

AN UNPARALLELED FACTORY

Born as a trading post on the medieval Wool Route, the town of Balmaseda boasts a unique blend of history and industry. A shining example of this is the La Encartada Factory Museum, a jewel of cultural heritage and one of Europe's leading industrial tourism attractions.

> La Encartada Factory Museum

Just outside Balmaseda, on the road to Burgos, lies a treasure of Basque industrial heritage: **La Encartada Factory Museum**.

➔ In 1892, five wealthy individuals who had made their fortunes in Mexico (known as indianos – people from Enkarterri who emigrated to the Americas and returned with riches) founded this textile factory. The factory thrived for a century. Specialising in wool, La Encartada produced everything from its signature berets (the traditional Basque txapela, its best-selling product) to blankets, fabrics, gloves and scarves.

A small working-class neighbourhood grew up around the factory, with houses, a chapel school, vegetable gardens and the manager's residence (now gone).



La Encartada Factory Museum

One of La Encartada's most impressive features is its collection of **late 19th and early 20th century machinery**, mainly from England.

Remarkably well-preserved, both in terms of its physical structure and the machinery it houses, the factory shows the entire production process, from the receipt of raw materials to the packaging of finished products. This technological integrity and exceptional state of preservation make La Encartada a truly unique museum experience.



La Encartada Factory Museum

Since 2007, La Encartada has served as an industrial museum managed by the Government of Biscay. The buildings, machinery and workers' dwellings form an evocative ensemble that takes visitors back to the dawn of the Industrial Revolution on the Iberian Peninsula.

In recognition of its outstanding heritage, the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) network designated La Encartada an Anchor Point in 2019, consolidating its importance on the European stage.

➔ After the visit to La Encartada, head to the centre of **Balmaseda**, the **first town in Biscay** and one of the oldest in the Basque Country. Its historic quarter, declared a historic-artistic site in 1996, reflects its rich past. Strategically located between Castile and the ports of the Bay of Biscay, Balmaseda flourished as an important commercial centre. Founded in 1199, the town retains its medieval layout and boasts architectural gems such as the Old Bridge and San Severino Square. As well as wandering the charming streets, you should consider climbing the old **Castle Hill**. Fortified



Balmaseda old bridge

➔ in the 13th century, this strategic vantage point once housed a castle that surrounded the city. Thanks to virtual reality, you can also travel back in time and see the old town and castle come to life all these decades later, transporting you back to medieval Balmaseda.



Casco histórico de Balmaseda

THE MUST-SEES



La Encartada Factory Museum is the crown jewel. Founded in 1892, this wool textile factory thrived for a century, operating until 1992, before becoming a museum in 2007. It is a unique and singular example of European industrial heritage. A guided tour of the La Encartada Factory Museum takes visitors back to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The museum preserves its original machinery and complete mechanical equipment, making it the best and most complete collection of textile machinery in all of Europe. The factory is remarkable for its state of preservation, as it retains its original layout and equipment. No other centenary industrial complex has this level of conservation and integrity.



The **Balmaseda History Museum** houses a vast collection of works of art, books, documents and ancient objects related to one of the oldest towns in the Basque Country. These vestiges of the past, its traditions and customs allow a better understanding of the historical evolution and peculiarities of Balmaseda.



Walk through the medieval streets of **Balmaseda** as if you were back in the 15th century. On this guided tour we will cross the Old Bridge, discover the monuments of the old town and see places that no longer exist, like the Casa de los Picos and the castle. Thanks to virtual reality goggles, these places come to life, revealing how they appeared to Balmaseda's historical residents. Don't forget to book your visit at the tourist office.



Balmaseda is the gateway to the **Kadagua River route**. To speak of the Kadagua River is to speak of Enkarterri. Its waters – witness and engine of history – have welcomed traders and pilgrims, turned red during the bloody wars of the Middle Ages, and witnessed the construction of majestic palaces and mansions. Today they lead us along a route full of secrets, charming corners and rich nature.



The **Santa Clara complex** (1675) is a remarkable architectural ensemble. Explore the restored convent, now the Hotel San Roque, the presbytery and the church. The church houses the Passion Play Interpretation Centre, as Balmaseda takes great pride in its famous procession, which culminates in a breathtaking crucifixion.



For mountain lovers, **Mount Kolutza**, the most emblematic peak of Enkarterri and beyond, is a must. At 879 metres, its summit offers a 360-degree panoramic view of Balmaseda and the surrounding valleys. Horns and bonfires lit on its summit, crowned by the Romanesque hermitage of San Roque, were used for centuries to convene assemblies under the famous Gernika tree.

HOW TO GET THERE

The easiest way to get here from Bilbao is by car on the Kadagua motorway [BI-634]. The journey takes about 30 minutes.



By private car

Balmaseda

[43.193471, -3.193503]:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/vyQFEYDX14avkDdN67r>

La Enkarta Factory Museum

[43.176862, -3.212290]:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/BfGU8Zp4trpYbk8y9>



By train

Balmaseda

[43.196255, -3.190118]:

<https://www.renfe.com/es/es/cercanias/cercanias-am/horarios>



By bus

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



RENT A BIKE AND GO CYCLING:

Beroutes <https://beroutes.com/>

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

WHERE TO EAT?

Did you know that Balmaseda has a typical dish with surprising industrial roots? Imagine a time when steam trains rumbled through Balmaseda. At that time, the town was home to the central workshops of the FEVE railways. It seems that resourceful workers invented the putxera or railway pot. This ingenious device was a small stove chimney that allowed them to prepare hearty stews on the train itself, ensuring a hot meal. Fuelled by steam from the locomotive's boiler, the putxera proved

so popular that the train company reportedly requested the stove manufacturer to equip these devices with a special spout to release the steam easily. This tradition lives on. Every year on 23 October, the feast day of San Severino, the putxera takes centre stage. But you don't have to wait: you can enjoy this delicious dish in any of Balmaseda's restaurants throughout the year.

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.



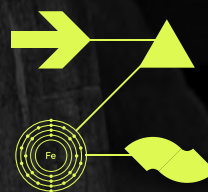
Be careful, especially in tunnels and viaducts.



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

LEARN MORE AT: www.visitenkarterri.com

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



www.visitenkarterri.com

Euskadi, anzolana, bien común



EUSKADI
BASQUE COUNTRY

Basque
INDUSTRIAL
TOURISM

Bizkaia
foru aldundia
diputación foral

IRON RIVER
INDUSTRIAL
TOURISM
IN BIZKAIA

enkartur
www.visitenkarterri.com