

# Biarritz

Basque Country · Spain

## TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



## Overview

Biarritz is a small seaside town on the Basque coast of south-west France, close to the Spanish border. It became fashionable in the 19th century as a resort for royalty. Today it is best known as the home of surfing in Europe, with big Atlantic waves, wide beaches and a grand seafront.

The town suits a few days of beach, surf, sea air and good food. It is compact and easy to walk. It also works well as a base for the wider Basque Country, with fishing towns, villages and San Sebastián all within an hour or so.

## When to visit

Summer is the best time for swimming and beach days, but July and August are busy and prices are higher. June and September are warm and calmer. Surfers often prefer autumn, when Atlantic swells are bigger. Winter is mild but wet, and some seasonal shops and restaurants close.

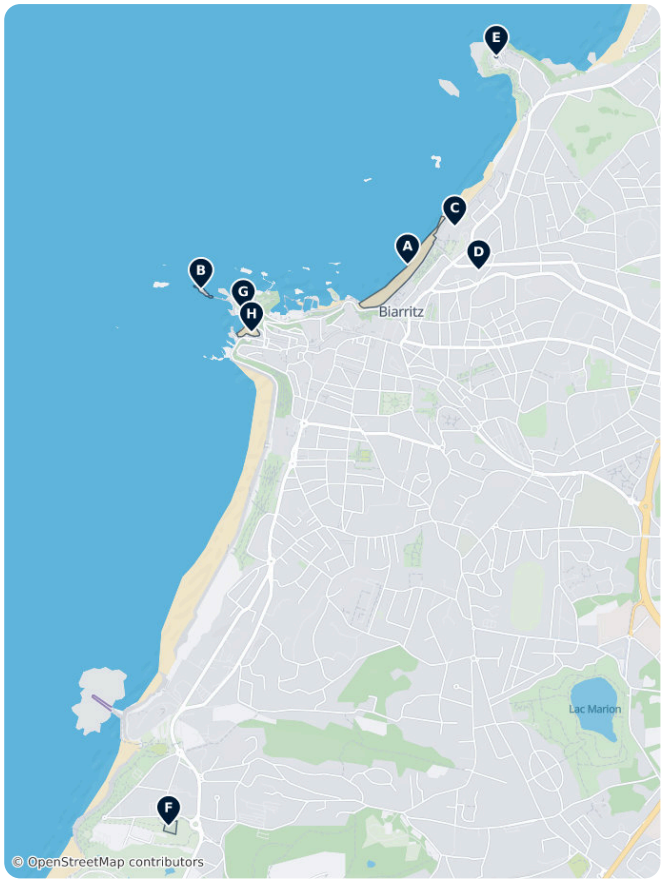
The Biarritz Surf Festival, a longboard and classic surf event, is usually held on the Côte des Basques in September.

| MONTH | CONDITIONS | DAY °C avg / max | NIGHT °C avg / min | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | Poor<br>Poor for sightseeing | 11° / 16°<br>Feels like 7° | 6° / 0° | 15 rainy days · Dry air |
| February | Poor<br>Poor for sightseeing | 12° / 18°<br>Feels like 8° | 6° / 0° | 14 rainy days · Dry air |
| March | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 14° / 21°<br>Feels like 11° | 7° / 3° | 14 rainy days · Dry air |
| April | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 16° / 23° | 9° / 5° | 15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| May | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 18° / 26° | 12° / 8° | 15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| June | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 22° / 29° | 15° / 12° | 12 rainy days · Calm winds |
| July | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 23° / 30° | 17° / 14° | 12 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds |
| August | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 24° / 31° | 18° / 14° | 12 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds |
| September | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 22° / 29° | 16° / 12° | 12 rainy days · Calm winds |
| October | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 20° / 26° | 13° / 8° | 13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| November | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 14° / 20°<br>Feels like 11° | 9° / 4° | 16 rainy days · Dry air |
| December | Poor<br>Poor for sightseeing | 12° / 17°<br>Feels like 8° | 7° / 1° | 15 rainy days · Dry air |

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

## Top sights




- A Grande Plage is the main town beach, in front of the casino and the big seafront hotels. It is a classic place to swim, surf and watch the sunset.
- B Rocher de la Vierge is a rock topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary. A metal footbridge from the 1880s leads to it, and the views over the bay and the coast are the best in town.
- C Hôtel du Palais stands on the seafront. It was built in the 1850s for Empress *Eugénie* and is now a luxury hotel. You can admire it from the beach even if you do not stay.
- D Chapelle Impériale was built for Empress *Eugénie*. It is a small, richly decorated chapel and a quiet stop away from the beach.
- E Phare de la Pointe Saint-Martin is the lighthouse at the northern end of town. You can climb its 248 steps for a wide view of the coast and the Pyrenees on a clear day.
- F La Cité de l'Océan is a museum about the ocean, surf and the sea around Biarritz. It is in a modern building south of the centre and works well on a rainy day.
- G Musée de la Mer is a sea museum and aquarium on the seafront, close to the Rocher de la Vierge. It is a good choice for families.
- H Plage du Port Vieux is a small, sheltered beach in the old fishermen's quarter. It is calmer than the Grande Plage and good for children.

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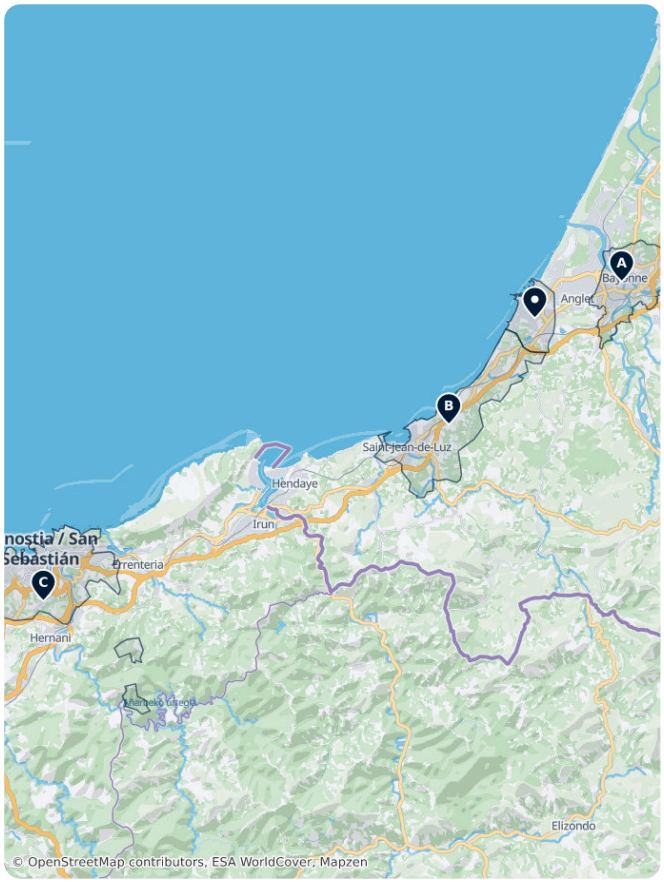
## What to experience

- **Take a surf lesson.** Biarritz is where surfing arrived in Europe in the 1950s. Beginners can book lessons in summer on the Grande Plage or the Côte des Basques. Local shops rent boards and wetsuits.
- **Watch the sunset from the Rocher de la Vierge.** Locals gather on the rock and the nearby promenade as the sun goes down over the Atlantic.
- **Walk the coast to the Chambre d'Amour.** The path from the lighthouse area leads north along cliffs to Grotte de la Chambre d'Amour, a sea cave linked to a local legend about two lovers. Check the tide first, as the water rises fast.
- **Try a seawater spa.** Thalassotherapy, treatments using seawater, is a local tradition. Several hotels and spas offer day visits.

## Day trips

The Basque coast and the hills behind it have many easy day trips. The closest ones are only a short ride away.




- A Bayonne: about 15 minutes by bus, train or car. A lively old city with a cathedral, river quarters and a long chocolate and ham tradition.
- **Bidart and Guéthary**: 10 to 15 minutes by bus, train or car. Quiet coastal villages with beaches and surf spots.
- B Saint-Jean-de-Luz: about 20 minutes by train or car. A pretty fishing port with a sheltered beach, a pedestrian centre and a covered market.
- **Espelette**: about 35 minutes by car. A village known for its red peppers, which hang on house fronts in autumn.
- **Sare and La Rhune**: about 40 minutes by car. A traditional Basque village near the mountain La Rhune, which has a rack railway to the summit and views over the coast.
- C San Sebastián, Spain: about 1 hour by car or bus. A famous food city with a city beach and a large pintxos bar scene.

## Where to explore

Other destinations nearby:

- For a historic city with a cathedral and river quarters, visit Bayonne.
- For a fishing port with a sheltered beach, visit Saint-Jean-de-Luz.
- For the border town on the Spanish side of the bay, visit Hendaye.
- For food and a city beach in Spain, visit San Sebastián.

## Getting there

- **By air**: Biarritz Pays Basque Airport (BIQ) is about 5 km from the centre, with mostly seasonal and European routes. Local buses and taxis connect it to town. Bordeaux and Bilbao have more routes and are each about 2 hours away by road.
- **By train**: Biarritz station is a few kilometres south of the seafront. TGV trains run from Paris via Bordeaux, and regional trains link Bayonne and Hendaye. Book on SNCF Connect. Take a bus or taxi from the station to the centre.
- **By bus**: Local and regional buses run along the coast to Bayonne, Hendaye and San Sebastián.
- **By car**: The A63 motorway comes from Bordeaux in the north and from Spain in the south.

## Getting around

- **On foot**: The centre, the beaches and the old port are close together. Walking is the easiest way to get around.
- **Public transport**: The Txik Txak bus network serves Biarritz, Bayonne and the nearby coast. Check routes, tickets and timetables on Txik Txak.
- **Cycling**: The town is hilly, so cycling is more tiring than it looks. Flat routes are easier on the coast towards Anglet.
- **Taxi**: Taxis are useful for the station and the airport, which are outside the centre.

### Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

**High**

The centre, beaches and old port are close together, so walking works well. Some streets and the coast paths are hilly.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Moderate**

The town is hilly, but flat routes lead along the coast towards Anglet.

## Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for a stay in town. A car is useful for villages and mountains inland.
- **Parking**: Parking is hard to find in July and August. Use paid car parks near the Halles and the Port Vieux and then walk.
- **Tolls**: Parts of the A63 motorway are tolled.

# Food & drink

Basque food is the main reason to eat out here. Look for pintxos (small snacks on bread, a Spanish Basque habit now common here), piperade (peppers and tomato with egg), grilled squid, and Bayonne ham. Gâteau basque, a cake filled with cream or cherry jam, is the classic dessert. Local chocolate and Espelette pepper make good gifts.

The best area for food is around the covered market Halle de Biarritz and the streets next to it. Go in the morning for fresh produce and cheese. Cafés and casual restaurants cluster near the Port Vieux and the Grande Plage. Pâtisserie Miremont is a well-known tea room and pastry shop in the centre.

## What to eat & drink

### BREAKFAST

**Croissant**
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

### LUNCH

**Ratatouille**
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

### DINNER

**Coq au Vin**
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

**Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon**
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

**Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne**
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

### SNACKS & STREET FOOD

**Baguette**
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

**Cheese · Fromage**
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

### SWEETS & DESSERTS

**Crepes · Crêpes**
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

**Macarons**
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

### DRINKS

**Wine · Vin**
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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## Safety & health

Biarritz is very safe for visitors. Pickpocketing and bag theft can happen on crowded beaches and in busy streets in summer, so keep valuables out of sight. Do not leave items in parked cars, especially near beaches.

The sea is the main risk. Waves and currents can be strong, and the Côte des Basques beach almost disappears at high tide. Swim only where lifeguards are on duty and follow the flag colours. Surf schools are safer than going alone.

## History

Biarritz was a small Basque fishing and whaling village until the 19th century. Fashion changed in 1854, when Empress *Eugénie*, wife of Napoleon III, started to spend summers here. Her villa on the beach became Hôtel du Palais. Royalty and aristocrats from across Europe followed, and the town grew into a resort with villas, a casino and churches.

You can still see traces of this period. Chapelle Impériale was built for Eugénie, and the Église orthodoxe russe reflects the many Russian visitors who came. Older marks of the sea life remain at Rocher de la Vierge, where the Virgin statue was placed after 1864 to commemorate whalers who returned safely from a storm. The metal footbridge dates from the 1880s. The lighthouse, Phare de la Pointe Saint-Martin, was built in the 1830s.

In 1957 the American film director *Peter Viertel* surfed here while working on a film. He is credited with the first surfing in Europe, and the town has been a surf centre since.

## Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

**CURRENCY**
**EUR €**

**EMERGENCY**
**112**

**ELECTRICITY**

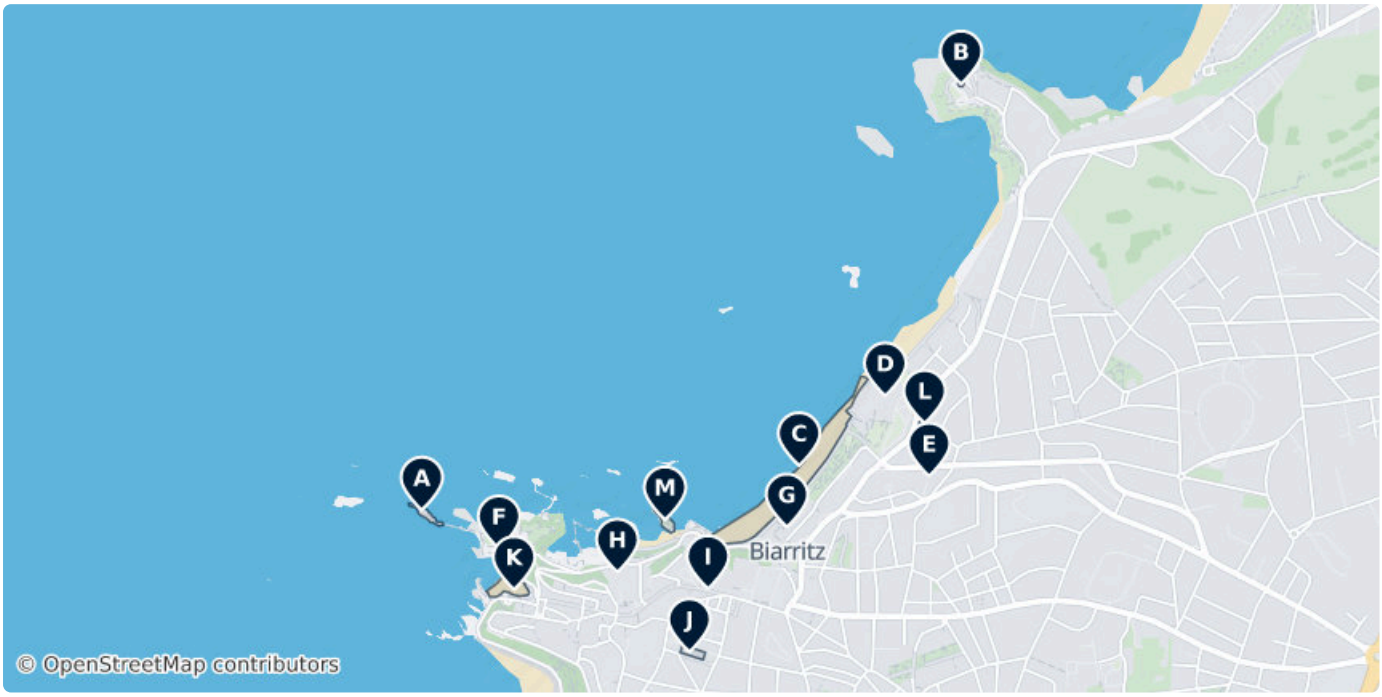
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

**LANGUAGES**
French

**TAP WATER**
**Safe to drink**

# Biarritz Must-Sees

Biarritz combines its heritage as a 19th-century imperial resort with its status as a premier surfing destination. This collection features the city's architectural highlights, including the Neo-Gothic Église Sainte-Eugénie and the Byzantine-inspired Chapelle Impériale. Explore the rugged coastline via the metal footbridge to the Rocher de la Vierge or climb the 1834 lighthouse for views over the Bay of Biscay. The selection also covers the Art Deco Casino Barrière and local culinary institutions like the historic Pâtisserie Miremont and the vibrant central market halls.






## A Rocher de la vierge

Dramatic rock formation topped with an 1865 statue of the Virgin Mary. It is accessible via an iron footbridge designed by Gustave Eiffel's workshops, offering panoramic views of the Basque coast.

Esplanade des Anciens Combattants, 64200, France
(43.48421, -1.57058)



## B Phare de la Pointe Saint-Martin

Built in 1834, this 73-meter-tall lighthouse stands on Cape Hainsart. Climbing the 248 steps provides a view stretching from the Spanish coast to the sandy beaches of the Landes.

Esplanade Élisabeth II, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.49376, -1.55389)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

tourisme.biarritz.fr/fr/que-faire/sites-e... , +33 5 59 22 37 10



## C Grande Plage

The city's central sandy beach, flanked by the Hôtel du Palais and the Casino. Historically known as the "Côte des Fous," it is a primary site for surfing and seaside recreation.

Quai de la Grande Plage, 64200, France (43.48520, -1.55891)



## D Hôtel du Palais

The Hôtel du Palais Biarritz is a historic luxury hotel beside the Atlantic beach in the resort town of Biarritz, on the Côte Basque in the...

Allée Winston Churchill, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48677, -1.55624)



## E Chapelle Impériale

Built in 1864 for Empress Eugénie, this chapel features a distinctive architectural mix of Romanesque-Byzantine and Hispano-Moorish styles, dedicated to the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe.

8 Avenue de la Reine Victoria, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48497, -1.55489)

tourisme.biarritz.fr/fr/decouvrir/sites-e..., +33 5 59 22 37 10



## F Biarritz Aquarium

Biarritz Aquarium, also known as le Musée de la Mer, is an aquarium in Biarritz. The building, in art deco style, was opened in 1933.

Rue de la Petite Atalaye, 64200, France (43.48334, -1.56819)

paysbasque.net/aquariums-et-musees/musee-de-la-mer-...

## G Casino Barrière de Biarritz

An Art Deco landmark built in 1929 on the waterfront. It features large bay windows overlooking the ocean and houses a casino, theater, and restaurant.

25 Boulevard du Général de Gaulle, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48383, -1.55929)



## H Église Sainte-Eugénie

A Neo-Gothic church built between 1898 and 1903 on the site of an old chapel. It is dedicated to the patron saint of Empress Eugénie and overlooks the Port Vieux.

9 Place Sainte-Eugénie, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48282, -1.56453)



## I Pâtisserie Miremont

Historic 19th-century pastry shop and tea room listed as a monument. It retains its original Belle Époque interior and has served European royalty since 1872.

2 Passage Bellevue, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48244, -1.56172)



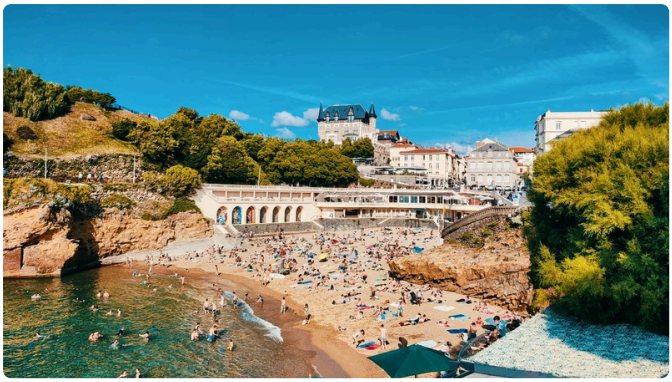
## J Halle de Biarritz

Traditional covered market offering local Basque specialties. The site consists of two halls, one dedicated to fish and the other to regional produce and cured meats.

9 Rue des Halles, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48103, -1.56230)

Mo–Su 07:30–14:00

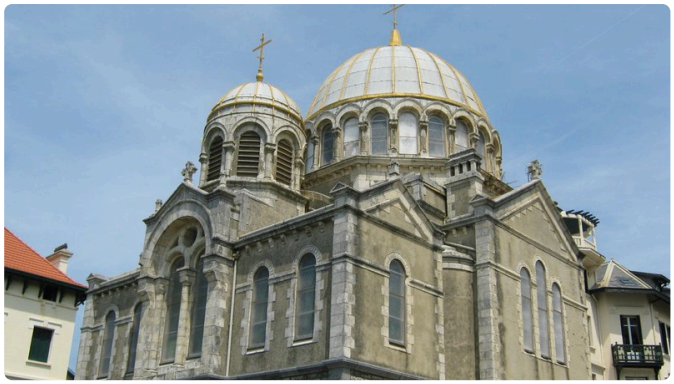
halles-biarritz.fr



## K Plage du Port Vieux

A small, sheltered sandy cove protected from the Atlantic swells by rocky outcrops. Its calm waters make it a favored spot for families and year-round swimmers.

4 Esplanade du Port Vieux, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48242, -1.56773)



## L Église orthodoxe russe

Built in 1892 for the Russian nobility, this Orthodox church features a prominent blue dome and a rich collection of icons originally brought from Saint Petersburg.

12 Avenue de l'Impératrice, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48615, -1.55502)

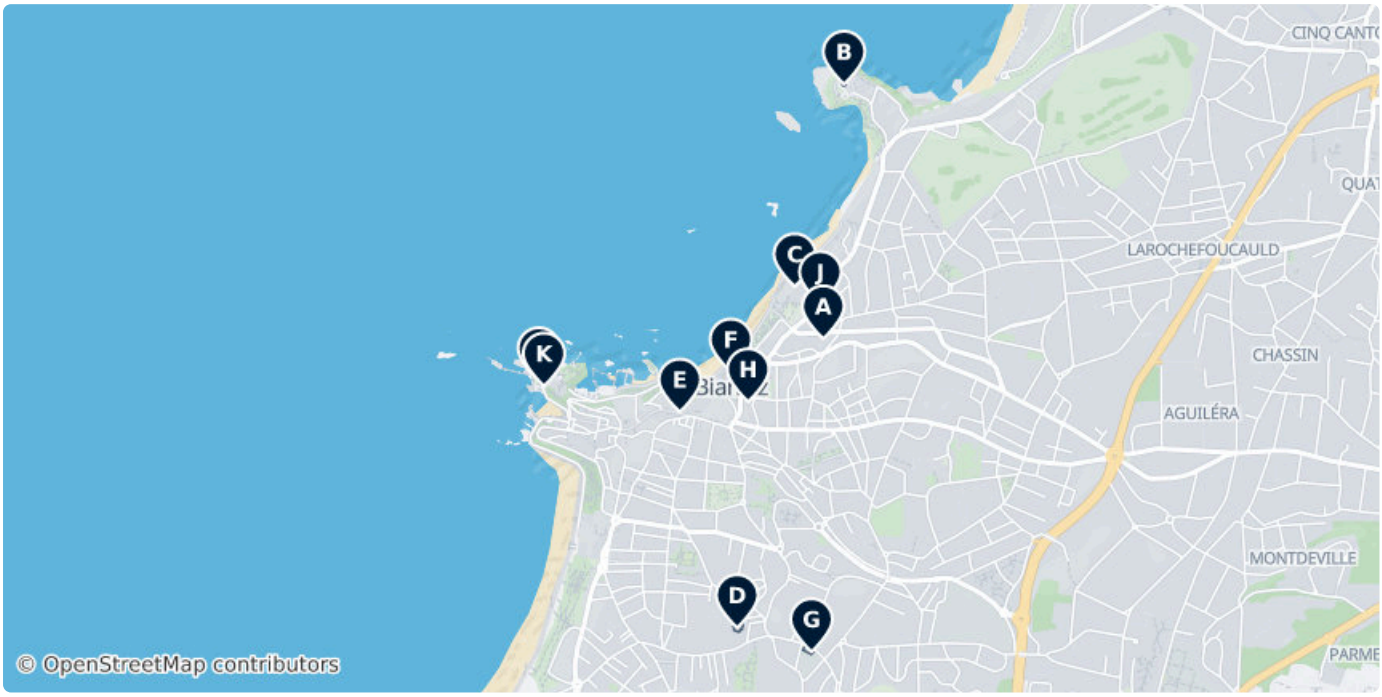
## M Rocher du Basta

A rugged rock formation situated between the main beaches, accessible via a stone bridge. It offers views of the Port des Pêcheurs and the coastline.

Boulevard du Maréchal Leclerc, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48399, -1.56305)

# Heritage Sites in Biarritz

Biarritz's architectural landscape reflects its transformation from a whaling village to a prestigious 19th-century imperial resort. This collection highlights landmarks from the Second Empire, including the Chapelle Impériale and the Hôtel du Palais, originally built for Empress Eugénie. The list also features Art Deco structures like the Casino Barrière and the Biarritz Aquarium, alongside religious sites such as the 12th-century Église Saint-Martin and the ornate 19th-century Russian Orthodox Church. Coastal heritage is anchored by the 1834 lighthouse on Pointe Saint-Martin.






## A Chapelle Impériale

Built between 1864 and 1866 for Empress Eugénie and Napoleon III, this chapel combines Romanesque-Byzantine and Hispano-Moorish architectural styles. It was dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

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tourisme.biarritz.fr/fr/decouvrir/sites-e..., +33 5 59 22 37 10



## B Phare de la Pointe Saint-Martin

Completed in 1834, this 73-meter-high lighthouse marks the boundary between the sandy Landes coast and the rocky Basque Country. It features 248 steps leading to a gallery with panoramic Atlantic views.

Esplanade Élisabeth II, Biarritz 64200, France
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## C Hôtel du Palais

The Hôtel du Palais Biarritz is a historic luxury hotel beside the Atlantic beach in the resort town of Biarritz, on the Côte Basque in the...

Allée Winston Churchill, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48677, -1.55624)



## D Château Boulard

A private 19th-century mansion situated 63 meters above sea level, known for its eclectic architecture and commanding position overlooking the city.

Avenue Bellefontaine, 64200 Biarritz, France (43.47499, -1.55899)



## E Pâtisserie Miremont

Established in 1872, this historic tea room features an ornate 19th-century interior. It was a renowned gathering place for European royalty, including King Alphonse XIII and Queen Victoria.

2 Passage Bellevue, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48244, -1.56172)

## F Casino Barrière de Biarritz

An Art Deco landmark designed by architect Alfred Laulhé and opened in 1929. Located on the Grande Plage, the building is a primary example of the city's interwar architecture.

25 Boulevard du Général de Gaulle, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48383, -1.55929)

## G Église Saint-Martin

The oldest church in Biarritz, dating back to the 12th century and restored in the 16th century. It features a traditional Basque cemetery and historically served as the municipal meeting place.

4E Allée du Chanoine Pierre Manterola, Biarritz 64200, France (43.47416, -1.55544)

## H Hôtel Plaza

A luxury hotel on Avenue Édouard-VII reflecting the city's early 20th-century architectural heritage and its status as a premier destination for high society.

(43.48279, -1.55847)

## I Aux Morts pour la France (1914-1918 1939-1945)

A memorial dedicated to Biarritz citizens who died during the First and Second World Wars, serving as the city's central site for commemorative ceremonies.

Esplanade des Anciens Combattants, 64200, France (43.48353, -1.56844)



## J Église orthodoxe russe

Built in 1892 for the Russian nobility who summered in Biarritz, this Byzantine-style church features a striking blue dome and houses historic icons brought from Saint Petersburg.

12 Avenue de l'Impératrice, Biarritz 64200, France (43.48615, -1.55502)



## K Biarritz Aquarium

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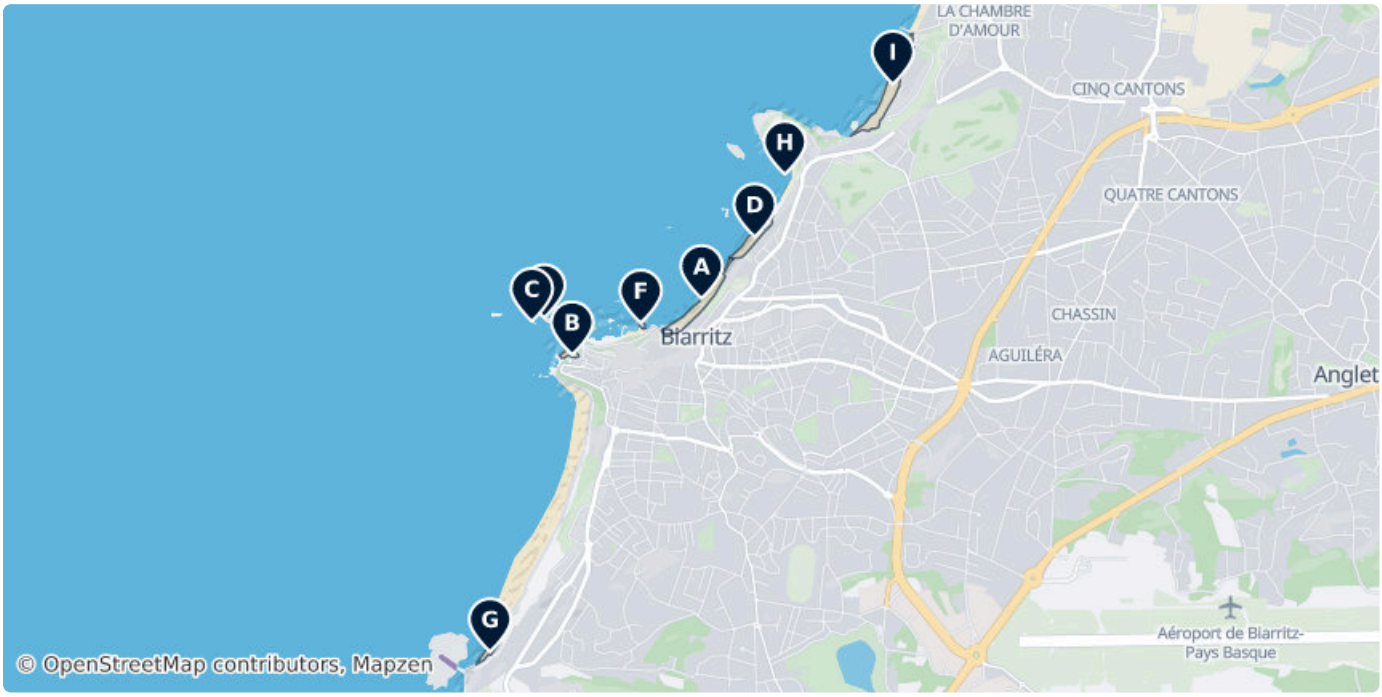
paysbasque.net/aquariums-et-musees/musee-de-la-mer-...

# Best Beaches and Coastal Landmarks

Biarritz's coastline is defined by a mix of expansive sandy beaches and dramatic Pyrenean rock formations. The central Grande Plage is flanked by the historic Hôtel du Palais and the Art Deco Casino Barrière, while the sheltered Port Vieux occupies a former whaling harbor. Iconic landmarks like the Rocher de la Vierge, connected to the mainland by a Gustave Eiffel-designed bridge, and the rugged Rocher du Basta provide elevated vantage points over the Bay of Biscay. Further south, beaches like Marbella offer a wilder landscape favored by surfers.






## A Grande Plage

The city's main sandy beach, situated between the Casino Barrière and the historic Hôtel du Palais.

Quai de la Grande Plage, 64200, France
(43.48520, -1.55891)



## B Plage du Port Vieux

A small, horseshoe-shaped cove sheltered from the wind and waves, located at the site of the city's former whaling port.

4 Esplanade du Port Vieux, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48242, -1.56773)

## C Rocher de la Vierge

An iconic rock formation topped with a statue of the Virgin Mary, accessible via an iron footbridge designed by Gustave Eiffel.

(43.48407, -1.57047)

## D Plage du Miramar

A quieter sandy beach located between the Grande Plage and the Biarritz Lighthouse, offering views of the Frégate rock formation.

Venelle des Vagues, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48825, -1.55528)

## E L'Ermite

Coastal rock formation situated near the Rocher de la Vierge.

(43.48426, -1.56963)

## F Rocher du Basta

A prominent rock formation accessible by a stone bridge, providing panoramic views of the Port des Pêcheurs and the coastline.

Boulevard du Maréchal Leclerc, Biarritz 64200, France
(43.48399, -1.56305)

## G Plage de la Marbellla

A rugged beach south of the city center, known for its surf-friendly waves and steep cliffside access.

(43.46776, -1.57332)

## H falaise du Dout

Coastal cliffs located near the Biarritz Lighthouse, offering elevated views of the shoreline.

(43.49133, -1.55324)

## I Plage de la Petite Chambre d'Amour

Sandy beach located at the northern end of the coastal path, named after a local legend involving a seaside cave.

64600, France (43.49579, -1.54588)

anglet-tourisme.com/fr/pratique/webcam..., +33559583535

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