



Trench in the limestone in a River Larrain gorge



Leizta station



Lekunberri train station

3- The pretty Navarrese town of Leizta is well worth a visit, although the layout of the natural trail does not cross it:

4- The old railway tracks leave the village to the right and go straight into the Iruñaga tunnel. Soon after, the trail leaves the Telleria tunnel (now collapsed) to their right.

8- Finally, the trail continues leaving the Lekunberri houses to the right until reaching the old Lekunberri train stations, which now houses the Tourist Council of Plazaola and its Tourist Information Point, and where this stage ends.

5- A few metres after the kilometre point 12, the natural trail reaches the entrance of the Ultzi tunnel which, with a length of 2,700 m, is the longest tunnel that can be crossed in any natural trail in Spain. Such tunnel runs under the water divide of two large basins: to the south, the Mediterranean Basin (the Larrain river, which is ultimately an Ebro tributary) and, to the north the Atlantic Basin (the Leizaran river). This causes abundant water filtrations inside the tunnel, which explain the great beauty of its central area. Despite the fact that the tunnel has electric lights, due to its length, the use of torchlight is advised, as well as in all other tunnels of the natural trail.

7- Soon before kilometre 18 and after a descending stretch, the layout of the trail runs parallel to the A-15 highway, and at the other side of the highway the town of Lekunberri stands. After a crossroads, and a section running along a deep trench, the trail turns right and crossed under the A-15 highway by means of a newly constructed tunnel, and then turns left to cross an unlit tunnel belonging to the original railway layout.

4- The following 4 kilometres of trail include 4 tunnels (Kantina, Urbietta, Leizta and Malkorra), while the trail runs among woodland and pastures where Latxa sheep graze, from whose milk the famous Ibizabal cheese is made. In this stretch, the visitor can enjoy the beautiful landscape of the Leizaran valley and the village of Leizta before leaving it behind for good. The walker will cross six more tunnels in the subsequent kilometres (Tunnel 2, Autxikeneko, Erasote, Tutenea, Tunnel 1 and Guitarran Buelta) which dot meadows and small larch (*Larix decidua*) patches, which later turn into indigenous species such as beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*), which form delicate, shadowy canopies over the traveler's heads.

6- Soon after the exit of the Ultzi, the trail turns right and runs along the NA-1700 for 300 m. In this section, the old Ultizi station is found, which now has been turned into a private house and farm. The traveller continues walking the trail, which now runs parallel to the NA-1700 up to the point where the trail crosses the next tunnel, and, soon afterwards reaches the Bartolo tunnel. This last section is covered by dense mixed woodlands where oaks (*Quercus robur*), chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*), beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*), and hazels (*Corylus avellana*), can be found.

2- When starting this stage, the traveller must take an asphalt road that leaves the old railway tunnel to their left; this tunnel is in too damaged a state to be used. Next, they will find the buildings corresponding to the old Plazaola station, and twice they will pass under A-15 Highway viaducts. Before passing under the second viaduct, the asphalt road turns into a dirt path. 350 m after the kilometre point 2, the traveller crosses the Gazpillotxiki tunnel, and they can admire a patch of northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) around the kilometre point 3. The landscape mixes woody areas with meadows and baserri (typical Basque houses); the trail reaches the Martikonera tunnel and runs close to the Leizta station, whose main building has been rehabilitated.

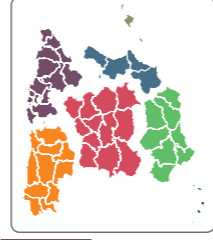
1- The trail starts in a meadow in Plazaola, just by the Plazaola station, which is the border of the province. At this point there is a parking lot displaying several information panels and a milepost indicating that we are on km 0 of the Basque stretch that runs through the province Gipuzkoa. The trail may be started along the old railway tracks that meander their way to the north, through the Leizaran to Andoain, crossing many tunnels and viaducts over the river, all of them in perfect state. Here, too, is located the milepost indicating that we are on km 0 of the Navarrese stretch included on the El Plazaola Natural Trail.

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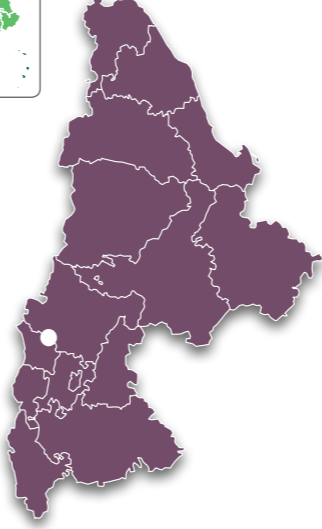


UNIQUE TUNNELS SURROUNDED BY A PERMANENTLY GREEN ENVIRONMENT

As in many other areas in rural Spain, old railways, which run across areas with great natural beauty, have been repurposed for public use. This old railway line, besides, offers the possibilities of crossing the longest tunnel in Spain, the Ultzi tunnel, in Navarre, which is 2,700 m long.



SECTOR NORTHEASTERN PENINSULAR



Since 1993 the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment's Nature Trails Program aims to restore former transport infrastructures such as railway tracks, cattle trails and traditional routes, for public use and enjoyment.

These routes take us to the countryside to discover the biodiversity and beauty of our precious natural heritage, and discover the villages, sights, traditions and people that are part of the unique cultural landscape of our country.

We invite you to visit them and offer you the keys to enjoy the trip. In this brochure you will find a brief description of El Plazaola Nature Trail. Plazaola station to Lekunberri station and the map for the journey, along with recommendations to make the most of this experience. We only ask one thing of you: do not forget to leave everything as you found it. The conservation of these pathways is also your responsibility.

TELEPHONES OF INTEREST:

- Touristic Consortium of Plazaola : 0034 948 50 72 05

NATURE TRAIL EL PLAZAOLA. PLAZAOLA STATION TO LEKUNBERRI STATION



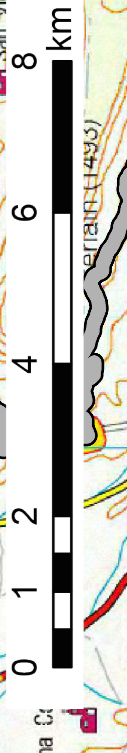
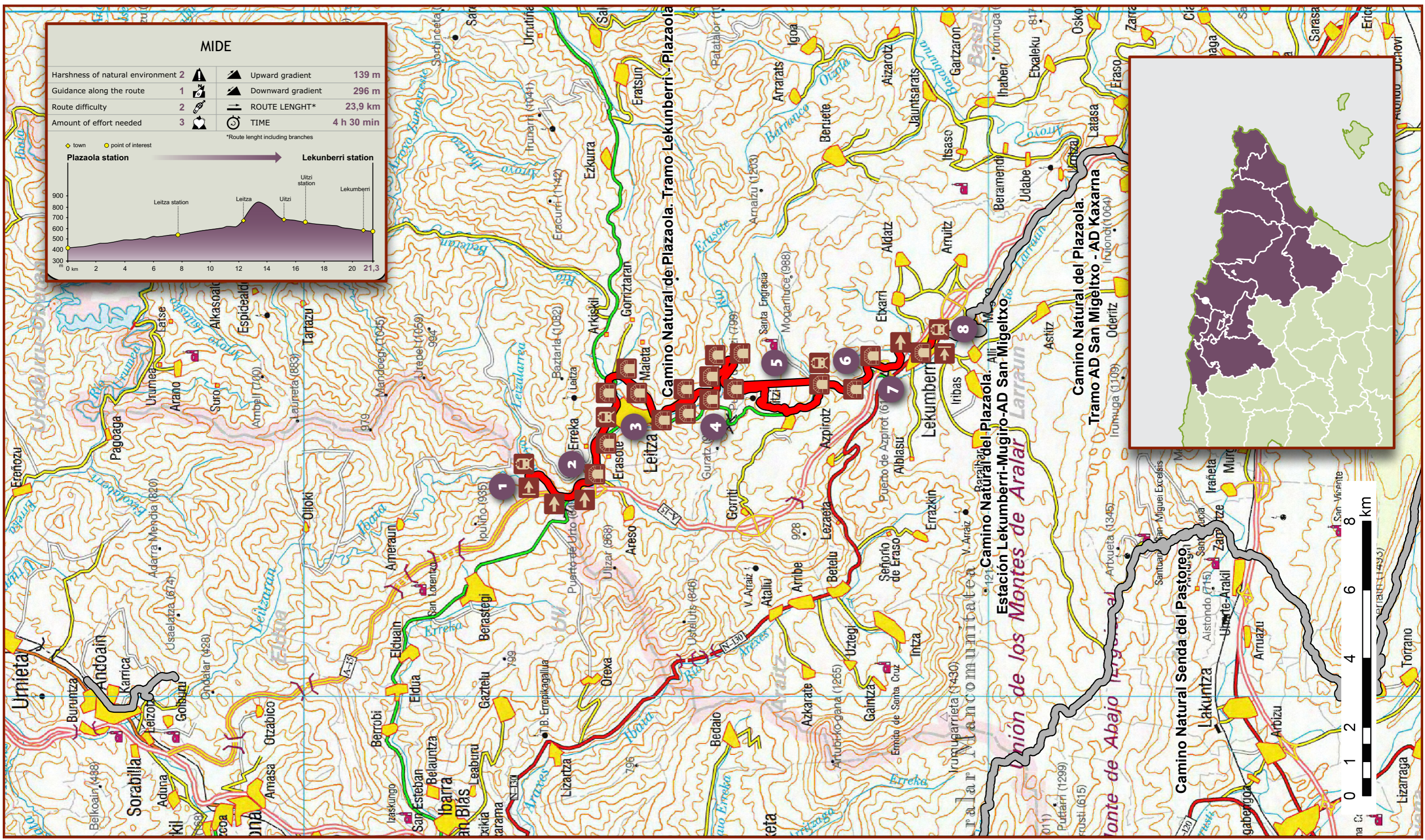
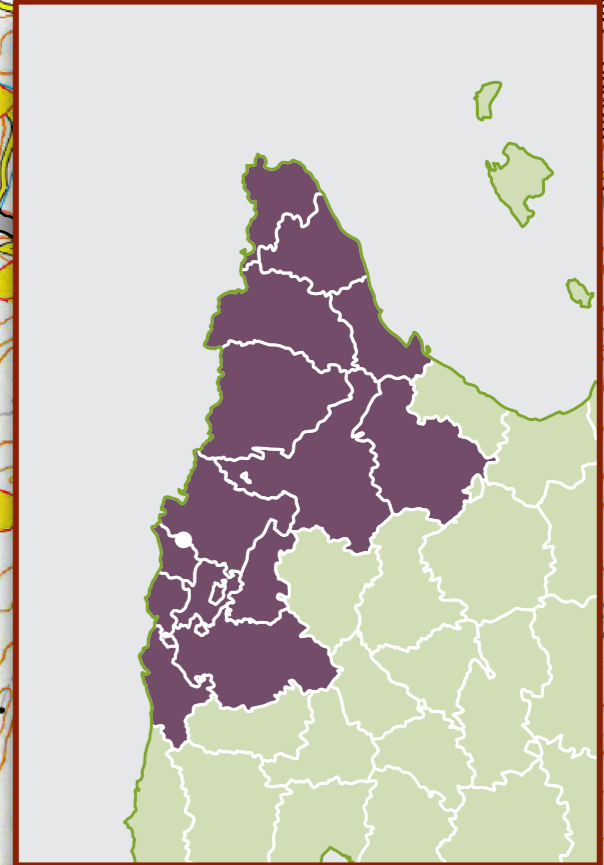
MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	▲ Upward gradient	139 m
Guidance along the route	1	▼ Downward gradient	296 m
Route difficulty	2	— ROUTE LENGHT*	23,9 km
Amount of effort needed	3	⌚ TIME	4 h 30 min

*Route lenght including branches

◆ town ● point of interest

Plazaola station → **Lekunberri station**



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NATURE TRAIL
PLAZAOLA.
PLAZAOLA STATION TO
LEKUNBERRI STATION

- Starting point
- End of trail
- Train station
- Tunnel
- Underpass