

Beat: Travel

ONE OF THE GIANT OF THE FRENCH FESTIVAL CALENDAR

BASQUE COUNTRY FESTIVAL - BAYONNE

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USPA NEWS - BAYONNE Festival is a giant of the French Festival calendar and although it starts on July 29. The big climax will take place on the first week-end in August. It is a must for anyone keen on a revelry. There's music, street performances, dances, parades and fireworks. Have to dress in red and white.

Red and white became the traditional uniform of Festival-goers. The Festival opens in ceremony at 10.00 pm on Wednesday night and has done since 1932. For five days until Sunday the whole town wears white with a red scarf. At midday, festivities start and continue throughout the day with bandas (traditional bands), floral processions, floats and parades of giant papier-mâché figures and floats, bull-runs on Place SAINT-ANDRE, Pelota tournaments in the Trinquet Moderne...

BAYONNE has strong policies on heritage and culture and was officially recognized as a "Town Of Art and history" in 2012. This Award from the French Government comes in recognition of 2,000 years of History and rich Heritage. It goes from the Gothic Cathedral which is a World Heritage Site since 1998 as part of the French Pilgrim Roots of Santiago De Compostela. To the old town restoration project, the Remparts, the Cloister and the Châteaux-Vieux.

The "Bull running" is a main draw card of the Festival. In BAYONNE, the bulls are actually cows with horns, and they don't run through town but are released on the crowd in front of the Châteaux-Neuf, and they still hurt if they run you down. They will also be bull fighting on Saturday and Sunday. Indeed, the Arena is famous for it. BAYONNE is the oldest bull-fighting in FRANCE, and boasts the world oldest written text on subject dating back to 1289.

The BAYONNE's colors are usually blue and white. The event is inspired by the San Fermin Festival across the Spanish border in PAMPLONA.

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