tourism – <http://tourism.euskadi.eus/en/>
- Bidasoa Tourism - <http://www.bidasoaturismo.com>
- Hondarribia Tourism - <http://www.hondarribiaturismo.com>



## TRAVEL PLANNING SERVICES

*Exclusive Travel Planning Services by **Iberian Traveler & Maribel's Guides**. Contact Maribel to arrange a custom itinerary for your trip to Spain, Portugal, Paris or southwest France.*

*Travel planning services are fee based, depending on the length of your trip. The fee includes the preparation of a customized, day-to-day itinerary based on the client's specific interests/travel style/budget, customized sightseeing, dining and shopping guides for each destination, booking of all accommodations, making restaurant reservations, securing of performing arts tickets (theater/opera/ballet/flamenco), setting up winery visits, cooking classes, personal guide services or special day tours, car rentals and consultation by email or phone.*

*USA Tel: (206) 861-9008 / (206) 364-6723 Email: [info@iberiantraveler.com](mailto:info@iberiantraveler.com)*

## GETTING TO HONDARRIBIA

The San Sebastián airport is located in Hondarribia with connections from Madrid, Barcelona, Málaga and Sevilla. Biarritz airport is 25 minutes away along the A-63. There is regular bus service between San Sebastián and Hondarribia on the Lurralde Bus ([www.lurraldebus.eus](http://www.lurraldebus.eus)), which leaves from Gipuzkoa Plaza in San Sebastián-Donostia. Cost is 1,65€ one-way. Irun/Hendaye and San Sebastián are the nearest rail service for Hondarribia.

## HONDARRIBIA

Hondarribia is widely considered to be one of the most picturesque coastal villages in all of Spain with its charming and colorful La Marina quarter, the much photographed fishermen's homes of Calle San Pedro, with their green, blue and red shutters and geranium bedecked balconies. It's featured in "The Most Beautiful Villages of Spain".



*Hondarribia with Mount Rhune in the background*

The handsome historic walled medieval quarter overlooks the city and is filled with aristocratic mansions and the Castle/Parador Carlos V. The wide beach winds along the river to the coast and has nice facilities (and clean restrooms) for a family beach day. Hondarribia makes an excellent small town base where one can spend several days exploring the Pays Basque, the lush valleys of Navarra and inland Gipúzkoa.

Whether you decide to stay in grand style at the 10th century **Castle Parador** on the Plaza de Armas in the medieval quarter, or opt for something simple, but comfortable, in one of the agrotourist homes, you'll be rewarded with lovely views, fantastic gourmet food, a lively fishing quarter for great pintxos in the evening, nice shopping and a friendly populace.

You can buy food and wine for a picnic at **Solbes**, the gourmet food purveyor across from the Tourist Office, or at **Urdai-Azpikoak**, Jon Alzaga (great ham and cheeses) at Calle San Pedro, 45, and the best baguettes (called *leñas*) I've every tasted in Spain at **Ogi**, Artesanos del Pan also on Calle San Pedro in La Marina, between Gran Sol restaurant and the laundry. Don't buy bread anywhere but here! For groceries and everyday staples there is an Erroski market with good prices very near the airport, but surface parking in front of the store is limited due to the ongoing construction in the area.

There is however, an underground parking garage located in front of the store, but is poorly marked.



Have an inexpensive breakfast (yummy "tostadas" topped with orange marmalada and "ladrillos") at **Cafeteria Kai-Alde**, on the main drag, Calle Zuloaga, across from the magazine & newspaper shop (that sells the IHT).

At the end of Calle San Pedro there's also a handy laundry (lavandería), which provides us with very good, usually one-day service, during our stay. The owner's daughters are very friendly and have friends they visit in NYC each year.

There is also a very modern indoor sports complex, a yacht harbor and new fishermen's pier, with restaurant, on the way to the beach, as well as several children's playgrounds. Plus for nightlife, on the road towards the beach, there's a bar and dance club, **Truck**, where one can have a nightcap in a pretty garden.



## AGROTURISMOS

*Great for budgeters or those who want to “cheap sleep and eat well”*

### IKETXE

I highly recommend the friendly and warm **Iketxe**, a farmhouse that the owners built entirely from scratch ([www.nekatur.net/iketxe](http://www.nekatur.net/iketxe)). It has only five rooms, but they're spacious, filled with handmade country furniture, pleasantly decorated with Kilm rugs on polished wood floors, private baths, with hair dryers. Room No. 3 downstairs has its own large private terrace, while room No. 1 has an enclosed sitting area. Upstairs, room No. 6 is quite spacious. The outgoing Patxi speaks a little English but his wife, Fátima, does speak English and is fluent in French.



*Breakfast Room at Iketxe*

The home has a downstairs kitchen, where Patxi prepares breakfast, with fridge for guests to use, a small library with books and brochures about the region and a breakfast room and lounge with TV for the guests' exclusive use. After all these years, it is still one of our favorite stops.

Tel: (+34) 943 644 391, or email them at: [iketxe5@terra.es](mailto:iketxe5@terra.es).

Doubles here in high season go for €66, a real bargain. The house has been featured in many Spanish travel magazines and in Alistair Sawday's Special Places to Stay/Spain, plus it is a selection of Secret Places; thus, it has become extremely popular. For high season, please book several months in advance.

### ARTIZARRA

If you are traveling with another couple, or as a family needing 3 bedrooms and 3 baths (no kitchen), consider the lovely Artizarra which has one huge upstairs bedroom with sofa, round table and chairs, small balcony, also with table and two chairs, and downstairs, two smaller bedrooms (all with private bath-showers only) which are off the living room with TV, mini-fridge, microwave, fireplace and breakfast table ([www.nekatur.net/artizarra](http://www.nekatur.net/artizarra)).

We have rented this home with another couple for two weeks in July. The owner, Lurdes, who speaks English, did our laundry, served us bountiful breakfasts of homemade cakes, breads, fresh fruits, platters of chorizo and hams, coffee and fresh juice, all for only 6,05€/person. We also had lounge chairs and two picnic tables in the front lawn, where we dined on gourmet products picked up in the markets every other night. And every night we soaked up the indescribable views of the sacred mountain of La Rhune and the lights of San Marical from our living room window.



*Casa Rural Artizarra*

This traditionally styled farmhouse, called a *caserio*, was newly built and is lovely. The downstairs guest quarters consist of two bedrooms, each having its own bath (with shower only) that open on to the charmingly decorated living room with two sofas, table covered with brochures about touring the area, picture windows looking out to the garden (spectacular views), a little dining area to the side where breakfast is served, where you'll find a small microwave and mini-fridge.

Upstairs there is one very spacious bedroom with its own little balcony (and chairs) plus room for a sofa, a rocking chair, a round table and two chairs, which we used for our writing and travel planning. The furniture here is handmade, including the armoire, which serves as the closet. The large dormer bath has a shower only. At the top of the stairs leading to this large bedroom is a small alcove with a fold out bed which could sleep two small children, or where one could put a crib. We used this area to store our luggage.

While the house is not air conditioned, the proprietress will provide fans for each floor, but they usually aren't necessary. A picnic table and lounge chairs are found in the front garden, which we used every evening when returning from our touring. We bought our dinner provisions and wine at the Solbes market, our bread at the Ongi bread shop, our Iberian ham at the local charcuterie and dined outside watching the sunset. We also enjoyed salads prepared with ingredients from the garden.

Our stay at the **Artizarra** proved to be very inexpensive and spacious lodging for our two weeks. We rented the entire house and split this cost with the couple traveling with us. We had our own private, 3-bedroom, 3-bath farmhouse (complete with pelota court), yet we didn't have to bother with cleaning. Our hostess, Lurdes, also changed bed linens and towels daily. She also prepares a bountiful breakfast, but only partook of it a few times, as we chose to have coffee and pastries in town. Again, this makes a perfect base for friends traveling together or for a family.

Tel: (+34) 655 721 834

*If you need just one room, I would book at the Iketxe, as the downstairs rooms have their own private terraces.*

### **HIGERALDE**

For couples traveling alone, in addition to the Iketxe, another very nice option is the Higeralde, located in the same Semisarga neighborhood as the Artizarra, and with beautiful views. Like the Artizarra, the traditional Basque furnishings are hand made or antiques, with armoires serving as closets, and the highly polished floors are terra cotta. The Higeralde offers 4 double-bedded rooms with private bath. Guests share a sitting area and breakfast room. The upstairs bedrooms have small balconies. High season rates run €65 per night. English spoken. See it at: [www.nekatur.net/higeralde](http://www.nekatur.net/higeralde)

Tel: (+34) 943 643 916 / 679 847 727.

### **MAIDANEA**

If the Iketxe is full, then you can consider the immaculate Maidanea with 6 double rooms, but no English spoken here ([www.nekatur.net/maidanea](http://www.nekatur.net/maidanea)).

Tel: (+34) 943 640 855

### **ARTOZ ENEA**

This is another typical Basque farmhouse with 5 double rooms. Ask for the largest and nicest room, No.4, with a balcony, or the cozy attic room-the remaining three do not have as much charm, but here the rooms do come equipped with TV, the house has internet access, the proprietor, Agustín will look after you very well, and very nice breakfasts are served in the garden ([www.arotzenea.net](http://www.arotzenea.net)).

Tel: (+34) 943 642 319 / 679 492 543.

All of the homes are located in the countryside, a mere 2 minutes from the center of Hondarribia as the crow flies, but closer to 7 minutes down narrow country roads that you'll share with farm tractors and people out for a walk. Best to ask the owners either to send you a very detailed map, or have them meet you at the Hondarribia airport to guide you to the properties. Do not attempt to find them at night. You may be able to pick up directions to all the agrotourist homes and a guide at the Hondarribia Tourist Office.

## STAYING IN THE OLD QUARTER OF HONDARRIBIA PARADOR DE CARLOS V

The 36-room castle/fortress Parador, with 8 ft. thick stonewalls, dates from the 10th century. Ferdinand and Isabella and their son Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor once resided here. One of the most atmospheric castle Paradors in the entire network, filled with antiques, suits of armor, tapestries. Reserve a room with view of bay below. Room 301 has views of the bay and the Old Quarter and has a sitting room, attic and two balconies.



*View from the terrace of the Parador*

Like the Parador in Limpias, Cantabria, this Parador supposedly has a resident ghost who makes his appearance during the quiet months of January and February. Ask the Director, Pilar, about the smiling *Celedonio*.

If booking in high season, do so several months in advance, as this Parador fills up very quickly and is actually quite popular year round. Breakfast can be taken in the beautiful interior courtyard or on the terrace. This Parador is seldom available in high season through the Parador discount programs, such as the 5-night or Golden Age plans. These discount rates are available here only during the winter, bringing the tariff down to 156€ per night on the Sunday-Thursday 5-night Plan. In addition to the high tariffs, the other disadvantage to staying here is that the gated parking lot is located below the main entrance, requiring guests to carry their bags up a steep flight of steps.

While the Parador has no restaurant, fine dining abounds in town and within the immediate area. You will be only 20 km away from San Sebastián, one of the premiere dining capitals of Spain.

If you are not a Parador guest and drop in for a drink, your access is limited to the lobby and adjacent bar only. The elevator now allows easy access to the Parador from the street below ([www.parador.es](http://www.parador.es)),



### 3-STAR HOTEL EL OBISPO

The 15th century archbishop's mansion that houses the hotel has 17 rooms with décor done by the designers of Artespaña. Rooms have TV, mini-bar and pretty views of the estuary. The best room is No. 202 in yellow with a black wrought-iron headboard and two French carved wooden chairs. Room 204 is also very nice. Some upstairs rooms share a walk out balcony overlooking the town.

The buffet breakfast included in the room rate is served in a cheerful, salmon and cream-colored downstairs breakfast room or the inviting outdoor terrace. There are six parking spaces for guests in front of the hotel, and parking is also available at a nearby garage. It sits on a newly renovated square in a quiet corner, off the beaten tourist path ([hotelobispo.com](http://hotelobispo.com)).

It seems lighter, airier, more inviting, less dark and gloomy than its neighbor, the Pampinot, because it is set on this open square and the hotel is air conditioned and equipped with free WiFi. It also offers room service, Nestles chocolates, breakfast brought to the room, baby-sitting services, and the free use of bikes. Owners are friendly, the property is immaculate and extremely attractive, prices moderate, and they respond to emails quickly. Owner: Victor Alza Lekuona. Breakfast is extra. This is my favorite small hotel of charm in the area!



*Hotel El Obispo*

### 3-STAR PAMPINOT

Is another palatial mansion that housed Maria Teresa, daughter of Philip II, before her wedding to Louis XIV in St.-Jean-de-Luz. It has an austere stone façade, but the reception is a spacious area with massive stone floor and exposed stonewalls with two huge altarpieces. But the antique look to me seems quite dark and somber.

There's also a little bar tucked into what was once the fireplace and a dramatic staircase leads up to the eight bedrooms, four on each level, each decorated differently. Buffet breakfast is offered but at a steep 15€/person, the same price as the Parador. ([www.hotelpampinot.com](http://www.hotelpampinot.com)).

### HOTEL PALACETE

Those who need to watch their budget closely may want to consider a sweet little hotel, very inexpensive, on Hondarribia's prettiest plaza of the Old Quarter, Plaza de Gipúzkoa. This bijoux, 9-room property is a renovated mansion, with doubles going for 68€ (low season) to 95€ (high season). The hotel also offers three single rooms and one, which is handicapped accessible. Breakfast is served on terrace for 7€. Rooms come with satellite TV, Internet access, safes, baths with hair dryer, but no a/c. Book the largest room with wall of windows facing the square ([www.hotelpalacete.net](http://www.hotelpalacete.net)).



*Hotel Palacete*

## STAYING IN MODERN HONDARRIBIA

### HOTEL JAIZKIBEL

This 4-star minimalist design, but very attractive hotel, offers very comfortable, modern rooms for at moderate price. In low season the very spiffy doubles are often available starting at 105€. There is private parking, a restaurant, bar and all the modern conveniences. It's located in a quiet, upscale residential neighborhood but within walking distance of the center of town. If you're looking for a full service hotel, this fits the bill nicely and at a lower tariff than the Parador ([www.hoteljaizkibel.com](http://www.hoteljaizkibel.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 646 040

## FAMILY APARTMENTS IN THE OLD QUARTER

### HOTEL JAUREGUI

A member of the Sercotel Group, down in the port, on Calle Zuloaga, has apartments on the top floor of the hotel that can be rented by the day or week. Nothing fancy but good for families on a budget who want to be within easy walking distance of the beach and restaurants ([hoteljauregui.com](http://hoteljauregui.com)).



*Calle San Pedro in Hondarribia's the old quarter*

## DINING IN HONDARRIBIA

### HERMANDAD DE PESCADORES

Directly across from the old wharf, at Zuloaga, 12, is a rustic, bustling, convivial place with impeccable seafood, one of the most popular in the city. You'll dine at communal wooden tables, but you'll need to reserve ahead of time, particularly on weekends when the French arrive in droves via the ferry from Hendaye.

Try the *merluza en salsa verde*, hake in green sauce, the house specialty, and the *anchoas caseras en salazón*, homemade salted anchovies. It's inexpensive, fun and informal, and always crowded.

Open for lunch Tuesday-Sunday and for dinner from Wednesday-Saturday. Closed Sunday and Tuesday evenings, all day Monday, Easter week, the first of July and Christmas.

Tel: (+34) 943 642 738

### RESTAURANTE ALAMEDA

For fine dining, and a Michelin star treat, choose the family run Alameda, across from the road leading up to the Old Quarter and the Parador. Considered by gastronomic critics as one of the finest spots in all the Basque Country. The owners/chefs, Gorka & Kepa Txapartegui, are among the country's top stars. If you can dine in only one of Hondarribia's fine restaurants, splurge on the Alameda.

The brothers offer a 5-course set menú, Gartzinea, for 35€, with a wine paring for an additional 15€, a 6-course menu, Hondarribia, for 50€, plus wine paring for 20€, and a 9-course degustation menu, Dastamena, for 80€, with a wine paring for 30€. It receives one sol (sun) from the prestigious Campsa guide, a rating of 15 (very high) from the Guía Gastronómica y Cultural del País Vasco and a 7/10 from The Best of Spanish Gastronomy.

Closes Sunday and Tuesday nights, all day Monday plus the 2nd week of June, 1st week of October and for three weeks around the Christmas holiday season. Reservations available online ([restaurantealameda.net](http://restaurantealameda.net))

Tel: (+34) 943 642 789.

### RESTAURANTE SEBASTIÁN, CLASSIC & BISTRO

For something in between, choose this classic restaurant at Calle Mayor, 11, in the Old Quarter. It's on the way to the Parador, on your right past the town hall. Housed in a former tobacco shop, it has a cozy downstairs dining room with open beams and a fireplace with walls covered with paintings by local artists. The chef is Miguel Soto Darrosez, and he offers a tasting menu for only 45€ + IVA. If you'd like to dine in a more casual atmosphere, then try their Zone 11 Bistro.

Open for lunch from 1:00 to 3:30 and for dinner from 8:00 to 11:00. Closed Sunday nights and Monday (except during the summer), and the first two weeks of November ([www.sebastianhondarribia.com](http://www.sebastianhondarribia.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 640 167.

### ARROKA BERRI

For something less well known but very nice, serving traditional Basque cuisine with a creative twist, my new Hondarribia favorite is the Arroka Berri, in the upper town on the right side of the road to the Cabo Higuer lighthouse at Higuer Bidea, 6. It's housed in a salmon colored, typical Basque farmhouse, remodeled in 2005. Chef Gorka Cepeda offers four special group menus for a minimum of 10 people per table. There's ample car parking across the street.

Open daily for lunch from 1:00 to 3:30, and for dinner from 8:00 to 11:00, closed from December 23 to January 3. Reserve online ([www.arrokaberri.com](http://www.arrokaberri.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 642 712

### ARRAUNLARI

On the boardwalk facing the sea at Paseo de Butrón, 3, is a fine choice with outdoor terrace affording views of neighboring Hendaye, France, across Txingudi Bay. Chef Iñaki Barros Roca offers a menú Bidasoa for a reasonable 26€ + IVA. It has an excellent reputation among the local cognoscenti. Closed Sunday night and all day Monday ([academiavascadegastronomia.com](http://academiavascadegastronomia.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 641 581



### LAIA ASADOR SIDERÍA

Opened in 2006, this modern roasting house, at Arkolla Auzoa, 33, excels in grilled meats and fish in a beautiful setting with mountain views. They offer a 3-course gastronomic lunch menu during the week for 20€ + VAT, bread, water, wine and coffee included, and a cider menu for 32€ + VAT. Reservations highly recommended on weekends and holidays ([lailaerretegia.com](http://lailaerretegia.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 646 309

## PINTXOS DINING

### BAR GRAN SOL

The first on our list is located along the pedestrian Calle San Pedro, which is one short block behind the main street. The bar, run by two young men, has won numerous gastronomic awards for its creative pintxos. Every dish is a little work of art and holds its own with the very best pintxos bars of San Sebastian. Go early because the pintxos disappear quickly and kitchen closes before 11:00 pm. If you arrive at 7:00, you'll find the bar covered with cold pintxos but you must wait until 7:30 to order the delectable hot pintxos from the kitchen.



During the summer, the bar and terrace become mobbed very quickly. I suggest you grab a spot at one of the barrel tables on the outdoor terrace (no chairs-this is stand up dining) and send one member of your party inside to order and then to wait at the bar. The bartender will ask for your name and call you when your order from the kitchen is ready. No waiter service. It's survival of the fittest here, but you simply should not miss these highly inventive treats.

Restaurant Gran Sol is located next door at No. 63 ([www.bargransol.com](http://www.bargransol.com)).

Tel: (+34) 943 642 701

### YOLA BERRI

The second bar, found at the corner of Zuloaga and San Pedro, is a local hangout with long wooden tables and benches, and a bar covered with traditional style pintxos from 11:00 am on. Hot pintxos are also available from the kitchen. There's also an upstairs dining room that serves huge portions at very moderate prices, and is a favorite of the locals. It's across the street from the Hotel Jauregui.

## BAR ENBATE

The Hotel Jauregui has its own fine pintxos bar, which is very handy for late night dining, as the kitchen doesn't close until 11:30 pm. This bar was a finalist in this year's Euskal Herria pintxos competition ([www.hoteljauregui.com](http://www.hoteljauregui.com)).

Other bars that we've enjoyed on pedestrianised Calle San Pedro include the classic (1940) **Bar Itxaropena** at No. 67 ([baritxaropena.com](http://baritxaropena.com)), and **Bar Ignacio** at No. 20 ([www.barignacio.com](http://www.barignacio.com)), which serves yummy potato omelets. Look for the green and white façade. You can sit at the bar or at a table. It's another local classic. **Bar Alcanadre**, at No. 26 also serves a good value menu del día.



*Pintxos time at Bar Ignacio, San Pedro, 20*

## NIGHTLIFE

Hondarribia offers little in terms of nightlife compared to San Sebastián, but one can have a nightcap at the Parador, or in the pretty garden of the popular bar and dance club, **Truck**, located on the road that leads to the city's beaches.

Or head to **Bar Azkenportu**, on the lower level in the picturesque blue building in the old quarter at San Pedro, 73, for a cocktail with the locals.



*Bar Azkenportu*

## THINGS TO DO

### BREAKFAST AND MID-MORNING COFFEE

Have an inexpensive breakfast (tostadas topped with orange marmalade and ladrillos) at **Cafeteria Kai-Alde**, on the main drag, Calle Zuloaga, across from the magazine and newspaper shop.

### GOURMET SHOPPING

Although we pick up grocery staples at the handy Erroski supermarket near the airport, we head to the specialty shops downtown for our gourmet items. We shop first at the gourmet delicatessen **Solbes**, located across the street from the tourist office, for their nice selection of wines, their fresh fruits and their prepared foods.

Then we head to pedestrians only Calle San Pedro, 45, in the fishermen's quarter, to the charcuterie **Urdai-Azpikoak** of Jon Alzaga, which sells a great selection of Iberian hams and Pyrenees cheeses.

Finally, we buy some of the best baguettes we've ever tasted at **Ogi**, Artesanos del Pan, also on Calle San Pedro, between the Gran Sol and the laundry-dry cleaners, lavandería.

### FOR CHILDREN-TEENS

There is a very modern indoor sports complex, a yacht harbor and new fishermen's pier, with restaurant, on the way to the very clean, well-maintained family beach, as well as several children's playgrounds.

### FERRY TO HENDAYE

One can take a little ferry, *navette maritime*, the Marie Louise, from the old pier/parking lot area in downtown Hondarribia to the port of neighboring Hendaye, France, just across the Txingudi Bay, where you can walk to the expansive family beaches. The ferry departs every 30 minutes.

