

Post



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# Bilbao and an inland tide pool - May 27, 2025

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## ***SUMMARY***

So long San Sebastián, hello Hee-hone (Gijón)! On the way we stopped at a scenic overlook above Bilbao and enjoyed the beautiful views. Drove in to town to visit the enormous Ribera Market but were failed by the Parking Gods so continued on to Castre Urdiales where supplemented our supplies and had a picnic at a pavilion on the beach.

Adventurous drive to near Gulpiyuru Beach and hike to the actual beach. It's an amazing little inland pool and beach that is created when the tide is in. Hiked up from there for gorgeous views of the cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean. Upon arrival at our lovely Parador hotel (this one was an

old mill) we received complimentary drink vouchers which we exchanged for actual drinks in the garden bar. Very good dinner at Amares then to bed. - Karen

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### ***DETAIL***

We check out of our hotel. The mystery of having paid a deposit for the room last year, and paying when we arrived is solved. It turns out that my signature and card, when we arrived, was to confirm last year's payment. Strange.

We pay our bill, pack, have coffee, and walk the twenty minutes to where Apple Maps says the rental car office is located. We see a concert hall there, which is odd. There's a guard who is willing to open a door there at 9 am. No, she knows of no car rental office near here. We continue on, down the street.

Thankfully not too many doors down is the Sixt car rental office for San Sebastián. There's one representative in there and no clients, which is nice. He takes my name and looks for my reservation. I ask if it's been busy this morning (since 8 am when they opened). Ooof, yes, he says, so busy. You still have cars? I ask. Not so many, he says. With my reservation in hand he tells me the bad news and the good news. He's been to marketing class. They do not have a car in the class we reserved, but for only 30 euros more a day we can have a much nicer car, an Audi Q3. I don't know from cars, but that's just 15 euros a day per couple, so sure. It turns out the car is quite nice.

For the next few hours we're driving west. First we have to get out of San Sebastián and onto the auto route. The roads and signage is pretty nice. The scenery is also very pretty. Close to lunch time we find a city with a grocery store and a beach, so we stop to buy stuff for a picnic. Ron's been in grocery retail for decades, but he's driving so I choose the store. I choose Lidl. It's like the Salvation Army of groceries. It's extremely basic and we're happy to be out of the store. We picnic under a pergola at the end of a long, pretty beach. The country much have a zillion of these. It's a tiny city undoubtedly known only to Spaniards.

As we picnic a man's stocky bulldog comes over and expresses interest in our food. The man gathers the dog, clips on the collar and gives the dog a firm whack (for having interrupted us). We were more offended by the man's action than by the poor abused dog. Walking to and from our car to our picnic spot we admire the beach with its fine sand. There are some people out sunning. Many of the women (all older) are topless ensuring their breasts get plenty of vitamin D. On the hike back Nancy notes the name of one of the big hotels/clubs/whatever. It was the 'naturalists de something or other'. No wonder they were topless. Behind this wall they're probably walking around without a stitch on.

Our next stop is also a beach, but an odd one. Our parking spot is just a couple of hundred yards off the freeway, down a one way road, but from there it's a good ten minute walk. The beach is unique in that it's 'inland'. The ocean has worn a tunnel inland and the beach is maybe a tenth or quarter mile from the ocean, proper. With each swell out there, the addition water is pushed through the hole and a small wave laps up on the shore of this remote beach. There's a tide here, too. It's wild.

We climb way up over the rocks between the inland beach and the ocean a ways away and take in an immense ocean. In the opposite direction are the snow capped pyrenees. It's quite dramatic. The names of the places around here sound like they're from Scotland and the landscape looks like it could easily be there, too.

When it's time for us to leave the logical thing to do would be to retrace our steps to the autoroute, but it's a one-way road. We consult the online maps and decide that's really the only logical way to go, one-way be damned. We won't be on it for more than a couple of hundred yards, so how serious an infraction could it really be. Having decided our course of action Ron starts the back and forth to turn the car around. Just as we're ready to drive up the one-way street, the wrong way, we notice a police car driving down the same road towards us. At the bottom of the road they stop, as if to say "and where do you think YOU'RE going??"

Karen draws the short straw and has to go over and speak with these Spanish peace officers to find out how we're really supposed to get back on the freeway. Speaking neither English nor French they think she's asking how to get to the inland beach. They explain it repeatedly in detail. Finally she gets the information we need and we're on our way, having only committed a serious international traffic violation in our hearts.

We get to our hotel a while later, in Gijón. It's a parador and used to be a grand mill for many years. Our room is grand and appointed in such a way that anyone's grandparents would feel right at home. We make a dinner reservation and hike the ten minutes over there. Dinner is wonderful and our waitress, who speaks only a little English, tries her darndest to explain foreign culinary concepts to us newbies. We don't quite know what everything is, but it's all very good. We chose well. We're OK to be in town for the next few days.

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## Photos



Driving from San Sebastian to Gijón we saw many interesting things, including this carved rock.



We were (I was) surprised by the size of the city of Bilbao.



We weren't surprised by all of the branding and self promotion the city did.



The Guggenheim didn't disappoint, even from a distance.



For lunch we just stopped at some small town. Probably few if any American tourists there, present company excluded. Lots of pretty beaches in this country.



Nice place for a picnic. Not a lot of shade.



Driving on we stopped to see a very unique inland beach/tide pool. The water reaches the beach via a very long, natural underground tunnel. We reached it with some difficulty, given the high weeds, er, plants.



The beach is indeed a beach. Gently lapping waves, and all. The actual ocean, near by, is accessed by very tall, sheer cliffs leading down to water. Laying on this beach, as small as it is, is the better alternative.



It was fun seeing the water rhythmically come in and go out.



The actual ocean wasn't bad either.



Looking south we saw water, too, but it was frozen. Hi Pyrenees.



FARNSNIENTE



Nice sitting areas down the hall. Good for draining yummy bottles of inexpensive pink Spanish wine.





More wine at dinner near by. Delicious dinner. We're spotting a pattern here.

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