

# BILBAO'S BEST VERMOUTH BARS



## **Bilbao has some great vermouth bars and this route will help you discover them all!**

Vermouth is much more than an aromatised drink; it's a ritual, a moment to be enjoyed in good company over a nicely served glass, a dish of calamari, a *gilda* (a typical local *pintxo* of anchovies, green olives and chilli peppers) or your favourite *pintxo*. In Bilbao, "vermouth time" is sacred, a tradition that invites us to savour this aperitif in its most refined and exquisite form. In some bars, this custom has been raised to the category of art: they prepare vermouths and *marianitos* (a shorter version) that are full of personality, thanks to their mixture of botanicals and other liqueurs that enhance the flavour. So today we'd like to invite you on a route to try the best vermouths in [Bilbao](#), discovering bars where this aperitif is king and every sip an experience.

Vermouth is a wine flavoured with herbs and spices, with a taste that can range from sweet to bitter, depending on how it's prepared. Each glass speaks of the expertise and painstaking care of the people who have made it - in some cases, with awards that place them among the best. It's hard to think of a better plan than a tour of the bars along this route to discover the nuances and aromas of the most exquisite vermouths in the city of Don Diego, as the locals like to call Bilbao.

From Casco Viejo to Indautxu, each bar has its own particular style and each glass is treated with the tender loving care of an alchemist in search of the perfect balance. We invite you to follow this vermouth trail, to let yourself be surprised by the bars that take care of every detail in their preparation and to

raise a glass to each other's health with a well-served *marianito*.

Here are some of the best places to enjoy vermouth at its very best.



**ANTIGUA CIGARRERÍA:** HOMEMADE VERMOUTH. Calle Astarloa, 5. Bilbao Centro

Just around the corner from Gran Vía, this bar is a landmark in Bilbao's cocktail scene. Their homemade vermouth is in a league of its own, but if you'd like to try something different, they also make a mean dry Martini, negroni or bloody Mary, and they have a selection of more than 18 white wines from different appellations of origin and even 12 types of champagne. The bar's elegant atmosphere, good music and cuisine will make sure that your aperitif is an unforgettable experience.

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**MORROCOTUDA:** VERMOUTH TO SAVOUR  
Calle Heros, 14. Bilbao Centro

A place to relax and enjoy. Here the product is king, and you know it with every sip and every bite. You can enjoy the cocktails prepared by José Ramón González Chato, the champion of the Biscay Bartender's Association, and, it goes without saying, a glass of vermouth, prepared with the expertise that wins over the uninitiated as well as expert judges in aperitif competitions. If you'd like a snack to go with your drink, they have a selection of dishes on offer, each more delicious than the last.

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**LA DESTILERÍA:** LAUDED AS THE BEST VERMOUTH IN BILBAO  
Calle Indautxu, 1. Bilbao Centro

[La Destilería](#) won the 9th Cinzano Spain 2024 prize for the vermouth with the most character in Bilbao, organised by Bilbao Centro. The bar's winning concoction, entitled 'Bilbao Past and Future', is the creation of bartender Juan Calderon who cleverly mixes Cinzano Rosso, Campari, Mamajuana, whiskey, piparra juice (a local chilli pepper) and lots of ice, with a gilda on top for good measure. Spectacular, to say the least! As well as this award-winning vermouth, their more 'conventional' preparations are sure to please, as is their Gin & Tonic, because La Destilería is the perfect place to enjoy a well-prepared long drink in an unbeatable atmosphere.

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**LAS TORRES:** A VERMOUTH THE WAY A VERMOUTH SHOULD BE  
Calle Simón Bolívar, 27. Bilbao Centro

A regular participant in vermouth competitions and always on the podium, this bar manages to surprise the jury every year with its preparations and special blends of botanicals, spices and other liqueurs. So, there are no two ways about it: if you are a fan of this aperitif, you just have to visit Las Torres, a Bilbao classic. Their prepared vermouth has a legion of unconditional fans - many say it's the best in the city - and it's the perfect accompaniment to one of the *pintxos* that have graced this bar's counter for the past almost 30 years.

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**ITURRIZA TABERNA:** VERMOUTH AND CALAMARI: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN  
Plaza Nueva, 5. Casco Viejo

From an ecclesiastical shop to a temple to good food and drink, this bar's cellar is heaven on earth and its *pintxos*, morsels fit for the gods! But if there is one thing that Iturriza's regulars regard as their religious duty, it's their Sunday visit to enjoy their prepared vermouth with a traditional dish of calamari, a winning and traditional combination that always goes down well. Another reason to visit this tavern with such a unique history is its location, right in the middle of Plaza Nueva, one of the emblematic nerve centres of the Casco Viejo bar scene.

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**ISIPIL:** MUCH MORE THAN COFFEE  
Calle Belostikale, 21. Casco Viejo

Although Isipil's main claim to fame is its excellent artisan coffee and its breakfasts, the fact is that everything they do in this bar is done to perfection, and the vermouth is no exception. At midday, it's the perfect place to enjoy a delicious vermouth, accompanied by their mouth-watering *pintxos* or one of the dishes on the menu such as homemade pies or quality tinned food. The bar offers a carefully selected range of wines, craft beers and mixed drinks, but it's always hard to beat a vermouth for an aperitif.

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**DARTXIN:** A VERMOUTH MENU

Muelle Marzana, 8. Bilbao La Vieja

Facing the La Ribera Market, [Dartxin](#) is one of the Bilbao's temples to the aperitif and vermouth in particular. It has a menu of homemade concoctions: Classic, Bilbao, Persepolis and Mexico with dry, citric, bittersweet and spicy flavours, respectively, but all with that special *je ne sais quoi* that makes them unique. And if you want to make sure that your aperitif is quite sublime, ask for one of the house specialities such as salted jumbo prawns, anchovies in vinegar, tempura langoustines, carpaccio platters... If you're a vegan, you'll love the three-flavoured hummus and falafel.

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**MEDIKOPA VERMÚTERIA:** VERMOUTH WITH A VIEW  
Muelle Marzana, 12. Bilbao La Vieja

Medikopa is a vermouth bar with a mission: to offer a pleasant place in which to enjoy the widest possible variety of vermouths - and cocktails - along with a selection of tapas and snacks on one of the best terraces in Bilbao, next to the estuary and with views of the La Ribera Market and the church and bridge of San Antonio. The bar's speciality is mussels straight from the market, so try them with a glass of their specially prepared, they're exquisite and the finest example of their offering, which we can define as simple, delicious and made with great care.

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**CASA LUAR:** VERMOUTH WITH PERIWINKLES AND SHRIMPS. Calle Marzana, 5. Bilbao La Vieja

Exuding the authentic atmosphere of traditional bars, Casa Luar is a great place to enjoy a vermouth accompanied by simple but unbeatable delicacies for a Sunday aperitif. On offer are such treats as *gildas* or cones filled with periwinkles and shrimps, as well as other traditional *pintxos* such as *bilbainitos* (langoustine, olive and egg on a stick), *felipadas* (a sandwich made with anchovies, mayonnaise, lettuce and a touch of spice) or tuna rolls. And if you're really hungry, you can try their platters of Iberian cold cuts and cheeses or salted anchovies. A contemporary tavern with the soul of a *txikiteo* (a *txikito* is a small glass of wine and *txikiteo* basically means going

on a pub crawl...).

### **So, a toast! To vermouth!**

This concludes our tour of Bilbao's vermouth bars. In total, we've tried nine offerings, nine very different establishments that have made this beverage their calling card. And we're still standing! But Bilbao's bar and restaurant scene is so rich that each bar has its own charm, its own special recipe and its own particular way of turning an aperitif into an unforgettable experience. So, get out there and explore the city, give yourself a treat!