

IN SEARCH OF FRIED SQUID IN BILBAO



It's definitely not a *pintxo*, but if it's Sunday then you have to try some *rabas* (fried squid) as an appetiser

Sunday just isn't Sunday if you don't have some rabas with your friends. These pieces of squid, also known as calamari, are cut into strips or rings and fried in plenty of oil until the batter is golden and crispy. By far the **most popular appetiser in Bilbao**, they go perfectly with a 'marianito' (prepared vermouth) and they also pair wonderfully with txakoli or a *crianza* red wine.

You can find this exquisite delicacy in practically every bar in the city, but beware! It's **reserved exclusively for Sundays** and public holidays and is simply not served on other days.

Before we start recommending a route that will let us enjoy the best rabas in Bilbao, perhaps we should explain - especially to our visitors - that rabas are not the same as *calamares a la romana*, Roman-style calamari, because they don't have egg in the batter. Also because some people use beer or sparkling water to make the batter thin and crispy although to tell you the truth, every bar has its own secret and they are certainly not going to let us in on it.

Here are some of the places that are renowned for their rabas and are a must-visit every Sunday; and as they say, more or less, in Spanish: **not all the good ones are here, but the ones that are here are all good.**



Rabas del Sorginzulo

In the heart of the Casco Viejo and Bilbao's pub-crawl zone par excellence, is [SORGINZULO](#) (**Plaza Nueva 12. Casco Viejo**), a place of pilgrimage where both a more traditional clientèle and foodies and food critics alike can enjoy tasty and crispy rabas. Believe it or not, they cook more than 40 kilos every Sunday and their menu includes both classic fresh squid rabas in rings served with a wedge of lemon and rabas in a bread roll with aioli and squid ink. Sorginzulo never stops winning pintxo competitions, but rabas are still their signature dish.

Right next door to Sorginzulo is [GURE TOKI](#) (**Plaza Nueva 12. Casco Viejo**), another temple of creative pintxos and plates of rabas, which attracts swarms of people eager to enjoy these crispy-on-the-outside, tender-on-the-inside squid delicacies.

Another place not to be missed is [CAFÉ BAR LAGO](#) (**Correo 13. Casco Viejo**), whose rabas have won first prize several times in the Rabas Competition organised by the [Asociación de Comercios y Empresas del Casco Viejo](#). What makes this place special is the fact that they serve them in strips along with onion rings, a combination that gives them a smooth and caramelised finish, reminiscent of Japanese tempura. Locals and visitors alike simply adore them.



Rabas Café Bar Lago

If you're in Indautxu, you really must visit the [ASADOR INDUSI](#) (**García Rivero 7. Bilbao Centro**) to enjoy their *rabas de txipi*, and in this case, you don't have to wait for Sunday, as it's one of the few places that always has these seafood delicacies, served with lemon and mayonnaise, on the menu.

In Rekalde, one of the best places for rabas is the [CAFÉ BAR TOBOGÁN](#) (**Plaza Rekalde 4. Rekalde**): they serve them in rings and they make their tempura batter with chickpea flour. And to savour them to the full, what could be better than enjoying them with their prepared vermouth, an unbeatable combination.



Rabas del Café Bar Tobogán

Our route draws to an end, almost, at Otxarkoaga, in [MENDIPEKO](#) (**Travesía Arbolantxa 2. Otxarkoaga**). Their rabas are out of this world and every Sunday they are the most sought-after appetiser for the locals in this Bilbao neighbourhood. If you live in the area, you're bound to know all about them, and you probably recommend them to your friends from other districts and visitors.



RABAS FROM THE MARKET GARDEN

Before bringing this route in search of Bilbao's most popular rabas to a close, we have a little surprise in store for you: some very special rabas in which vegetables take the place of the squid. We're talking about the so-called "market garden rabas", strips of vegetables (carrots, onions, courgettes...) with a crispy batter that you will adore no matter whether you're a vegetarian or not. And where can you eat them? Without a doubt, at [LURRINA](#) (**Barrenakale Barrena 16. Casco Viejo**), where they also serve traditional squid rabas.