

IRON AND SEA

The Saint James's Way winds through Muskiz, a town bordering Cantabria that boasts some of the most stunning coastal scenery in Biscay.

Here, the pilgrimage route follows the Itsaslur and Piquillo Greenways, former railway lines that once served the area's thriving mining industry.

This stretch is of great cultural, environmental and scenic value. The Barbadun estuary in Pobeña is a protected Natura 2000 site, complemented by a spectacular coastal promenade.

> Itsaslur and Piquillo Greenways > El Hoyo - Ontón mining site

The Iron and Sea route is an easy 6-kilometre linear walk that can be accessed from either the Kobaron or Pobeña neighbourhoods of Muskiz. Starting from Kobaron is convenient but requires a car, although two large parks provide easy access.

➔ If you choose to start from **Pobeña**, you can get there by bike, public transport or car. Be aware, however, that the first part of the climb involves a steep staircase, a remnant of an old mineral transport system. It can be a challenge for those with mobility problems.

➔ Once you get over this hurdle, the path opens up to reveal breathtaking views of the **Barbadun estuary and La Arena Beach, a beautiful stretch of sand shared by the towns of Muskiz and Zierbena**.

Weaving through the route are eloquent remnants of mining, silent testaments to a bygone era. The imposing structures of the McLennan Mining Company stand out, a powerful reminder of their industrial might. Following the edge of the cliff, where the old mine railway once ran, two overgrown calcining furnaces are revealed on the way – remnants of the Amalia Vizcaína mine, built in 1900 in Kobaron. Equally remarkable is the monumental **El Castillo mineral loading dock**, once used by **McLennan** to transport iron from nearby mines to



England. Although a violent storm tore away the metal structure in 2008, the impressive stone base of the dock remains.



Itsaslur Greenway - El Castillo mineral loading dock

This unique landmark offers not only a glimpse into mining history, but also breathtaking views over the sea. From **Kobaron**, extend your journey for 3 kilometres by following the Piquillo Greenway towards Ontón, in Cantabria. This section reveals more mining heritage belonging to the **El Hoyo - Ontón mining site**, including

recently restored structures from the **Josefa and Celedonia mines**, such as the sorting plant and the loading station. From the late 19th century until the 1970s, iron was extracted from these mines and transported by rail to the **Piquillo loading dock** in Ontón for export by sea.

HOW TO GET THERE

To start the route, you can arrive by car and park either in Kobaron, where there is plenty of parking, or in Pobeña. There is also a large car park at La Arena Beach, from where you can walk across the bridge to Pobeña. If you start the route in Pobeña, you can also get there by bike and public transport.

Cycling can be a very interesting option, as this area boasts an extensive network of cycle and pedestrian paths, seamlessly linking the left bank of the Bilbao estuary with the historic mining area of Enkarterri. Explore the plethora of cycling and hiking routes offered by this region to the west of Bilbao.



By private car

Kobaron

[43.347126, -3.143794]]:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/48Q5X000TuedAS9q6>

Kobaron

[43.350510, -3.143121]]:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Dx9QZm99QAifv1Ho9>

Pobeña

[43.347126, -3.143794]]:

[https://maps.app.goo.gl/ntBKdv15y\]phDB7r7](https://maps.app.goo.gl/ntBKdv15y]phDB7r7)



By bus

<https://www.bizkaia.eus/es/web/bizkaibus/lineas>



RENT A BIKE AND GO CYCLING:

Beroutes <https://beroutes.com/>

Urgebi Bikes <https://www.enkartribike.com/>

WHERE TO EAT?

For true gourmets, try the seafood restaurants in the port of Zierbena and Pobeña. Explore the variety of options in Kobaron or grab a bite with a view at La Arena Beach. Fresh catches and delicious seafood await you in all these places.

TIPS



Wear comfortable walking shoes..



Respect the environment, local people and animals.



Enjoy nature without noise or haste.



If you're driving, remember that cyclists and pedestrians have priority.



Adhere to general traffic rules.



Be careful, especially in tunnels and viaducts.



If you're cycling, always wear a helmet and ride carefully on sections shared with vehicles.

LEARN MORE AT: www.visitenkarterri.com

THE MUST-SEES



Once a bustling mining port that shipped iron ore across the Bay of Biscay and Urdax, **Pobeña** is now a charming neighbourhood. Like Kobaron, it makes a great starting point with plenty of bars and restaurants. Take a pleasant stroll along the Barbadun River towards the town centre, or continue further upstream for a 7-kilometre trek to the El Pobal forge. This route follows the banks of the river and offers a chance to get in touch with nature.

Cross the Pobeña bridge to **La Arena Beach**, the second largest stretch of sand on the Bay of Biscay coast, shared by the towns of Muskiz and Zierbena. It's perfect for relaxing walks, admiring the dramatic tides or catching some waves at the La Arena Surf Center. Don't miss the magical sunset from the right side of the beach – it's a real postcard moment!

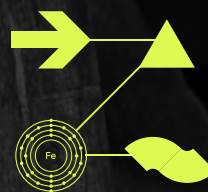
Head inland to Muskiz and discover the imposing **Muñatones Castle**. It was built over a long period in the 14th and 15th centuries amid factional wars. Although technically a tower, it is considered a castle thanks to its outer walls. It has been declared a monumental ensemble. The castle is linked to the legendary Lope García de Salazar, a powerful local figure known for his military prowess as well as his literary contributions. For access, contact the El Pobal ironworks.



The picturesque **port of Zierbena**, a short distance from La Arena, retains its maritime charm with fishing boats bobbing in the harbour. The surrounding area is a haven of traditional restaurants and barbecues, where the tantalising aroma of grilled fish fills the air.

For panoramic views, hike to **Punta Lucero**, a 307-metre hill in Zierbena. The summit offers breathtaking views of La Arena Beach, especially at sunsets. The route to the summit is lined with remnants of war, such as bunkers, tunnels and cannons, part of the so-called Iron Belt – a horseshoe-shaped defensive line some 80 kilometres long, built to protect Bilbao and its surroundings from Francoist troops during the Civil War.

**JATORRIA; MENDIA,
BURDINA ETA ITSASOA
EL ORIGEN; MONTAÑA,
HIERRO Y MAR**



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Euskadi, anzolana, bien común



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