

Discovering the Charm of Bidart: A Comprehensive Travel Guide

Nestled on the picturesque Basque coast of France, Bidart is a hidden gem that promises a perfect blend of natural beauty, rich culture, and thrilling activities. My recent visit to this enchanting village left me spellbound, and I am thrilled to share my experiences and tips with anyone considering a holiday in this beautiful corner of the world.

Accommodation: A Cozy Stay at Villa L'Arche

Choosing the right accommodation can make or break a holiday, and I couldn't have been happier with my stay at Villa L'Arche. This charming boutique hotel offers stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean and is situated just a stone's throw away from the beach. The rooms are spacious and elegantly decorated, blending modern comforts with traditional Basque elements.

The highlight of my stay was the private terrace overlooking the ocean, where I enjoyed my morning coffee while listening to the soothing sound of waves. The hotel also has a lovely garden and an infinity pool that seems to merge with the sea, creating a tranquil oasis perfect for unwinding after a day of exploration.

Exploring the Beauty of Bidart

The Beaches

Bidart is renowned for its beautiful beaches, each offering a unique experience. My favorite was Plage du Centre, located right in the heart of the village. This sandy beach is perfect for families and offers various amenities, including surf schools. As a beginner surfer, I took a lesson here and had a fantastic time riding the waves under the guidance of friendly instructors.

For a more secluded experience, I visited Plage d'Erretegia. This beach is surrounded by cliffs and greenery, making it a great spot for a peaceful retreat. The clear waters and rocky outcrops are ideal for snorkeling and exploring marine life.

Hiking and Nature Walks

Bidart is a paradise for nature lovers, with numerous hiking trails offering breathtaking views of the Basque coast and the Pyrenees mountains. One of the most memorable hikes I undertook was the Sentier du Littoral. This coastal path stretches from Bidart to Hendaye, passing through charming fishing villages, hidden coves, and lush landscapes. The trail is well-marked and suitable for all fitness levels, providing plenty of opportunities to stop and soak in the stunning vistas.

Cultural and Historical Sites

A visit to Bidart wouldn't be complete without exploring its rich cultural heritage. I spent a

delightful afternoon at the Chapel of Sainte-Madeleine, perched on a hill with panoramic views of the ocean and the surrounding countryside. This quaint chapel, dating back to the 12th century, is a testament to the village's long history and offers a serene spot for reflection.

Another must-visit is the Bidart Market, held every Saturday morning. The market is a vibrant showcase of local produce, artisan crafts, and Basque delicacies. I indulged in some delicious cheese and charcuterie, and even picked up a few souvenirs to bring back home.

Activities and Entertainment

Surfing and Water Sports

Bidart's location on the Atlantic coast makes it a prime spot for water sports enthusiasts. In addition to surfing, I tried my hand at stand-up paddleboarding and windsurfing. The local schools and rental shops make it easy to get equipped and start enjoying the water, whether you're a seasoned pro or a complete beginner.

Golfing

For golf lovers, Bidart offers the Golf d'Ilbarritz, a beautiful 9-hole course with spectacular ocean views. Even if you're not an avid golfer, the stunning scenery and well-maintained greens provide a pleasant way to spend a few hours.

Culinary Delights

The Basque Country is famed for its cuisine, and Bidart is no exception. I had some of the best meals of my trip at Bodega Bidart and Auberge Koskenia, where traditional Basque dishes are prepared with fresh, local ingredients. Don't miss out on trying pintxos, the Basque version of tapas, which are perfect for sharing and sampling a variety of flavors.

What to Do in Bidart When It Rains

While Bidart is blessed with plenty of sunshine, it's always good to have a plan for rainy days. Fortunately, there are numerous indoor activities to enjoy.

Visit Biarritz

Just a short drive from Bidart, Biarritz is a vibrant city with plenty of indoor attractions. I spent a rainy afternoon exploring the Cité de l'Océan, an interactive museum dedicated to the ocean and marine life. The exhibits are engaging and informative, making it a great outing for families.

Spa and Wellness

Bidart has several wellness centers where you can pamper yourself. I treated myself to a relaxing spa day at Thalmar Thalasso Spa, where I enjoyed a range of treatments, including a seaweed wrap and a hydrotherapy session. The spa's tranquil environment and professional staff ensured a rejuvenating experience.

Indoor Markets and Shops

Rainy days are perfect for exploring Bidart's indoor markets and boutique shops. The Halles de Biarritz indoor market is a short drive away and offers a fantastic selection of local produce, seafood, and gourmet treats. I also enjoyed browsing through the local artisan shops, where I found unique handcrafted jewelry and Basque linens.

Culinary Classes

One of the highlights of my trip was a Basque cooking class at Les Ateliers du Cuisinier. The class was both educational and fun, and I learned to prepare traditional dishes like piperade and gâteau Basque. It was a great way to immerse myself in the local culture and bring a taste of Bidart back home.

Final Thoughts

Bidart exceeded all my expectations and left me with unforgettable memories. Its stunning landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and wide range of activities make it an ideal destination for travelers of all ages and interests. Whether you're looking to relax on pristine beaches, explore scenic hiking trails, or indulge in delicious Basque cuisine, Bidart has something to offer.

If you're considering a holiday in the Basque Country, put Bidart at the top of your list. Its unique charm and warm hospitality will captivate you from the moment you arrive, and you'll leave with a deep appreciation for this beautiful part of France. Happy travels!