



# how to spend it

A website of worldly pleasures from the **FINANCIAL TIMES**

FOLLOW US



SEARCH



- HOME
- STYLE
- WATCHES & JEWELLERY
- TRAVEL
- HOUSE & GARDEN
- CARS, BIKES & BOATS
- ARTS & GIVING
- TECHNOLOGY
- FINE LIVING
- SPORT
- GIFT GUIDE

DESTINATIONS | PERFECT WEEKEND

## Elena Arzak's perfect weekend

The joint head chef of her family's three-Michelin-starred Restaurante Arzak, in San Sebastián, which was recently named one of The World's 50 Best Restaurants, also co-directs the kitchen of Ametsa at The Halkin hotel, London



SHOW INFO

FEBRUARY 21 2014  
MARK C O'FLAHERTY

I never leave the restaurant before 1.30am on a Saturday morning, but I still like to get up early. I'll go to Bar Haizea for breakfast with my husband, Manuel, and my children, Nora, nine, and Mateo, seven. It's a very authentic café, with good crab and egg *pintxos* [tapas]. Fishermen and workers from the nearby Mercado de la Bretxa go there. I have been coming to the area ever since I could walk.

We'll go to the vegetable and fish markets afterwards. We are obsessed with fish in San Sebastián and the markets are second only to Japan. I like hake and *kokotxa* – hake throat – which is a Basque speciality.

We'll then go to Casa Munoa, the jewellery store, which is very special and affordable. It has antique pieces and will rework old heirlooms for contemporary tastes. The owner also has a collection of vintage, paper toy theatres and a huge library. We'll then go to Minimil, a local designer fashion label. The clothes are sleek and modern; they designed our restaurant's uniforms. I also like Auka, a multibrand store near the *belle époque* Hotel Maria Cristina. They always stock cool clothes and accessories.

By 1pm a lot of the shops are closing, so we'll go for more *pintxos*. There are so many places I love that I couldn't list them all, but often I go on a whim or a craving. I might go to La Viña for lamb trotters or cheesecake, or Bar Martínez for peppers stuffed with tuna and tarragon. I also like A Fuego Negro, which is run by a brother-and-sister team. Their food is visually playful; they once created a pigeon dish with little silver balls that look like shot.

In the afternoon I'll go to a few galleries that show contemporary Basque art, such as Ekain, Altzerri or Galería Kur. I particularly like the work of the late abstract sculptor Eduardo Chillida, who focused on negative space.

Later, Manuel and I will take the motorbike into the old town and go to Ganbara for dinner. It's known as a *pintxo* bar, but the small dining room downstairs is one of the city's best-kept secrets. Amaia, the owner, does fish and seafood beautifully, as well as her famous grilled wild mushrooms with a soft egg yolk.

We will go on to Museo del Whisky, which is a bar with hundreds of different whiskeys, or we'll go for a drink outdoors in Plaza de la Constitución, where they used to hold bullfights; the numbers above each of the windows in the square mark out the old balcony boxes.

Many shops close on a Sunday, so it's a perfect day to sit in cafés, have a long leisurely lunch and wander. I love this town; the old architecture has been nicely preserved, and the modern buildings sit well next to the historic ones. In the morning, we'll take the children to the Museo San Telmo, the Basque Country's oldest museum – it has a new, aluminium-clad extension and a good café.

I like the way that the whole city seems to face outwards to the sea. After the museum we'll go to Gros, a neighbourhood with an impressive beach. We might meet some friends for an aperitif, before a long lunch at Bokado at the Aquarium, with its excellent contemporary Basque food and breathtaking bay views. The kids tend to leave the table early to go and play in the square, and we'll watch them from the window while drinking gin and tonics.

After lunch we might go for a walk on La Concha beach, and in the evening we'll either stay home or have dinner at Rekondo; it has one of Spain's best wine cellars. No matter what, Sunday evening is reserved for the family, and we're all happy to be together.

**A Fuego Negro**, 31 Calle 31 de Agosto, 20003 (+34650-135 373; [www.afuegonegro.com](#)). **Auka**, Camino Kalea, 20004 (+34943-429 360; [www.auka.es](#)). **Bar Haizea**, 8 Aldamar Kalea, 20003 (+34943-425 710). **Bar Martínez**, 13 Calle 31 de Agosto, 20003 (+34943-424 965; [www.barmartinez.com](#)). **Bokado Aquarium** **Mikel Santamaría**, 1 Plaza Jacques Cousteau, 20003 (+34943-431 842; [www.bokadomikelsantamaria.com](#)). **Casa Munoa**, 28 Calle Aldamar, 20003 (+34943-422 847; [www.casamunoa.com](#)). **Ekain Arte Lanak**, 4 Iñigo Kalea, 20003 (+34943-421 729; [www.ekainartelanak.com](#)). **Galería Altzerri**, 2 Reina Regente, 20003 (+34943-424 046; [www.altzerri.eu](#)). **Galería Kur**, 6 Paseo de la Zurriola, 20002 (+34943-280 762; [www.kurgallery.com](#)). **Ganbara**, 21 Calle San Jerónimo, 20003 (+34943-422 575; [www.ganbarajatetxea.com](#)). **Hotel Maria Cristina**, 4 Paseo República Argentina, 20004 (+34943-437 600; [www.hotel-mariacristina.com](#)). **La Viña**, 3 Calle 31 de Agosto, 20003 (+34943-427 495; [www.santiagorivera.com](#)). **Mercado de la Bretxa**, Edificio Arkoak Bretxa, 20003 ([www.la-bretxa.com](#)). **Minimil**, 7 Elkano Kalea, 20004 (+34943-397 308; [www.minimil.es](#)). **Museo del Whisky**, 5 Alameda del Blvd, 20003 (+34943-424 678; [www.museodelwhisky.com](#)). **Museo San Telmo**, 1 Plaza Zuloaga, 20003 (+34943-481 580; [www.santelmomuseoa.com](#)). **Rekondo**, 57 Paseo de Igeldo, 20008 (+34943-212 907; [www.rekondo.com](#)).

See also

[Elena Arzak, Arzak, Restaurants, San Sebastian](#)

### Most popular



DESTINATIONS  
[Argentina's undiscovered northwest](#)



DESTINATIONS | PERFECT WEEKEND  
[Ian Schrager's New York](#)



DESTINATIONS | PERFECT WEEKEND  
[Jeremy Hackett's perfect weekend in London](#)



DESTINATIONS  
[St Vincent and The Grenadines](#)



DESTINATIONS  
[Cheval Blanc's Maldivian debut](#)

Replay

### How To Spend It app

Download our Webby-nominated iPad app from the Apple Store

### Archive choice



#### Elena Arzak's perfect weekend

The joint head chef of her family's three-Michelin-starred Restaurante Arzak, in San Sebastián, which was recently named one of The World's 50 Best Restaurants, also co-directs the kitchen of Ametsa at The Halkin hotel, London

#### COLUMNS

[The Aesthete](#) [The Bespokeperson](#) [The Captain's Table](#)  
[Chronicles of a Spa Junkie](#) [The Cult Shop](#)  
[Diary of a Somebody](#) [E-equissions](#) [Eeetibles](#)  
[Finders Keepers](#) [For Goddess' Sake](#) [From Desk Till Dawn](#)  
[The Gannet](#) [Get Realty](#) [The Haute Seat](#) [Need To Now](#)  
[Past Masters](#) [Perfect Weekend](#) [The Reconnoisseur](#)  
[The Sharpener](#) [The Smart Money](#) [The Smooth Guide](#) [Swellboy](#)  
[Technopolis](#) [TechnopolisTV](#) [Travelista](#) [Van der Postings](#)  
[Wry Society](#)

#### SECTIONS

[Style](#) [Men's Fashion](#) [Women's Fashion](#) [Personal Luxuries](#) [Health & Grooming](#)  
[Watches & Jewellery](#) [Men's Watches](#) [Women's Watches](#) [Men's Jewellery](#) [Women's Jewellery](#)  
[Travel](#) [Destinations](#) [Adventure](#) [Cruises & Boating](#) [Snow](#)  
[House & Garden](#) [Interior Design](#) [Furniture](#) [Home Accessories](#) [Architecture](#) [Property](#) [Gardens](#)  
[Cars Bikes & Boats](#) [Cars](#) [Bikes](#) [Boats](#) [Planes](#)  
[Arts & Giving](#) [Art](#) [Performing Arts](#) [Philanthropy](#)  
[Technology](#) [Audio/Visual](#) [Computers](#) [Gadgets](#) [Cameras](#) [Phones](#)  
[Fine Living](#) [Food](#) [Drink](#) [Cigars](#)  
[Sport](#) [Motorsport](#) [Extreme Sport](#) [Golf](#) [Fishing](#) [Gambling](#)  
[Gift Guide](#)

Contact us

[About Us](#) [Competitions](#) [Privacy](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Cookie policy](#)