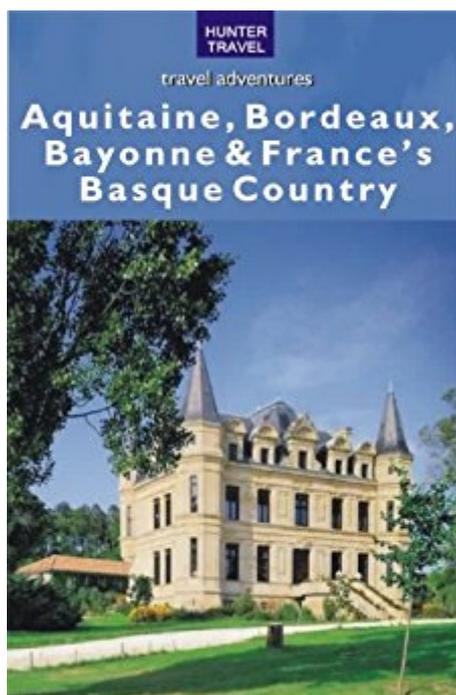


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Aquitaine, Bordeaux, Bayonne & France's Basque Country



Synopsis

A thoroughly detailed guide to this region of France, with full information on where to stay, how to get around, the history & culture, sights to see, and what to do. Following are a few excerpts from the guide. Some of Europe's most beautiful cities, stunning beaches and serene, vineyard-dotted countryside are in the Aquitaine region, yet it remains underrated and undiscovered by most tourists. Bordeaux, an epicenter for wonderful wine, is an amazingly vast and entertaining city that is constantly abuzz. To the south lies the enchanting Basque Country, a region crossing into Spain whose borders are not official, but whose people are vehemently (and sometimes violently) proud and independent. Much of the Aquitaine region is a national park. Along the Pyrenees and the Spanish border are several quaint mountain and seaside villages, such as St-Jean-Pied-au-Port and Oloron-Sainte-Marie. Saint-Jean-de-Luz, practically kissing the Spanish border, is one of the prettiest small cities in all of France. The Aquitaine is a place to indulge, be it in wine, fabulous food, relaxing spa therapies, ocean breezes or incredible shopping. The outdoor adventures here are one of the main attractions. The Basque Country attracts visitors from around the globe for its year-round surfing. The national park, spanning a massive stretch of Atlantic coast, beckons those interested in watersports. The Pyrenees to the south of the region offer splendid hiking and skeeng opportunities. Tip: To see Aquitaine arts and crafts in the creation stage, and to buy great locally-made wares, make stops along the Route des MÃfÂ©tiers d'Arts (contact the Association pour la Promotion des MÃfÂ©tiers d'Art d'Aquitaine, tel. 33-05-57-22-57-36, 353 Boulevard du PrÃfÂ©sident Wilson in Bordeaux, www.route-Ã-Ã-metiers-d-art-aquitaine.com). They have maps and a book on various artists in the region. Popular in France since the 1960s, thalassotherapy means sea-water cure. It was discovered by a Tour de France cyclist healed from his injuries by seawater in his Brittany home. Today, there are numerous thalassotherapy treatment centers in the Aquitaine. Treatments are catered to each visitor, and can be used to address any number of ailments. Or just go for the sake of relaxation, a noble cause indeed. A new trend has been combining spa treatments with vinotherapy, or wine treatments. What could possibly be more indulgent, or uniquely French? Additionally, many of these treatment centers have their own upscale accommodations and gourmet restaurants (although most allow for booking of just therapies without overnight stays). The main thalassotherapy treatment centers are: Atlanthal (tel. 33-05-59-52-75-75, 153 Boulevard des Plages in Anglet-Biarritz, thalasso.atlanthal@wanadoo.fr, www.atlanthal.com) has a huge pool of warm sea water, a variety of sea therapies and an on-site nursery, all inside an upscale hotel. Helianthal (tel. 33-05-59-51-51-10, Place Maurice Ravel in Saint Jean de Luz, helianthal@helianthal.fr, www.helianthal.fr) provides a mix of water treatments, including jet

showers and hydromassage, with varying therapeutic benefits including relaxing the body or strengthening muscles. Complexe de Thalassothérapie (tel. 33-05-59-51-35-35, 125 Boulevard de la Mer in Hendaye, thalassosb@aol.com, www.thalassoblanco.com) has treatments aimed at weight loss, curing headaches and various ailments, relaxation, and physical rehabilitation.

Bordeaux is an absolute paradise for shopaholics and wine aficionados. Easily one of France's most beautiful and interesting cities, Bordeaux's pedestrian shopping zone is constantly filled with tourists and locals alike. As a hub of the Bordeaux wine-producing region, there are numerous shops selling high-quality wines at low prices. There are many tours to the area's grandiose wine châteaux for tastings in stunning settings. The city's shopping options are vast, ranging from small malls to tiny locally-owned boutiques.

Book Information

File Size: 874 KB

Print Length: 92 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Hunter Publishing (August 5, 2009)

Publication Date: August 5, 2009

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B002KMITHW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,152,930 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #35

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I just blew \$7.99 to download this 'brochure'. It is a very brief overview of each area, 3 or 4 cities per region & limited info about each city. There is a section (2 pages) of Catalan words & phrases if you venture into the pyrenees, but that is all I found useful.

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