

Plazaola Greenway

The Larraun and Leitzarán valleys that run between Navarra and Guipúzcoa are a veritable natural sanctuary. Between their leafy hillsides covered in beech and oak trees, a little narrow gauge railway used to wind its way tirelessly until it was closed mid-way through the last century. Today its spectacular route is offered to cyclists and walkers searching for unspoilt natural countryside.



TECHNICAL DATA

- CONDITIONED GREENWAY

From Navarra to Guipúzcoa through the most virgin landscapes of Leitzarán





LOCATION

Between Lekunberri (Navarra) and Andoain (Guipuzcoa)
NAVARRA-GUIPÚZCOA

Length: 44 Km

Users: 

*Mugiro-Uitzi (7 Km): Suitable, with occasional steep slopes
Tunnel of Uitzi- to the provincial border (12 Km): Conditioned
Provincial border -Andoain (17 Km): Suitable, but with difficulties (potholes and mud)
Andoain metropolitan zone (4 Km). Suitable

Type of surface:

Mugiro Uitzi-(7 km) Compacted earth
Uitzi Tunnel -provincial border (12 km) Compacted earth
Provincial border -Andoain (17 km) Non-conditioned compacted earth
Andoain Metropolitan Zone (4 km). Compacted earth
Tunnels of Uitzi and Tellería: Non conditioned

Natural landscape:

Valleys with atlantic forests and pine reforestation forests. The Valley of Leizarán is listed as a Natural Biotope

Cultural Heritage:

Popular architecture of Mugiro, Lekunberri and Leitza. Astuitza House. Tower (XVI) in Andoain

Infrastructure:

Greenways in tranches: Mugiro-Uitzi; Tunnel Uitzi-Leitza- Provincial border. The rest is a continuous platform without conditioning. 41 tunnels.

How to get there:

Lekunberri, Leitza, Areso y Uitzi: bus companies La Ronncalesa, Mugioarra, Leizarán y La Burundesca

Andoain: Renfe short distance from San Sebastián.(*). Please ask the conditions of bike admittance in Renfe train

Connections:

San Sebastián: 17 Kms. to Andoain
Pamplona: 48 Kms. to Leitza y 33 Kms. hasta Lekunberri

Maps:

Military map of Spain. 1:50.000 scale



946,947,968 sheets Official road map of the Ministry of Public Works. Ministerio de Fomento

Mapa Consorcio Turístico del Plazaola

More information on the Greenways guide Volume 1

DESCRIPTION

Km. 0 / Km. 5 / Km. 8 / Km. 18 / Km. 33 / Km. 40

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Km 0



The Greenway is fully developed on the Navarra side of the route (except for the Uitzu tunnel) and is soon to be developed on the Guipúzcoa side. It is a fascinating trail that runs through the Imotz, Larraun, and Leizarán valleys.

The Greenway starts in Lekunberri, the capital of the Larraun valley. The actual starting point is the town's station, which has been tastefully restored and is now home to the local Tourist Office and the Plazaola Tourism Consortium. It is an ideal place for travellers to pick up some good, practical information about the Greenway and the surrounding area. And there is another attraction at the station (especially for the younger visitors): an old Eusko Tren railway carriage, called the Vagón de los Juegos (Games Carriage) has been restored and refurbished as a fun and learning centre. It is an original way for children to learn about the railway and discover the history of the Plazaola train.

There is a preliminary section of Greenway for cyclists and walkers to make a "there and back" trip, which leaves the station in the direction of Pamplona and goes as far as the little village of Mugiro. This 2 km section is an ideal warm-up for the trail awaiting us.

From Lekunberri station we start to climb gently up to the station at Uitzu. On the way we pass through a seemingly endless forest and the first three tunnels of the 39 we will find en route. We need to take care when exiting the first tunnel because immediately afterwards there is a detour to avoid the A-15 motorway. We need to drop down and pass under the A-15 using an underpass, and there is a steep (but short) climb back up to the original route

Km 5



At Km 5 we come across the first buildings of Uitzu station, situated at the entrance to the 2.7 km long tunnel of the same name. After two years of closure and reclamation works finally opens the end of 2010.

For those not wishing to venture down this long tunnel there is an alternative route: we take a track leading off the road at km 12 which, after a steep climb, leads us back to the Greenway at the exit to the tunnel. Four kilometers marked with white paint, which pass through the town of Uitzu, deviating end of town to the right to ascend a path that leads to the watershed of the Cantabrian and the Mediterranean. Earn 200 meters of altitude and is not recommended for bicycles.

From the northern end of the Uitzu tunnel to the Leizta tunnel (600 metres long and equipped with lighting), seven small tunnels allow us to continue along the original railway route avoiding the centre of Leizta, a pretty town featuring large stone houses and flower decorations. After another two tunnels, also with lighting, we reach the Tellería tunnel, which is currently impassable due to a cave-in. After several years down a road to reproduce the original design, the summer of 2010 finally opens an alternative path to the tunnel without slope or danger to users. On the other side of the tunnel is Leizta station, with two of its buildings rehabilitated in 2009. Visitor use is expected of them by 2012.

After crossing the stone viaduct at Leizta we say goodbye to the Leizta valley and enter into the lush Leitzarán valley. We have to pass beneath elevated sections of the A-15 (the Leitzarán motorway) on two occasions before arriving at the old station of Plazaola (Km. 18) dilapidated.

Km 18

Plazaola station, the first of the old mining railway, stands at the border between Navarra and Guipúzcoa and is also the end of the developed Greenway. The rest of the route is perfectly viable (though not developed as a Greenway) as far as Andoain. Soon this Basque Country part of the route will offer the same conditions as the Navarra

section, thanks to the restoration and refurbishment work being carried out by the Andoain Town Council. Evidence of this work can be seen in the recently installed lighting in the tunnels along the Guipúzcoa part of the trail.

The landscape also changes as the gradually valley closes in, forcing the old railway to run parallel to the river Leitzarán. One kilometre into Guipúzcoa and just 50 metres away from the Greenway are the Plazaola mines (or to give them their registered name, the Bizkotx mines), which were the original reason for the Plazaola railway. They are well worth a visit for anyone interested in industrial archaeology.



Km 33

The Leitzarán valley is heavily exploited for its wood so at certain times of the year we may come across heavy vehicles (logging trucks) along the way. The waters of the river Leitzarán are also exploited, as evidenced by the many sluices and canals along the water course. One of the surprises of the route is precisely one such canal, which crosses perpendicular to the valley on a spectacular stone aqueduct. The water carried by this canal feeds the Ameraun power station, at km 33, where there is still a modest railway halt.

Km 40

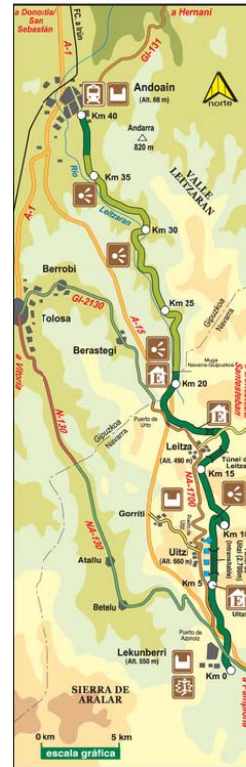


The Greenway continues on its way until we reach a blocked off tunnel which forces us to make a detour down a wide track to the riverside, next to one of the many medieval bridges that cross the river. Next, we pass through a place called Matxinbarrena where, dozens of metres below our feet, the river flows over a series of waterfalls between the densely forested valley sides.

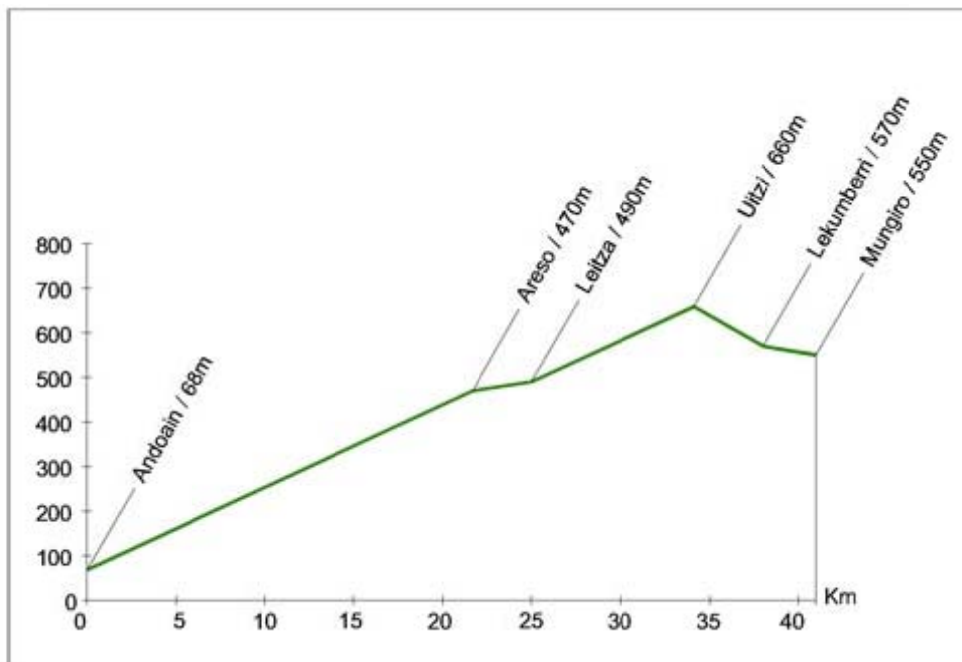
The presence of a growing number of cyclists and walkers tells us that we are approaching Andoain. A tunnel with an "anti-car" barrier signals the start of a pedestrianized section of the Greenway, where the surface is concrete and there are benches and a training circuit for joggers.

Up until now, after Km 40, the town of Andoain had overrun the railway line, but now work is being done to recover a section of over 3 km inside the town that will take us to the Town Hall Square. Here, in the shadow of the church, we can watch pelota players demonstrating their skill against the fronton wall.

MAPS

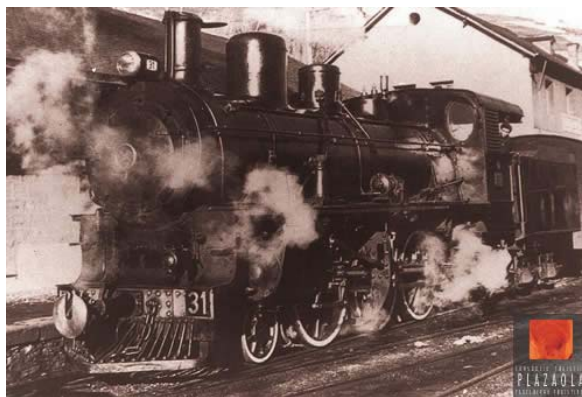


PROFILE



RAILWAY HISTORY

El ferrocarril del Plazaola, que unía las ciudades de San Sebastián y Pamplona, tuvo sus inicios como un modesto ferrocarril minero que comunicaba las minas de Plazaola con la estación del Ferrocarril del Norte en Andoain.



Este primer trazado fue el soporte para una ulterior ampliación en 1914 hacia San Sebastián y hacia Pamplona. El nuevo ferrocarril, de ancho métrico, se diseñó para viajeros y mercancías, teniendo siempre una modesta historia. Tras la guerra civil la situación económica de este ferrocarril, que no era muy espléndida, fue tornándose crítica. Por fin, las riadas del año 1953 se llevaron algunos puentes del ferrocarril y parte de la vía, circunstancia que sirvió como excusa definitiva para el cierre del ferrocarril.

INTERESTING DATA

1. Festivals and holidays
2. Accommodation
3. Eco-tourism
4. Managing Authority
5. Town Councils
6. Emergencies
7. Coaches & buses
8. Railway



Festivals and holidays

Uitzi

From September 29 to October 1
San Miguel



Leitza

Last Sunday in January
Carnavales

August 10 to 15
San Tiburcio

Andoain

June 24
San Juan

May 3
Santa Cruz

Mugiro

June 29
San Pedro

Lekunberri

October 12
La Pilarica

Berastegui

August 10
San Lorenzo

Elduaien

September 8
La Natividad

Villabona

July 25
Santiago

Accommodation

Leitza

Hostal Jai-Alai Ostatua
Tel. 948 51 07 35

www.jai-alai.es

e-mail : info@jai-alai.es

HS Musunzar

Tel. 948 51 06 07 / 51 04 75

Casa Rural Aztieta (completa)

Tel. 948 51 03 57; 609 855023



www.aztieta.com

maritxubuldain@yahoo.com

Casa Rural Aritzeta (completa)

Tel. 948 51 01 80; 685 981 961

www.arizeta-landaetxea.com

Casa Rural Ozparrun (completa)

Tel. 948 51 00 19 / 690 064 546

Apartamentos Guratz

Tel. 670 82 11 50

Apartamentos Labaki

Tel. 948 51 02 07/ 680 93 60 00

Casa Lesakenea

Tel. 619 21 84 02 / 606 24 96 39

Lekunberri

Hotel Rural Ayestarán I y II

Tel. 948 50 41 27

info@hotelayestaran.com

www.hotelayestaran.com

Casa Rural Barbonea (completa)

Tel. 948 50 40 96

www.casabarbonea.com

info@casabarbonea.com

CR Ezkilenea (completa)

676 88 76 46 / 660 15 68 71

CR Urgain I-II

616 476 308 /948 50 43 51

urgain1-2@hotmail.com

www.urgain1-2.com

Camping Aralar.

Tel. 948 50 40 11

www.campingaralar.com

e-mail: info@campingaralar.com

Más alojamientos, restaurantes, etc. en: <http://www.plazaola.org/serviciosturisticos.html>



Eco-tourism

Consortio Turístico Plazaola. Tel. 948 50 72 05.

www.plazaola.org

e-mail: plazaola@plazaola.org

Leitzaran 31. Vía Verde en la provincia de Guipúzcoa: Tel. 943 59 04 59

La Kantina del Plazaola. Alquiler de Bicicletas. Tel. 948 60 46 44

Oficina de Turismo de Lekunberri.

Tel. 948 50 72 04; e-mail: oit.lekunberri@navarra.es

Parque Aventura Beigorri. Lekunberri. www.beigorriaventura.com

Cuevas de Mendukilo. Lekunberri. Tel. 948 39 60 95. www.mendukilo.com

Aralar Zalditegia. Alquiler de caballos. Tel. 948 50 42 14

Mirua Actividades de Naturaleza. Tel. 608 560 369

Bosque de Orgi . Tel. 948 30 53 00 / 620 95 54 54.

www.garrapo.com

Managing Authority

Consortio Turístico del Plazaola.

Plazaola, 21

31870 Lekunberri

Tel: 948 50 72 05

Fax: 948 50 73 33

e-mail: plazaola@plazaola.org

<http://www.plazaola.org>

Town Councils

Larraun (Lekunberri):

Tel. 948 50 42 07

Lekunberri: Tel 948 50 42 11

Leiza: Tel: 948 51 03 10

Areso: Tel 948 51 03 27

Andoain: Tel 943 30 08 30



Areso: Tel 948 51 03 27

Andoain: Tel 943 30 08 30

Emergencies

EMERGENCIAS: Tel. 062

Ertzaintza: Tel 943 33 25 00

Emergencies (Navarra): Tel 112

Coaches & buses

Lekunberri desde Pamplona y San Sebastián por A15
La Roncalesa: Tel 948 22 20 79

Lekunberri, Uitz y Leitza desde Pamplona
Leitzarán: Tel 948 22 40 15
Mugiroarra: Tel 948 22 71 22

Andoain desde San Sebastián
Garayar: Tel 943 55 66 58

Railway

www.renfe.es Tel. 902 24 02 02

LINKS



www.plazaola.org

Enlace del Consorcio Turístico del Plazaola, encargado de gestionar la parte navarra de esta ruta. Explica quiénes son, dónde están y todo la información relativa a los valles de Larraun y Leitzarán: gastronomía, tradiciones, leyendas...

www.andoain.org

Página web del Ayuntamiento de Andoain, localidad en la parte guipuzcoana de esta Vía Verde. Ofrece toda la información relativa al municipio, agenda de actividades y posibilidades de paseos y rutas por los alrededores



www.cfnavarra.es/turismonavarra

Página web del Gobierno de Navarra. En la sección de turismo se puede conocer toda la riqueza de esta provincia, desde los Pirineos hasta la Ribera, sin olvidar el Camino de Santiago o las mil rutas que atraviesan estas zonas.

www.leitzar.net

Página web en la que se hace una descripción del Leizaran: río y valle. Su historia y su presente.

MULTIMEDIA

De Navarra a Guipúzcoa por los parajes más vírgenes del Valle de Leizarán, la Vía Verde del Plazaola nos invita a disfrutar de su dulce recorrido sobre el antiguo ferrocarril del mismo nombre. En este capítulo de la serie "Vive la Vía" también se muestran los atractivos paisajísticos y gastronómicos de la Ribera navarra, a través de la Vía Verde del Tarazonica, en el entorno de la monumental villa de Tudela.

Parte 1 de 2

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weUP1mNtJh8&feature=player_embedded

Parte 2 de 2

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=RuwaK591_dE