

TREATISE ON

GIJŌNŌMY

THE PLACES, CUSTOMS AND SPECIMENS OF GIJŌN
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ANTHOLOGICAL STUDY.



xixón

visita **gijón**

+34 985 34 17 71

www.visitagijon.es

infogijon@gijon.info

turismogijon

GijonTurismo

visitagijon

TurismoGijon



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BEFORE STARTING...

Some real secrets lie hidden in this guide. Within its pages, you'll find local figures who want to tell you their stories out loud. To see and hear your virtual messages, you must install an app on your mobile.

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Creative concept
Asur Fuente, Julio Rodríguez, Eteria

Texts
Julio Rodríguez

Design and layout
Eteria

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TREATISE ON
GIJON^{OMY}

76-year-old Maru takes a swim with her "grupín" (little group) every morning at 8am, be it summer or winter. They meet up at San Lorenzo Beach, specifically at Stairway 2, which they affectionately call "La Rampina" (Little Ramp). "It's the highlight of the day", she says.



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Living well has its science

Introduction to Gijonomy

Gijón/Xixón is a lively, accessible city, a meeting point and a starting point for numerous routes, magnified throughout its history by its stories, by its very nature and by what is constantly being added to it. A city linked to nature, hospitable, endearing, but also modern and avant-garde, an example of mobility and sustainability. Throughout the year it offers diverse cultural, musical and festive activities bathed by the incomparable naturalness and vitality of the Bay of Biscay (known here as the Cantabrian Sea). Its privileged geography features green areas, promenades, paths and a dozen beaches always at the ready for fun and relaxation. Not to mention its local cuisine, of course – tasty morsels ranging from traditional seafood dishes to pastries to satisfy any sweet-toothed craving. And don't forget the cider! But, above all, Gijón/Xixón is its people. Our people. Unique men and women who are generous and wryly humorous, larger than life, and who well deserve their own study. An anthropological and anthological Treatise on Gijonomy which reveals to those visiting us the true essence of this welcoming city full of surprises: its residents. Let yourself be seduced by Gijonomy. Because, without a doubt, living well has its science. Welcome to Gijón/Xixón!





Álvaro, Pedro "the Great" and Macio enjoying life at El Tostaderu (The Toaster). Legendary local characters. What else can we say?



THE PRINCIPLES



Gijonomy is structured around its Core Principles, a series of laws that govern life in Gijón/Xixón and that of its people.

The result of years of observation and study, the Core Principles are key to understanding the personality and habits of these curious local figures. Great minds and schools of thought that have left an indelible mark on the history of science and philosophy have participated in the preparation of these Principles. Well, actually, more than them participating, we've stolen some of their ideas, so there's really no doubt as to their contribution.

In time, little by little, we'll go about completing the Treatise on Gijonomy: revealing the secrets of each of the Principles, learning about unusual specimens, discovering new places and depicting different behaviours.

gijonomia.es

Living well has its science

1st PRINCIPLE

-Archimedes-

“Any body submerged in a fluid experiences an unbelievable rush”

We have a very special relationship with water. We swim in the sea in winter, we get wet walking in the orbayu (misty rain/drizzle)... But then we're just gluttons for punishment!



2nd PRINCIPLE

-Thermodynamics-

“Energy is neither created nor destroyed; it is shared”

What feeds the soul more than laughing with friends on Cuesta'l Cholo (Cholo's Hill), football on the beach, cider or cachopos? Well, we just love sharing all that.



3rd PRINCIPLE

-Ohm's Law-

“The intensity of the current is directly proportional to the value of the resistance”

Impetuous, somewhat stubborn, and always, always going against the tide... This tough, spirited nature is in the very make-up of the people of Gijón/Xixón.



4th PRINCIPLE

-Euclid-

“The shortest distance between two points... is what least matters”

Gijón/Xixón is a city to walk around: alone, with your pet or with the family. Its city wall, paths, parks, pedestrian streets... Or to cycle around, because there are kilometres and kilometres of bikeways!



5th PRINCIPLE

-Carnegie-

“The secret of success is to surround yourself with Gijón/Xixón”

The city welcomes you. Your product, your service or your meeting gains added value if you surround it with this friendly, innovative city.



6th PRINCIPLE

-Newton-

“Every body will remain at rest, barring an act of God”

As soon as a single ray of sunlight appears, there's nothing that can get us off the beach. Well, a bottle of cider and some andariques (velvet crabs) just might make us think twice.



7th PRINCIPLE

-Thales of Miletus-

“Water is the origin of everything. Or is it?”

Water is just fine; it's very healthy, etcetera, etcetera. It would be the most important element of life, if it weren't for cider. A culín (glass of cider)?



8th PRINCIPLE

-Geometry-

“The area of a cachopo is equal to the base times the height, divided by two”

We're "larger than life", but even we share a cachopo. Thanks to this dish, we can judge the size of anything.



9th PRINCIPLE

-Protagoras-

“Grandona (Huge) is the measure of all things”

La Escalersona, El Molinón, las letronas. In Gijón/Xixón, everything is BIG. And the people, bigger still. Larger than life itself!



Chapter 1

Identity, language and culture



A esgoña:
a lot, abundant, in
great quantity.





Mariana came to Gijón / Xixón a few years ago and she's already one of us. Open the app and scan this photo to read her story.



Remember that to see Mariana's message you must download our app:



Those curious specimens

Learning un pelín (a little bit) of Asturianu (Asturian language), getting caught up in the local festive spirit, joining in the celebrations, dancing to the sound of popular music or enjoying the cultural events...all will let you discover the most human side of Gijón/Xixón and decipher, at least in part, its particular science of living well.

Gijón/Xixón is a city with personality. With one very particular trait: the character of its inhabitants - those who were born in the city and those not so lucky to have been born here, yet who have chosen to live here. With a spirit of solidarity and activism, the people of Gijón have a unique character that defines who they are, expressed in the **9th principle of Gijonomy:**


 "Grandona (Huge) is the measure of all things."


That's why, if you're with someone from the city, it won't be easy for you to eat more, brag more about your city or be first to pay for a round. Because the people of Gijón/Xixón are like that: larger than life. *El Molinón*, *La Escaleroña*, *Las letronas*, etc. (the big mill, stairway, letters, respectively) Augmentatives rule like nothing else. But there's no reason to be scared; to compensate, the city also has places like *Los Campinos*, the *kilometrín* or *El Rinconín* (the little fields, kilometre, corner, respectively). At all these places, the locals share everything with each other and foreigners alike: their passion for food, cider, the sea, nature, friendship, fun...

their passion for life! Without a doubt, curious specimens worthy of study.

To get to know them a bit and their particular way of understanding life, you have to start by understanding what they say (and how they say it), which isn't



always easy. Walking around the city, it's not unusual to hear some astonishingly strange words and expressions.

Local men and women have a fresh, genuine and somewhat cheeky way of speaking, in which they naturally intersperse their conversations in Spanish with the Asturian language, or Asturianu. But they also use their own jargon, which originated in the Cimavilla neighbourhood: playu. So, if someone from here tells you "ver la ballena" (to see the whale – see Glossary), they aren't exactly suggesting you go to the Aquarium... If you ask about someone you haven't seen in a long time



and they tell you that they “went southeast”, prepare yourself for the worst; in Cimavilla “southeast” refers to the cemetery. But if they call you *bobín* or *bobina* (fool), don’t get angry, because, more than an insult, it’s a term of endearment.

And, of course, if they invite you to an *espicha*, don’t think twice and accept, since they’re referring to an informal party held in a cider mill, where cider poured straight from the barrel becomes the shining star.

It’s a good idea to find out if your Gijón/ Xixón get-away coincides with any of its many fiestas de prau, outdoor celebrations with live music which people go to in a group to spend the day (and night) eating, drinking, dancing and singing. Taking place throughout the year, especially in summer, in the different city neighbourhoods, as well as in the county’s towns and parishes, les fiestas de prau are a hallmark of the city and an example of Asturian culture and values.

So, in light of this festive spirit, it isn’t surprising that there are apps to be able to go hopping from *folixa* to *folixa*, that is, from party to party. At these events, cider and *bollos preñaos* (chorizo-filled buns) are always plentiful, although at the traditional *amagüestu*, which is held in autumn, roast chestnuts and sidra del *duernu* (sweet cider) are eaten and drunk. *Pote asturiano* (Asturian stew), *picadillo* (spicy minced pork) and *frixuelos* (crepes) are must dishes during *Antroxu* (Shrove Tuesday/ Carnival), a festival of regional tourist interest which is of great importance in



Pablo and his son, Juan, are all set to go. “Come on down, we’re going to catch some waves.”



Gijón/Xixón. It takes place a week after *Comadres* Thursday, an exclusively female celebration when women grab the chance to get together, go out to dinner and take over the Gijón nightlife.

Another fascinating festivity is the *Noche de San Xuan* (St John's Eve, 24 June), when the people of Gijón gather around the huge bonfire lit on Poniente Beach and burn something old while making a wish. *Fiestas de prau* (outdoor celebrations) around a bonfire celebrate the shortest night of the year with folk and traditional music performances.

Located in the centre of the celebrations, in the Plaza del Marqués, the fountain around

the statue of King Pelayo is also decorated with flowers, since legend states that on that night the *cuélebres* (giant mythological winged serpent-dragons) hold the *xanes* (Asturian mythological water nymphs) prisoner. The next day the *xanes* go out looking for water lilies in rivers and springs. The festivities of *San Xuan* join the patron saint festivities of *San Pedro* (St Peter's Day, 29 June).

As for *Día d'Asturies en Xixón* (Asturias Day in Gijón), this is celebrated on the first Sunday in August. The city's folkloric groups and bagpipe bands march in the traditional parade which runs between the Plaza Mayor and Santa Catalina Headland. Once there, participants have a picnic and

dance the *danza prima*, the time-honoured folk dance of Asturias in which the dancers link their little fingers and form concentric circles. In the afternoon, a variety of games, sports and dances typical of Asturian culture are also demonstrated outdoors.

But, beyond the traditions, Gijón/Xixón also has a spectacular calendar of cultural and artistic events, consolidated over the years, which place the city at the forefront of the international avant-garde. Among them, the FICX (Xixón International Film Festival), Noir Week, FETEN (European Performing Arts Fair for Children), the Metropolis and Tsunami festivals, and CometCon, the convention of alternative cultural and leisure activities for young people.

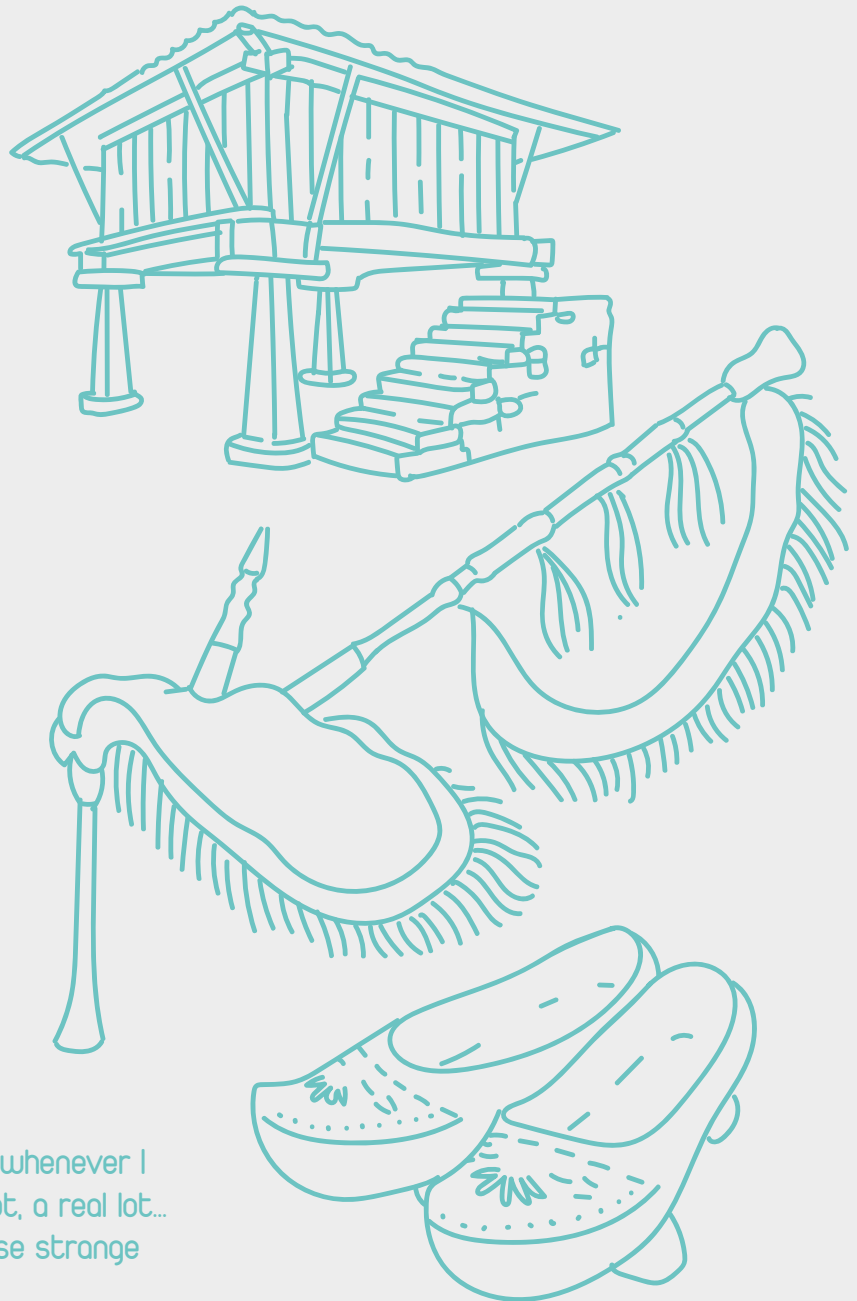
Museum of the Asturian People

To get to know traditional Asturian culture in depth, there's nothing better than going to the *Muséu del Pueblu d'Asturies*, an open-air ethnographic museum created in 1968 within a 35,000 m² wooded enclosure, which includes a brackish water pond, the remains of the marsh that once dominated the mouth of the Piles River. In its facilities you can find *hórreos* and *paneras* (raised granaries) from the 17th to the 19th centuries, gentry houses, a farmer's house, a cider mill, a shepherd's shelter, utensils and tools, etc. The museum's collection includes various kinds of tangible and intangible evidence: musical, museographic, photographic, documentary and that related to oral tradition.

Inside the *Muséu del Pueblu*, you'll also find the *Muséu de la Gaita* (Bagpipe Museum), which houses a sample of traditional bagpipes from Asturias as well as from different European, North African and Near Eastern countries. Other Asturian musical instruments, such as tambourines, horns and flutes, are displayed as well.

Vicenta, a resident of the Pumarín neighbourhood, has no doubts about it:

"Oh, girl, I go to the Pueblu d'Asturies whenever I can. I like anything that's Asturian a lot, a real lot... All those things from before. And those strange bagpipes, my lord, what bagpipes!"



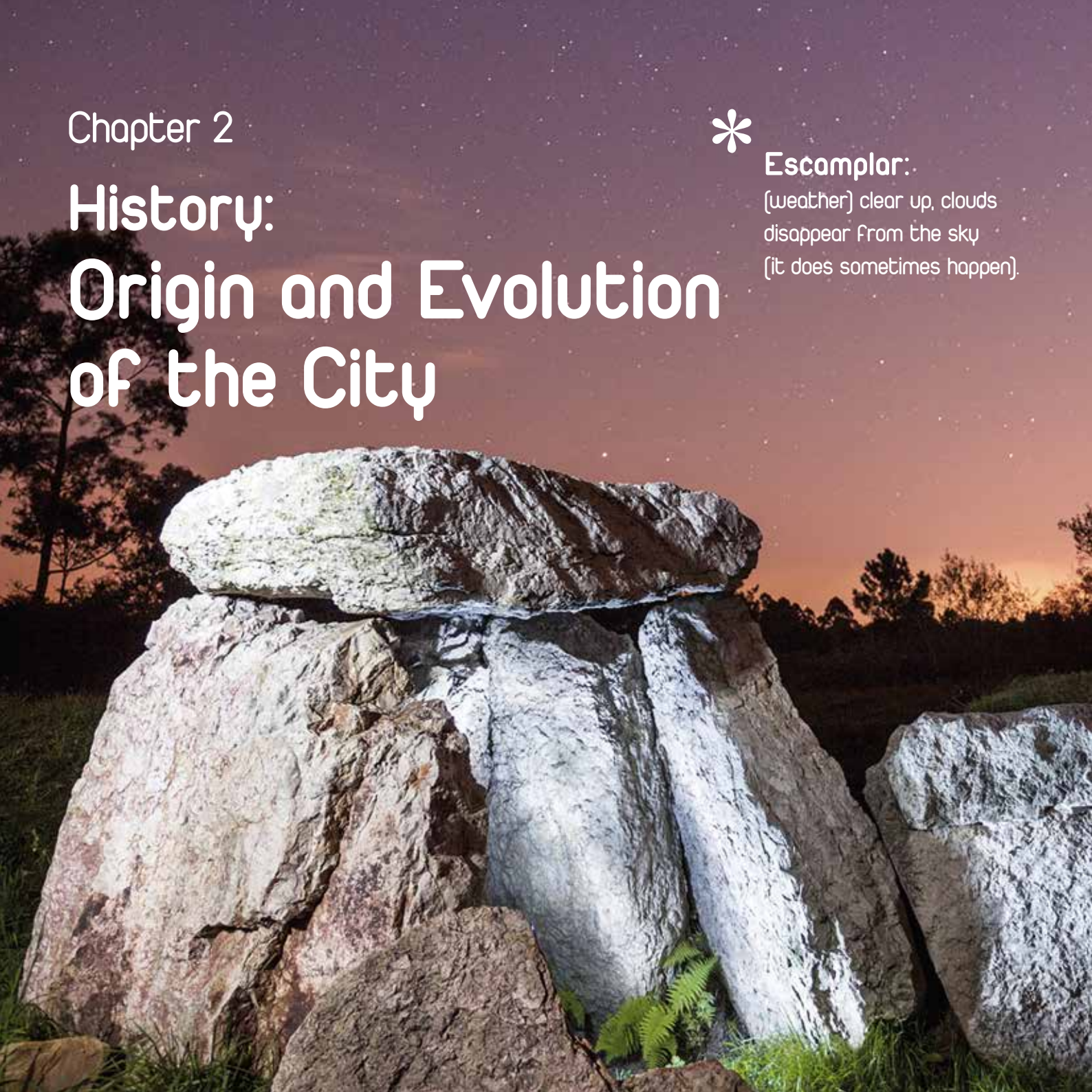
Chapter 2

History: Origin and Evolution of the City



Escamplar:

(weather) clear up, clouds
disappear from the sky
(it does sometimes happen).



This goes way back

To understand our present-day local idiosyncrasies, you have to delve into our history and our stories: the Neolithic origin of the city, the remnants of the Roman Empire, the medieval period, the industrialization process, etc. A walk around the city and its surroundings lets you travel in time through the preserved heritage of each of these historical periods.

Patient sentinel of the bay of Gijón/Xixón, Mount Deva has for centuries kept the origin of the city hidden underground. A secret that was only revealed at the end of the 20th century when excavations began. To date, these have uncovered not only a necropolis, made up of nine burial mounds spread out along the line of peaks, but also a quarry from which the Neolithic peoples extracted large stone blocks to build some of the tombs. This was at least 5,000 years ago.

To better understand the importance of this site, we suggest you first visit the Campa Torres Archaeological-Nature Park, located on Torres Headland, about seven kilometres from the city centre. One of the main hillforts in

northern Spain, founded by an Astur tribe called the Cilúrnigos (before 490 BC), this area provides information on Asturian protohistory and the transition from pre-Roman to Roman times, as well as having a bird observatory and an observation deck with views of Gijón/Xixón and El Musel, the city's impressive port, one of the most important in northern Spain.

After visiting the mysterious Neolithic burial mounds, it would be a good idea to point this historic tour in the direction of the Roman Villa in Veranes, twelve kilometres from the city centre and an example of a stately home from the Late Roman Empire. Then head on to the Roman baths in Campo Valdés, located in Cimavilla, the old area of Gijón/

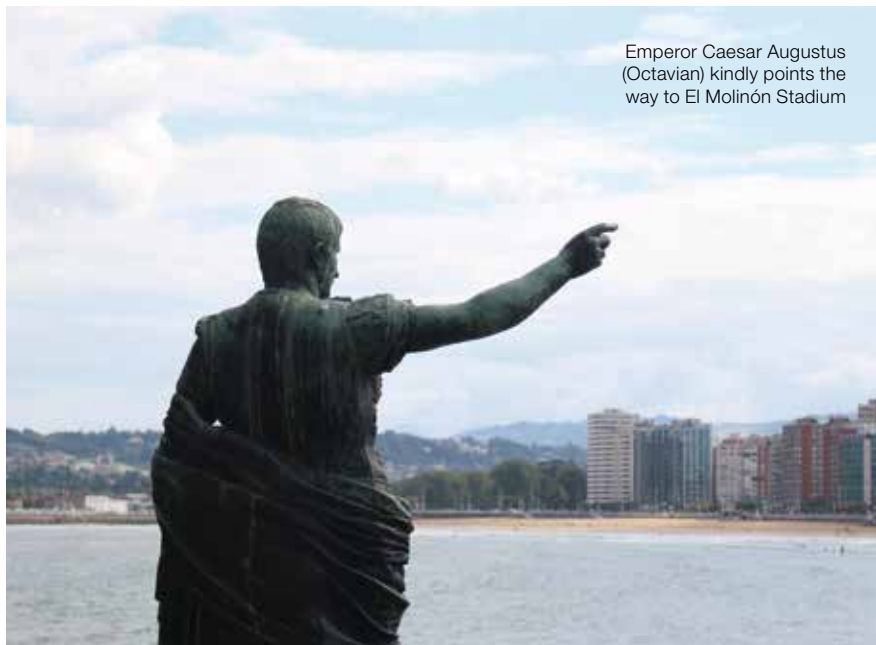
Burial mounds
at Mount Deva

Xixón. This is where the Roman city was founded at the beginning of the 2nd century AD in order to engage in trade, not only by sea, but also by land, along the Vía de la Plata Route.

It's clear that the heritage of the Roman Empire has left its mark on the city, not just in the inherited material heritage, but also in the curiosity and admiration this fascinating historical period arouses in the people of Gijón. A good example of this is the Kérberos Cultural Association, whose members routinely, and quite realistically, recreate Roman military camps, both in Campa Torres and in other places in the city.



Campa Torres,
settlement of the
Cilúrnigos



Emperor Caesar Augustus
(Octavian) kindly points the
way to El Molinón Stadium





So now you know, if you come across a Roman legionnaire in some corner of Cimavilla pouring out a glass of cider, don't be surprised... Remember: you're in Gijón/Xixón.

Moving ahead with your walk, and in the history of the city, the Middle Ages can be seen in all its splendor in the dozen Romanesque churches preserved throughout the county which testify to the importance that this area had on the Jacobean route which ran along the Cantabrian coast to Santiago in the 10th century, the so-called Northern Route. Outstanding among them are: the Church of San Miguel de Dueñas, next to the public outdoor washhouse in Castiello de Bernueces; L'Abadía Cenero (Cenero Abbey), considered by many to be the Romanesque cathedral of Gijón, large and verdant like the yew that has been growing next to it since 1718; and San Salvador de Deva, one of the oldest Romanesque churches on the Iberian Peninsula. At this time, the city was still limited to the population nucleus of Cimavilla, as it didn't start expanding southwards until the middle of the 16th century.

The streets of Cimavilla preserve monuments of great historical and architectural value, such as Palacio de Valdés (Valdés Palace), built in 1570 on the foundations of the city wall itself; Casa de Nava (Nava House), from the 18th century; the Clock Tower, now headquarters for the Municipal Archives; Revillagigedo Palace and Alvargonzález House.

You should also keep an eye out for all the little nooks and crannies reminiscent of the seafaring Gijón/Xixón, such as the Chapel of La Soledad, built in the 17th century and former headquarters of the Seafarers' Guild; the Plaza del Periodista Arturo Arias, also called the *Campu les Monxes*

(Nuns' Field) and popularly known as the *Llavaderu* (Washhouse), where there remain two typical fishermen's houses and the recently renovated *Tabacalera* building, a former Augustinian Recollects convent which was expropriated and turned into a tobacco factory, employing 2,000 women known as *cigarreras* (cigar rollers). Having tremendous class consciousness and spirit of solidarity, this workers' collective led the first great women's strike in Asturias in 1903. During the following years it served as a role model for not only the women's labour movement, but for the labour movement in general, so typical of the Gijón character. Because, day by day, the people of Gijón/Xixón demonstrate the **3rd principle of Gijonomy:**

—

 “The intensity of the current
 is directly proportional to the
 value of the resistance”
 —


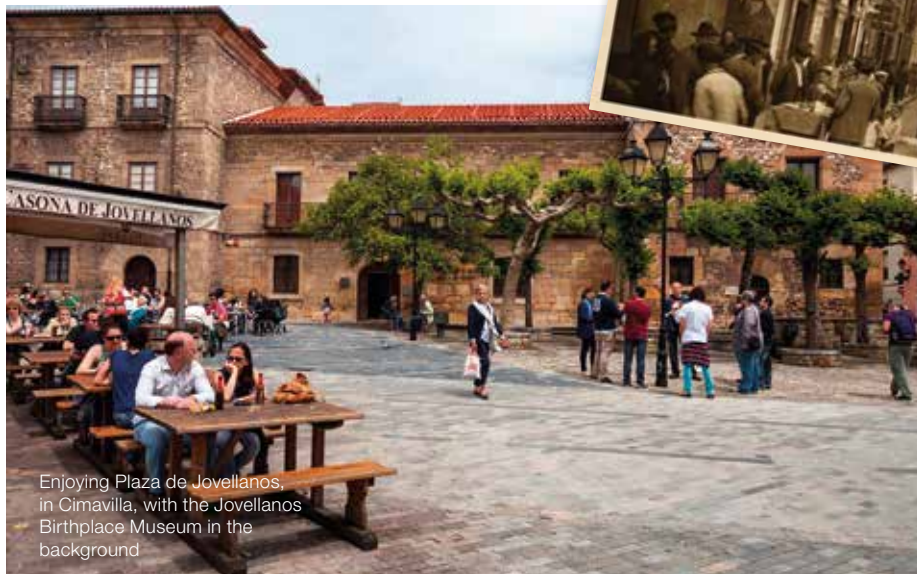
Also awaiting you in Cimavilla is the house and tomb of one of its most famous citizens, Enlightenment thinker Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, who was to plan the axes for the urban development which would take place during the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the *Museo Casa Natal de Jovellanos* (Jovellanos Birthplace Museum) you can learn more about this key figure of the Spanish Enlightenment and visit his tomb in Remedios Chapel. On its top floor the

Portrait of Jovellanos
by Francisco de Goya



museum houses the impressive work *El Retablo del Mar*, a large polychrome wood carving by Sebastián Miranda, closely linked to grassroots Gijón/Xixón, in which the sculptor from Oviedo quite realistically recreates a fish auction in the old wholesale fish market in the Cimavilla neighbourhood.



Enjoying Plaza de Jovellanos, in Cimavilla, with the Jovellanos Birthplace Museum in the background



Jovellanos Street, early 20th century

The industrialization process that began in the mid-19th century turned the city into the centre of the Asturian production sector: El Musel Port, the abundant manufacturing facilities, the shipyards, etc. Gijón/Xixón would not be what it is today without its industrial heritage: chimneys, workshops, factories, workers' housing, machines... but also the people who were able to create a melting pot of ways of life, customs and styles of living and working inherited by their descendants. An example of this is the Celestino Solar Workers' Housing, dating from 1877. Hidden inside the city block known as the "hammer of Capua St", it has now been converted into a museum, an exponent of the lifestyle of the Gijón working class in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

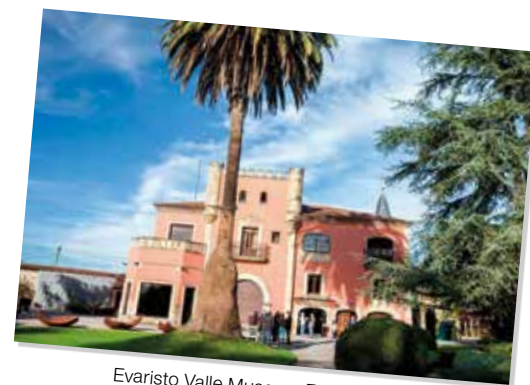
But now it's time to move along. With industrialisation came new architectural

movements, such as Art Nouveau, one of whose most representative features is the use of the female figure in its ornamentation. The streets of Corrida, Jovellanos, Munuza, Cabrales, Instituto, Moros, Trinidad and San Bernardo are all home to some of this style's most representative buildings, such as the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Ladislao Menéndez house, located in the Plaza de Europa, and the building housing the old Café San Miguel, the popular *Cafetón*, located in the square of the same name.

In order to get a complete vision of the historical evolution of the city, we recommend ending this fantastic journey through time with a visit to the Nicanor Piñole Museum and the Evaristo Valle Museum Foundation, both offering a broad sample of the work of these two early 20th-century artists from Gijón.



Plaza del Instituto, popularly called "El Parchís" (Parcheesi Square)



Evaristo Valle Museum Foundation, in Somió

Laboral City of Culture

Built between 1946 and 1956 and originally conceived as a miners' orphanage, this spectacular architectural complex soon became the first labor university in Spain and later a secondary school. In 2007 it was refurbished and turned into a large cultural space.

Presided over by its imposing tower at one end of the main square, inspired by St Mark's Square in Venice, the building was built facing away from the city of Gijón/Xixón. Architect Luis Moya from Madrid designed it like this, in the image and likeness of the Parthenon in Athens, both to protect it from the northwest wind and to make people have to go around it to enter, thus appreciating all its grandeur.

It currently houses different facilities, such as its monumental Theatre, the Laboral Centre for Art and Industrial Creation, the Radio and Television Company of the Principality of Asturias (RTPA), the School of Dramatic Arts (ESAD), the Professional Conservatory of Music and Dance, the Integrated Training Centre, the Jovellanos School of Commerce, Tourism and Social Sciences, etc. Throughout the year, numerous spaces accommodate different shows, activities and all kinds of professional and socio-cultural events.

It is the largest building in Spain, three times larger than El Escorial (270,000 m²)

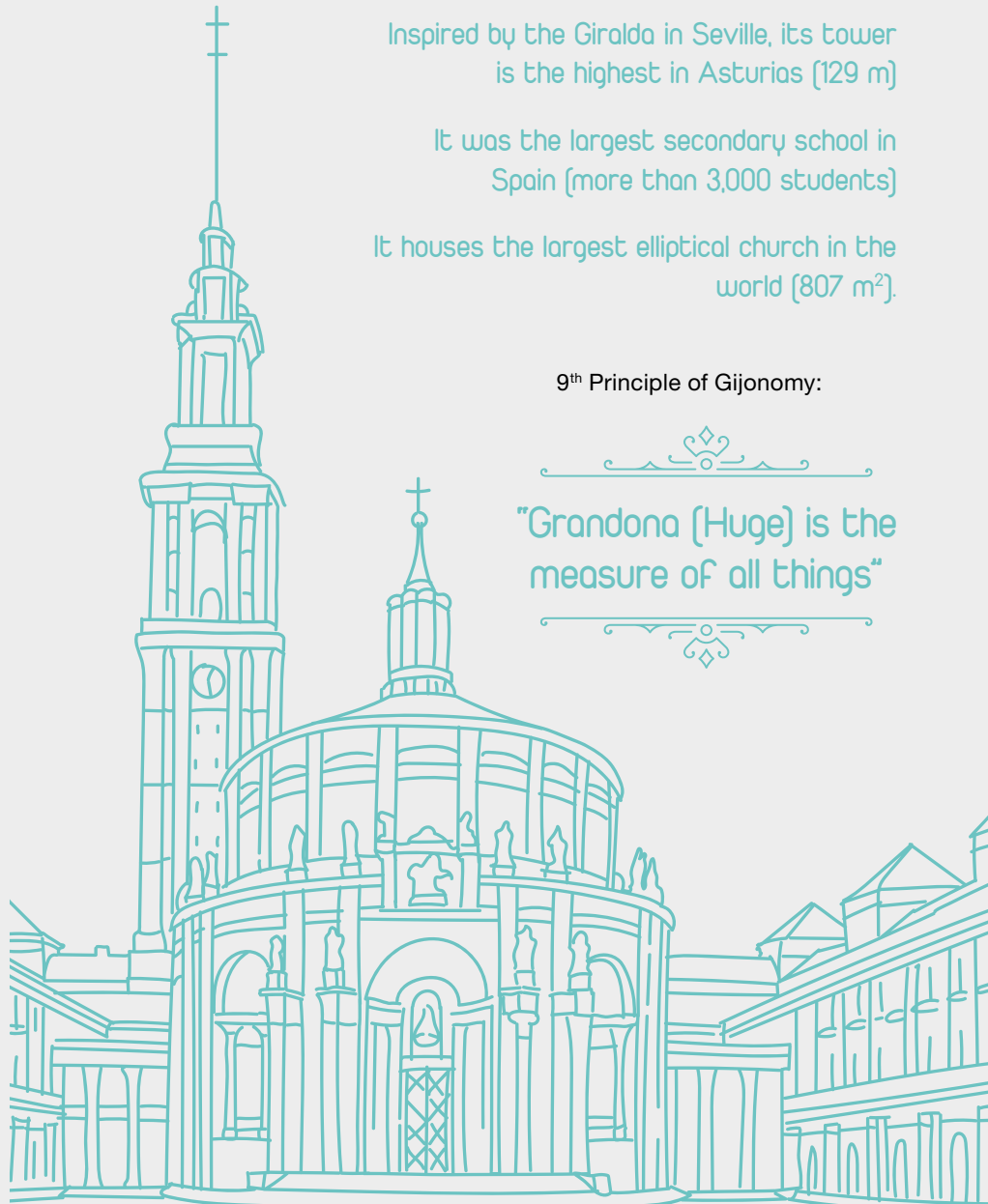
Inspired by the Giralda in Seville, its tower is the highest in Asturias (129 m)

It was the largest secondary school in Spain (more than 3,000 students)

It houses the largest elliptical church in the world (807 m²).

9th Principle of Gijonomy:

"Grandona (Huge) is the measure of all things"



CuLRutas: Cultural Routes around Gijón/Xixón

Two centuries
of history

Cimavilla

The Gijón/
Xixón of
Jovellanos' Day

Art Nouveau
Gijón/Xixón

Industrial
Gijón/Xixón

Gijón/Xixón:
historical
memory

Gijón/Xixón:
more than
just a city

Gijón/Xixón:
sculptures
and art

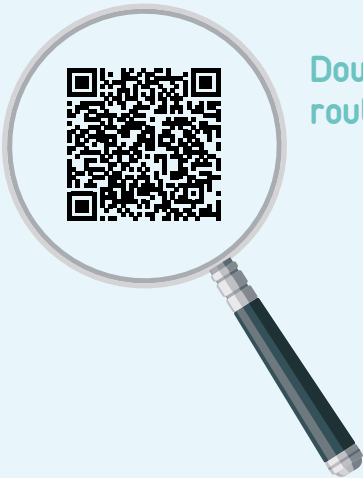
Gijón/Xixón
with the family

Gijón/Xixón
From a woman's
perspective

Literary
Gijón/ Xixón

Cinema in
Gijón/Xixón

A series of routes invite you to explore and learn about the historical and cultural heritage of Gijón/Xixón from the most diverse perspectives: history, art, cinema, literature, feminism, etc. Twelve different angles from which to discover the same city.



Download the routes here



Chapter 3

Geography I: The Old Town



Playu/a:

a nickname given to certain people from Gijón; a certain jargon, especially in the Cimavilla neighbourhood.



Cimavilla: The Soul of Xixón

The origin and essence of Gijón/Xixón, Cimavilla perfectly represents the spirit of its residents. Life in the upper neighbourhood, or fishermen's neighbourhood, is strongly influenced by the surrounding sea, which shapes the residents' unique character: smug, cheeky, sarcastic, yet supportive and activist. A walk through its streets among historical buildings and lively terraces shows you the heart of this city that beats to the ebb and flow of the Cantabrian Sea, as the Bay of Biscay is called here.

The former neighbourhood of pirates, fishermen, cigar makers and craftspeople, Cimavilla not only represents the essence, but also the origin of Gijón/Xixón. This is where it all began, on this small headland surrounded by water on all sides, except

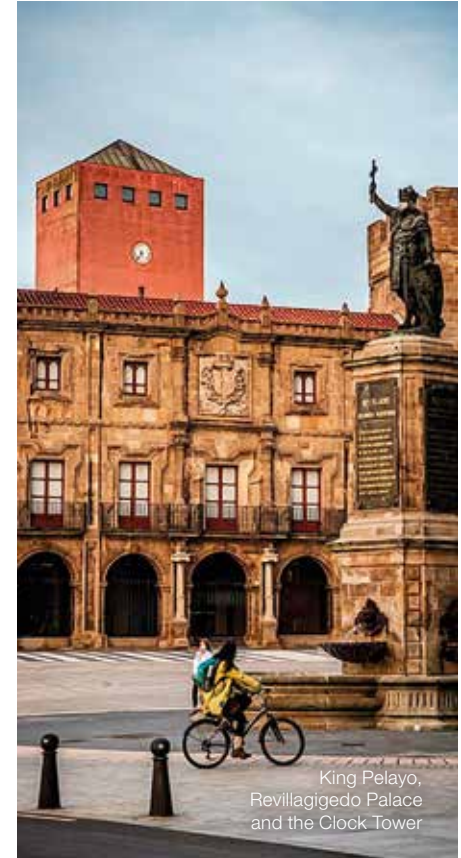
for the small isthmus that today joins the area of the Plaza del Marqués and the City Hall with the city centre. Here, in the 1st century AD, after conquering the hillforts of the Astures, the Roman Empire founded a small settlement that took root and gradually spread inland.



Cuesta'l Cholo
(Cholo's Hill)

Over the years, the city grew in the shape of a fan, but always with its heart and sights set on the neighbourhood where it originated, Cimavilla. Whaling would end up becoming the driving economic and social force until 1722, when the last capture of these cetaceans using harpoons and lances took place. At present, the memory of whaling only remains in the city's imaginary and in the names of some houses and streets near the port. Such is the case of *Tránsito*

de las ballenas (Whale Way), where the specimens captured along the Gijón coast were cut up. Next to it, Cuesta'l Cholo (Cholo's Hill) is today one of the busiest places in the city. Both locals and visitors go there daily, at any time of the year, looking to be caressed by the intermittent rays of the setting sun while enjoying a few bottles of cider and some *tapas*. Actually, the old town is full of charming restaurants that preserve the seafaring spirit that has always defined it.



King Pelayo,
Revillagigedo Palace
and the Clock Tower

It's in these streets and squares where you'll find the *playos*, a nickname given to the people of this neighbourhood and, by extension, all residents of Gijón/Xixón. The *playu* idiosyncrasy is undoubtedly a subject worth studying. They are unrivalled in their strong character, their unusual lifestyle and outlook on life, and even in their way of expressing themselves or, rather, of talking on and on.



Evening falls at the Skatepark



Narrow streets of the Cimavilla neighbourhood

In fact, after the Civil War they even invented their own language, “resve” (also called “vesre”), consisting of speaking backwards, reversing the order in which the vowels and consonants of a word or phrase should be pronounced, in order to communicate among each other and try to confuse the security forces of the dictatorship.

From Cimavilla Skatepark, young Jairo, a full-time resident of the neighbourhood

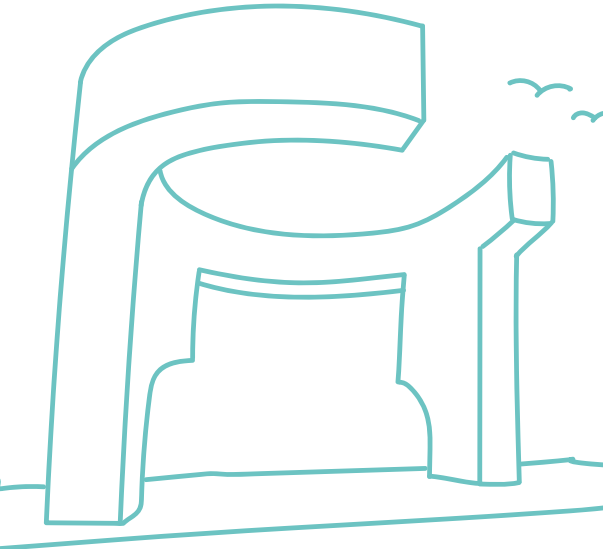
**“You think you’re so great!
So now we walk around with
earrings, tattoos and other
stuff on our heads... But watch
it! We’re still just as playu. Or
are you going to try and tell
me otherwise?”**

and occasional skateboarder, remembers how when he was little his grandfather, together with the friends he played dominoes with, would scold him in “resve” if he bothered them.

The bohemian and alternative atmosphere that has taken over in Cimavilla in recent years is perfectly reflected in the Rock Stairs, which connect the marina with the upper part of the neighbourhood; painted a different color, each step bears the title

of one of the 50 greatest albums in rock history, no less! Just imagine!

And if you continue up from the skatepark, you'll come to Cerro de Santa Catalina, a natural promontory which in the 17th century housed a military enclave to protect the city from pirate attacks. In addition to enjoying the best views of the city (in the words of Jovellanos, "The spectacle is magnificent; an inexplicable pleasure is felt at the sight."), *Cerro de Santa Catalina* can boast of accommodating our most famous sculpture, *Elogio del horizonte* (In Praise of the Horizon), a 10m-high concrete structure weighing almost 500 tons created by Chillida. If you go inside, you can hear the amplified sound of the waves crashing against the rocks at the bottom of the cliff, just as if you were holding a huge shell to your ear.



The City of Sculptures

Apart from *Elogio del horizonte*, some thirty sculptures by local and national artists of the most diverse tendencies make up a unique route through the city. Not far from Chillida's sculpture, still in the Cimavilla neighbourhood, you can admire *Nordeste* (Northeast), by Joaquín Vaquero Turcios, which represents the union between Gijón/Xixón, the Bay of Biscay and industry. Now in the vicinity of the marina, the popular monument to King Pelayo, a participant in celebrations such as Carnival, faces a huge cider-bottle sculpture that you can't help but see. The *Árbol de la Sidra* (Cider Tree) is a work made up of more than 3,200 cider bottles. Temporarily installed to raise awareness concerning glass recycling, it has ended up becoming a permanent attraction due to the interest it arouses among visitors to the city. On Paseo de Rosario Acuña, the promenade next to El Rinconín Beach, you'll find another of the city's most famous sculptures, *La madre del emigrante* (The Emigrant's Mother), by Ramón Muriedas, affectionately nicknamed "La Lloca" (The Crazy Woman) or "La Muyerona" (The Big Woman). It portrays the suffering of those mothers who watched as their children left for the Americas in search of a better life. Other works scattered throughout the city include the Monument to the Republic, by Manzano y Quesada; The Cube, by Alejandro Mieres; and Genesis, by Joaquín Rubio Camín. And, by the sea, we can point out, among others, *Sombras de luz* (Shadows of Light), by Fernando Alba, and *Solidaridad* (Solidarity), by Pepe Noja.



The Emigrant's Mother, by Ramón Muriedas

LA LLOCA
DEL
RINCONÍN

Chapter 4

Geography II: The Ebb and Flow of the Bay of Biscay



Pingar:

drench, soak, drip: This is where the expression "poner pingando" comes from, meaning either "to get soaking wet" or "to haul someone over the coals" (literally, to drench someone in insults).





The sea at the heart of it all

Gijón/Xixón lives and breathes looking out on the Bay of Biscay. And the Bay of Biscay faces those who walk along its shores or contemplate it from El Muro, La Providencia or Cerro de Santa Catalina. The people of Gijón carry the sea in their hearts. They have nine beaches and coves suitable for all types of bathers: competitive swimmers, surfers, children, nudists, people with reduced mobility, lovers of secret hideaways, etc. Find your favourite place!

Gijón/Xixón embraces the sea from the Bay of San Lorenzo. Throughout the year, thousands of Gijón residents and visitors walk daily along the promenade known as El Muro, from San Pedro Church to *La Lloca*. In addition to San Lorenzo Beach, the best known in the city, the county has eight other sandy beaches. Some are city beaches, while others are surrounded by nature. And let's not forget our modern marina. This

explains why the relationship between the people of Gijón and the sea is so intense; they carry it in their hearts. This should come as no surprise as they go to the beach not only to take a quick dip or sunbathe, but also to surf, walk barefoot along the shore, walk their dogs in winter, play soccer, volleyball and beach paddle ball ... or they go crabbing at the *pedreru* (rocky spot of the beach).



Swimmers at La Rampina (Little Ramp)

San Lorenzo Beach

Located in the very centre of the city, and flanked by El Muro, a 3km-long promenade, San Lorenzo Beach is one along the most famous city waterfronts on the Bay of Biscay. This crescent-shaped, 1.5km-long beach is one of the most representative images of the city, a classic destination for swimming, walking, playing and doing water sports. In recent years it has become very popular among surfing enthusiasts, as its conditions make it ideal for both beginners and experienced surfers alike. And every weekend on its wide sandy

beach, football matches are organized in which people of all ages meet up to play, tide permitting, of course, since they have to play at low tide.

You can get down to San Lorenzo Beach via a series of numbered stairways, which go from Stairway 0 (“La Cantábrica”), located behind San Pedro Church, to Stairway 16, located at the mouth of the Piles River in the area popularly known as “El Tostaderu” (“The Toaster”). At any time of the year, Pelayo, Álvaro, Leri, Carmen, Macio and other locals who

love basking like lizards in the sun rush to this spot, sunscreen in hand, as soon as the sun breaks through the clouds. Because, as they say, the Tostaderu wall collects and stores up every ray of sunlight that reaches Gijón/Xixón. In a nutshell, a microclimate. And that’s why this is where professional sunbathers go to toast themselves.



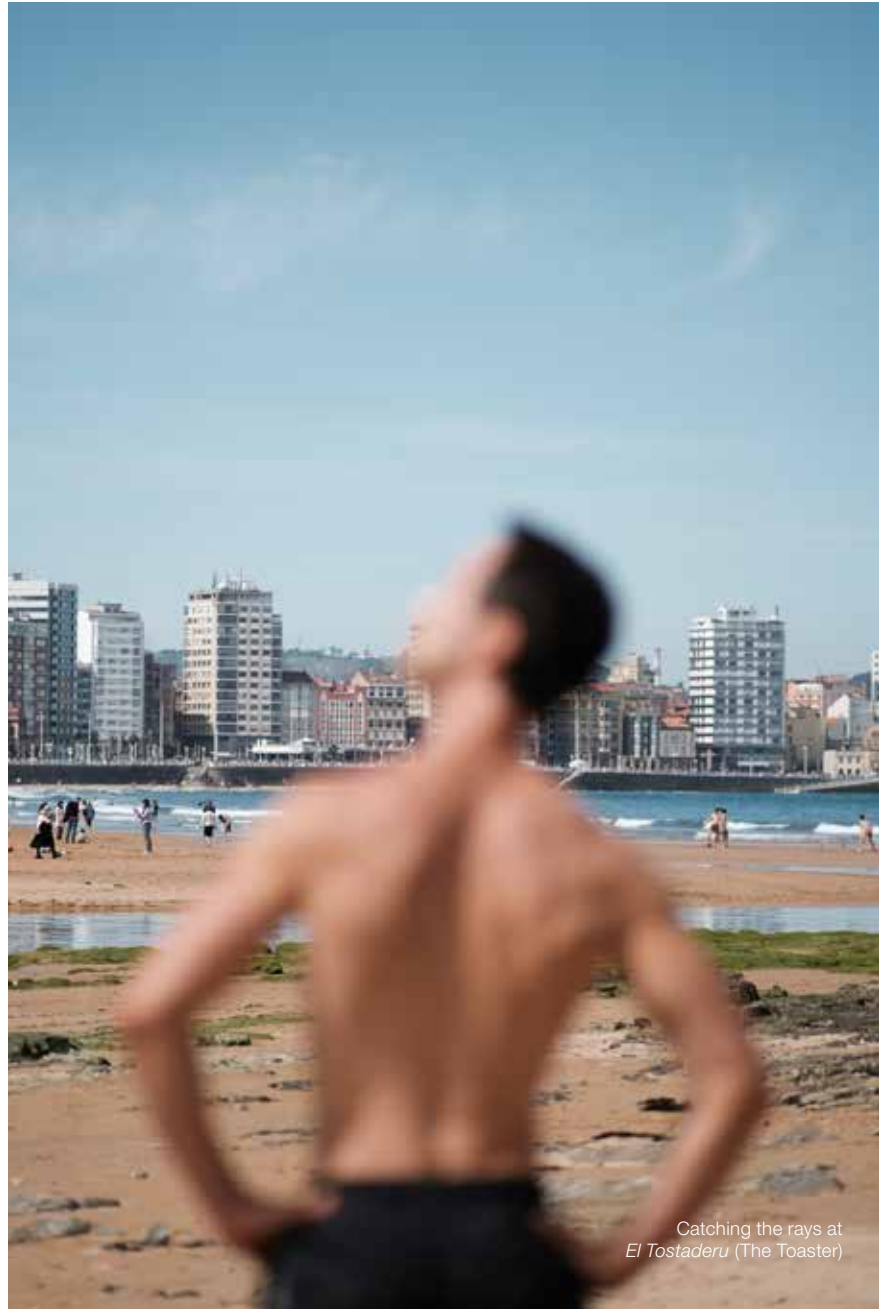
A regular meeting point for many Gijón residents, Stairway 4, the one with the big clock, the one with the giant thermometer, is the largest and most famous. As couldn't be otherwise, it's known as *La Escaleroña* (Big Stairway). There, and at Stairway 2, affectionately called *La Rampina* (Little Ramp), something extraordinary takes place every day of the year, no matter how cold it is: early morning swims. An intrepid group of men and women from Gijón meet up every morning to jump into the water and start the day recharged with all the energy of the sea, making good the **1st Principle of Gijonomy:**



“Any body submerged in a fluid experiences an unbelievable rush”



Charo, a member of the La Rampina group, leaves no doubts as to the benefits of such an unusual activity: “This is my lifeblood,” she declares, echoing the group’s general opinion. “And they say we’re insane,” she continues, laughing, “but... blessed insanity!”



Catching the rays at *El Tostaderu* (The Toaster)

Poniente, or Pando, Beach

Located in the Fomento area, very close to the marina, this beach is ideal when the nor'easter blows, since it's protected from this wind's effects. Poniente Beach was already a spa area in the mid-19th century, as evidenced by the fact that in 1858 Queen Isabel II took advantage of her official trip to Asturias to benefit from medicinal baths in the waves.

L'Arbeyal Beach

This is the large beach in the western part of the city, located between the working-class neighbourhoods of El Natahoyo and La Calzada. About 500 metres long, it has firm, golden sand bathed by calm waters and offers a good range of services.

Other city beaches

El Rinconín, or **El Cervigón**, Beach is located at the eastern end of the promenade. 400 metres long with a sand and rock substrate, it's an attractive spot for both underwater fishing and snorkeling, but we recommend swimming with caution due to the rocky bottom. As the first dog-friendly beach in the region, dogs are allowed all year round. **Los Mayanes** Beach is situated on the sandy shoreline extending from San Lorenzo to the right, along Paseo de Rosario Acuña. It is made up of rocks, pebbles and mixed sand, depending on the tides. Access to it is good, as are the services.



Rural beaches

Peñarrubia is the first of the rural beaches in the eastern part of Gijón/Xixón. About 500m long, it's a narrow strip of pebbles and sand, surrounded by high cliffs rich in fossils. It's usually frequented by naturists. Beyond La Providencia, you'll find Estaño Beach, a cove with golden sand in the attractive shape of a tombolo. Divided in two by an

islet found in its western section, another of its attractions lies in the small natural pool carved out of the rock called the *Pozo del Cura* (Priest's Pool).

Serín is a beautifully unspoilt narrow beach, about 350 metres long, flanked by cliffs and open to the Bay of Biscay. It's not easy to get to, which is why

it especially attracts nudists and naturists, as well as those who love quiet surroundings. Finally, **La Cagonera** Cove, an old haven for boats and fishermen. It's very difficult to get to by land, so we advise going by boat. Ideal for underwater fishing and diving.



Serín Beach



Maru swims every day of the year at San Lorenzo. Let her tell you about her experience.

Remember that to see Maru's message you must download our app:



Gijón Marina

The Gijón/Xixón marina is divided into four docks with more than 780 berths. It's held the Blue Flag award by the European Foundation for Environmental Education since 1996 and has established itself as a benchmark for some of the main international regattas. Right in the centre of the city, next to the Cimavilla neighbourhood, it's the ideal place to enjoy the sea and water sports and activities: jet skiing, paddle surfing, kayaking, boat rentals, boat trips, dinghy sailing, etc.

Refalfiu:

monotony, boredom caused by overabundance;
when you have overdone, overeaten or enjoyed
something without restraint and you're sick and
tired of it, then "tas refalfiáu".



Chapter 5

Geography III: Natural Sciences



Afayoizu/a:

welcoming, enjoyable, pleasant; a person, place or thing that makes you feel at ease.



Gijón/Xixón... Naturally

Gijón/Xixón is surrounded by nature. Its residents are well-aware of this and enjoy their natural surroundings in many different ways. One of them is walking along the greenways that bring them closer to the sea, rivers, forests or the surrounding mountains... Cervigón Path, PeñaFrancia Path, Camocha Greenway, the Ñora and Piles River Paths. Ideally, you should relax and take your time to walk along them, because, just as the 4th Principle of Gijonomy establishes, "The shortest distance between two points... is what least matters".

As you can see, there are many reasons to pack your boots in your luggage when you travel to the town of Jovellanos. The five greenways in the outskirts are just some of these, but so are the three cultural routes that leave the city for other destinations. Because Gijón/Xixón is not

only a destination, but also a starting point. So, from the city you can walk the Way to Covadonga/Cuadonga, make a pilgrimage to Santiago along the Northern Route of the Way of St James or head south following the Vía de la Plata Route.

Green Xixón

Paths and routes around the county of Gijón/Xixón

Cervigón
Path

Peñafrancia
Path

La Camocha
Greenway

Vía de la
Plata Route

Ñora River
Path

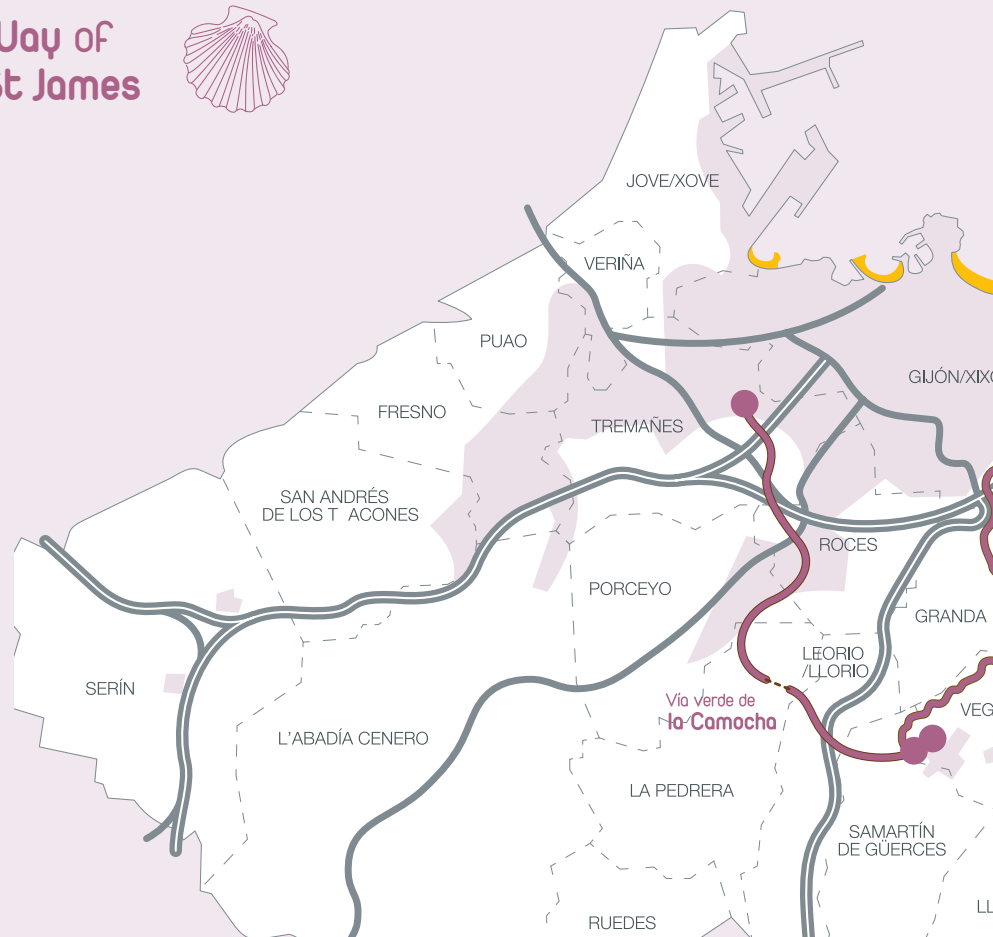
El Piles
River Path

Way to
Covadonga

Way of
St James 

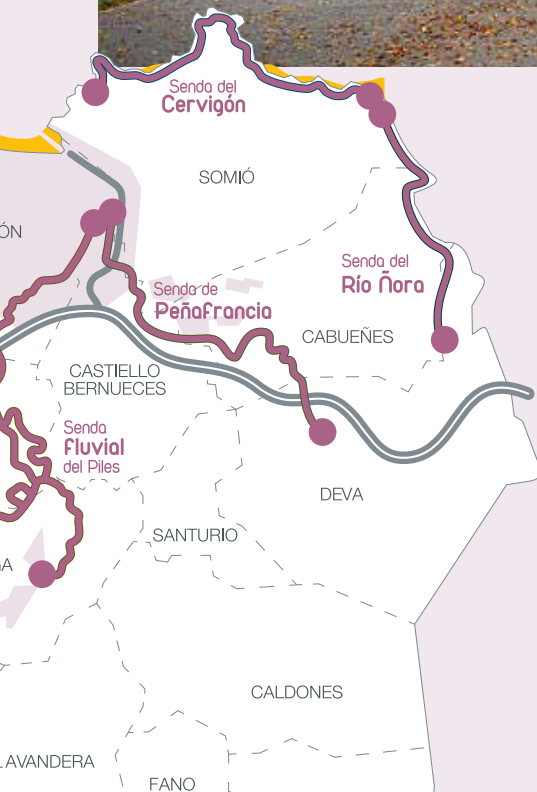


Download the
paths and
routes here





La Camocha Greenway



There are numerous walking and cycling itineraries that take you through Gijón/Xixón's natural environment and let you enjoy the county's many nooks and crannies of scenic, ethnographic and cultural interest.

Cervigón Path is one of the most representative. It runs along the cliffs, rocks and beaches of the eastern coast, an area unaffected by the city's urban and industrial growth.

Following part of the old mining railway, **La Camocha Greenway** brings you

close to the town founded in the mid-20th century to house La Camocha mine workers and their families. A rural setting with native woods combines with the area's recent industrial past, still present in the characteristic headframes of the mining shafts.

And, like the previous ones, each path has its own personality and charm: the **Peñafrancia Path**, which runs along the banks of the river of the same name, as do the **Ñora** and **El Piles River Paths**, the Way of **St James**, the Way to **Covadonga**, the **Vía de la Plata Route**, etc.

Chapter 6



Ways and Customs: Having Fun with the Family

Guoje/a:

a little boy/girl, youngster.

This word comes from mining jargon, where it was used to refer to the children who worked washing the coal ("coal washers").





Tomás is clever and curious. And he knows how to enjoy the city better than anyone. Let him tell you about it. Open the app and scan this photo.

Remember that to see Tomás' message you must download our app:



Kid Stuff

Nine beaches perfect for relaxing, swimming and doing sports, pleasant routes and walks in a green setting and an excellent infrastructure for a fun, varied offer of children's activities all make Gijón/Xixón an ideal city for making plans for the whole family.

Gijón's little ones enjoy a wide range of children's activities at any time of the year. And so do their parents, of course. Family leisure activities are one of the city's strong points, so those travelling with kids are in luck. To start off, in Gijón/Xixón families

can find a variety of accommodations to suit them (hotels, apartments, country cottages and bungalows, etc.), with amenities specially designed with families in mind, while local restaurants offer special menus and outdoor play areas.

Beyond the logistical needs, the city has numerous activities and visits to delight children, starting with San Lorenzo Beach, an emblematic spot in Gijón/ Xixón that becomes an ideal play area for the whole family in both summer and winter. On any of the county's beaches, tides (and parents) permitting, boys and girls can build sandcastles, jump waves along the shore, surf, look for crabs, etc. And, in addition, canine pets are also in luck. Dogs are allowed on El Rinconín Beach all year round, while on San Lorenzo Beach they're allowed between Stairways 2 and 8, but not during the summer season.

Other recreational pastimes available to families include water activities, children's workshops, camps, storytelling, horseback and hot air balloon rides... an almost endless list of activities which joins other events of interest throughout the year, such as football matches in El Molinón (¡Puxa Sporting! Go Sporting!), the European Performing Arts Fair for Children (FETEN), the Mercaplana Christmas Fair for Children and Young People, the fun activities of Noir Week in summer.

Likewise, your family can discover the past accompanied by a faun at the

Roman Villa in Veranes or through dramatized visits or puppet shows at the Roman Baths. In addition, you can learn what traditional Asturian sports are like by playing them at the Museum of the Asturian People and learn about the cider-making process, even participating in the *mayanza*, when the apples are chopped up and pressed, thanks to the visits and activities that the county's cider mills organize.

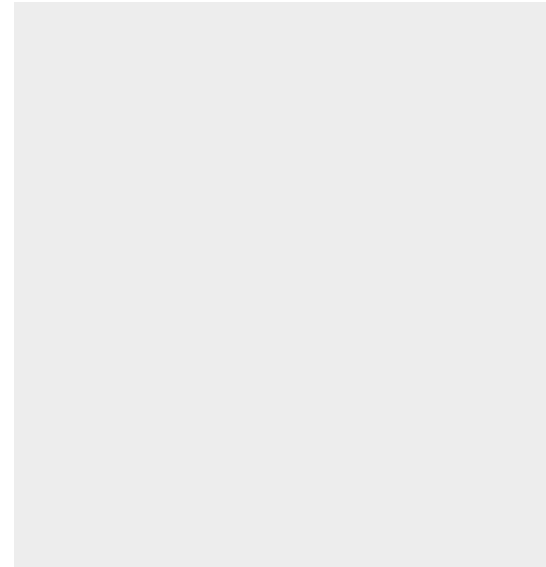
Children and teenagers who are skateboarding enthusiasts visiting the city will want to pack their boards in their luggage when they find out



they can enjoy this activity here at the Cimavilla Skatepark, which has a bowl and a street area with ramps, hubbas, rails, etc. Located next to the Old Fort and the Santa Catalina Artillery Battery, the skatepark offers spectacular views of the sea and the city, an added attraction for parents to consider if they accompany their children to this spot. There's a second skatepark, without a bowl, in Pericones Park, and another indoor one at GuajeSkates Indoor Skatepark & School.

Continuing on with plans for your activity holiday, don't forget the greenways that

start from the very centre of Gijón/Xixón or the 70 kilometres of bike lanes the city has so you can get around safely. There are also numerous parks and gardens that have children's play areas, such as Cabo San Lorenzo Park and Isabel La Católica Park, which has recreational facilities and various animal species roaming free.



A walk along one of the greenways

7 essentials For the whole Family



Filled with wonder at
the aquarium

OUTDOOR RESTAURANTS

A few kilometres from the city, in the rural areas of the county, you'll find a multitude of outdoor restaurants with play areas and games for the little ones and fresh, invigorating cider for parents.

GIJÓN/XIXÓN AQUARIUM BIOPARK

Eels, sturgeons, moray eels, rays, bull sharks, loggerhead turtles and 400 other marine species coexist in the 60 fresh and salt water pools that display the flora and fauna of the world's seas and oceans in detail.

FISHERY EXPERIMENTATION CENTRE (CEP)

Another, lesser-known museum related to marine life is the Fishery Experimentation Centre, on Avenida Príncipe de Asturias, next to El Arbeyal Beach. This centre is in charge of the well-being of the live specimens at the Aquarium, as well as maintaining and renovating the models and collections on display.

ATLANTIC BOTANICAL GARDEN

Not to be missed is this 25-hectare natural museum, the first botanical garden in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. It comprises more than 30,000 plants representing 2,500 species. In addition to its forests and natural gardens, inside the grounds you'll find *El Bosque de los Niños*, a beautiful wooded area for children, as well as a fun maze hedged with laurel trees.

PONIENTE BEACH

There's nothing better than spreading out your towels on this 500m-long city beach. Its waters are perfect for even the youngest in the family to splash around in and for getting started in water sports. It has a children's playground right on the beach which can be enjoyed at any time of the year.

ASTURIAS RAILWAY MUSEUM

The Railway Museum houses the largest collection of preserved historical railway material in all of Spain. During Steam Train Days, historical steam and diesel locomotives are run.

Visitors can ride in old wooden train cars on short tours of the museum, as well as take special guided tours.

MARCO TOPO FAMILY GAME

For those travelling with the family, a fun, playful way to discover the city's history, culture and heritage is the Marco Topo Adventure in Gijón/Xixón, an interactive game that offers a self-guided tour of our most emblematic places: the Marina, Cimavilla, San Lorenzo Beach, the Aquarium, El Molinón Stadium, the Botanical Garden, etc .



Gijón/Xixón in one click

Digital tools to discover Gijón/Xixón from the other side of the screen.

Gijón/Xixón is right within reach via different digital tools that show the city from the other side of the screen. With Story Map Gijón/Xixón you can immerse yourself in the history of the city via your mobile and the maps. Published by Radio Viajera, Gijón/Xixón through the Ages is a series of podcasts that take you around the city on a journey through time. The virtual tours allow you to visit different emblematic locations in the town of Jovellanos without leaving your chair.



Enjoy all this and much more by scanning this code with your mobile.

Self-guided routes with augmented reality content



Download them for free from Google or iOS stores or access them from visitagijon.com.

Go to the points of interest indicated on the app map and, during the tour, don't forget to point your mobile at the plaques on the ground that will let you trigger the AR recreations.



Between Centuries AR Tour

Immerse yourself in the period of industrial development that marked the beginning of the recent history of Gijón/Xixón. You'll find out about the *sardineras* (women who sold sardines through the streets), the old San Lorenzo Beach spas, working-class life in the Celestino Solar Workers' Housing, the merchants of La Merced Street, etc.



Cimavilla AR Tour

Discover the secrets of Gijón's old town through some of its most emblematic local figures. Rambal, some female cigar rollers, a group of seafarers, Xosefa and Gaspar Melchor Jovellanos and more will all show you curious little spots such as a reproduction of the entrance door in the Roman wall or the underground anti-aircraft shelter.



Botanical Secrets

Visit the Gijón/Xixón Atlantic Botanical Garden following the instructions of some peculiar tour guides: the Cuélebre, the Espumeru, the Xana (huge winged serpent-dragon; tiny, chubby-cheeked boy found in the sea foam and mist; water nymph, respectively) and other mythological beings, designed by Gijón artist Ruma Barbero. These characters already appear in *The Seven Wonders of Gijón/Xixón* comic book, available at Infogijón.



Museum of the Asturian People

The mythological characters from *The Seven Wonders of Gijón/Xixón* will also be your hosts at the Museum of the Asturian People, giving you the chance to discover this spot which brings you closer to the customs and way of life of the Asturian people.

visitogijon.com



Chapter 7

Ethnography I: Cider Culture



Chiscar:

to splash (a term widely used on the city's beaches, and also in its cider houses)



Rojo was a miner. A wise-guy with a wry sense of humour, he's a prime example of what's amazing about the character of Gijón people, but big time! He has a lot to tell us about his beloved Gijón/Xixón. Open the app and scan this photo.

Remember that to see Rojo's message you must download our app:



The origin of all things

Water is the origin of all things... or is it? The best thing to do would be to ask the people of Gijón/Xixón, who, okay, enjoy water, but absolutely adore cider. As they say, cider isn't just a drink; it's in their nature and way of existing in the world (their world), a tradition, a ritual, a celebration of life, friendship and fraternity. Everything starts with cider.

There are love relationships that never die. For example, the one the people of Gijón have with their beloved cider. A drink already appreciated by the Astures in its original forms, the Romans, who called it *zythos*, were totally swept away by it, which gave rise to words such as *pomar* or *pumares*

(a traditional apple orchard). Since then, cider has made up part of the Asturian emotional framework. Having a low alcohol content, it's refreshing and healthy ("antipyretic, diuretic and laxative", as would say those who feel the need for a patient information leaflet for everything).



Beyond its curative powers, cider, like the sea, is part of the daily life of the people of Gijón, configured as a way of socializing and making friends that social networks only wish they could recreate.

After all, there is no custom more typical of Gijón than that of having a bottle in the company of friends (no need for explanations; when you drink cider, you're bound to be in good company). This is how our **2nd principle of Gijonomy states it:**

—
“Energy is neither created
nor destroyed, it is shared”
—

There's no better way to understand the importance and all the ramifications of this native drink in the life of Gijón than by visiting the area's *llagares* (cider mills), where you can even participate in an *espicha* (informal party held round the cider barrels), or by going into the cider houses and cider bars when walking round the city. There visitors can try ciders from different cider mills and accompany the *culinos* (glasses of cider) with some of the seafood dishes typical of Gijón's local cuisine, such as *chicharrinos*, *bocartinos*, *parrochines* and *panchinos*, all of them small fish that are usually eaten fried in cider houses.

But, beyond these places, there are other occasions when the cider-making art of the town of Jovellanos can be fully

enjoyed. At Easter, for example, the First Cider of the Year contest is held, in which people attending are invited to savour the first cider to come out of the mills that year, which will be consumed throughout the season. And at any time of the year, the people of Gijón make their own secular procession from *chigre* to *chigre* (cider house to cider house), from mill to mill, where there's no shortage of *pinchos* (finger foods), traditional food... or a good tongue-lashing if you go home too soon.

Summer brings traditional festivals, where cider reigns supreme. But it also brings an event particularly linked to cider: the jam-packed Natural Cider Festival. Held at the end of August, the people of Gijón are joined not only by other Asturians, but also by visitors from

all over Spain. And then in October, the cider calendar brings us closer to *Gijón/Xixón de Sidra* (gijondesidra.wordpress.com), an outstanding 11-day food event in which most of the city's cider houses are twinned with the leading cider mills of Asturias, offering the best ciders along with little portions of tasty dishes.

The county and its cider mills

Apart from dropping in at one of the many cider houses in the city and taking the opportunity to savour the local cuisine, the best way to introduce yourself to the special features of the Asturian drink *par excellence* is to visit one of the county's cider mills to learn about the production process of this ancestral drink while tasting it directly from the barrel.

Natural Cider Festival

Declared of Regional Tourist Interest, this outstanding event is held the last week of August. Among other activities and events, its extensive programme includes the Cider and Apple Market, tastings at the city's cider mills, the Cider Bus routes and even the gathering of thousands of people to try and break the world record for simultaneous cider-pouring, which takes place each year on Poniente Beach.

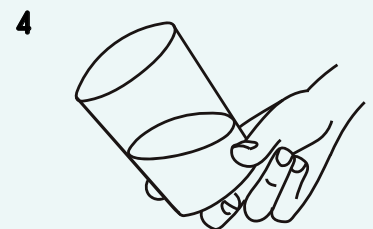
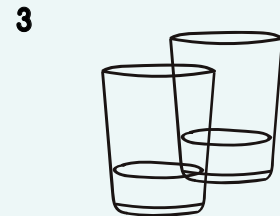
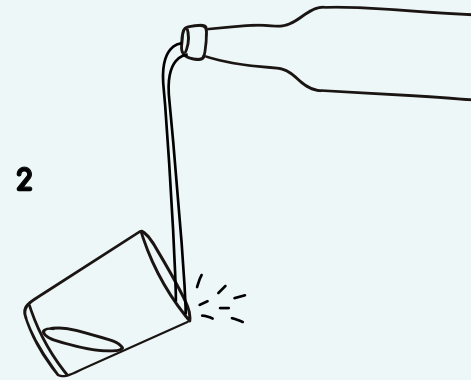
Four essential rules when tasting drinking cider

1. Cider is not ordered by the glass, but by the bottle, which is usually shared. Traditionally, everyone drinks from the same glass, but it is increasingly common for each happy drinker to have their own.

2. To enhance its flavour, cider is poured from a certain height. If you don't dare, ask the waiter or waitress to do it, or ask your mates at the bar, who will surely *echarte un gabitu* (help you out).

3. Cider is served by *culinos* (a small amount of cider when compared to the large glass), which are to be drunk in one go, but leaving a bit in the bottom which, in the case of sharing a glass, is thrown to the ground to clean the glass for the next person.

4. If someone pours the cider and offers you a *culín*, don't keep them waiting. Drink it quickly in one go. If you don't, everyone will know that you are *foriatu* (not from Asturias).



Chapter 8

Ethnography II: Culture and Food



Fortón/a:

big eater, glutton, who needs to eat a lot to feel satisfied; a real fan of stuffing themselves, when not a "professional" overeater.



Some calamari, a bottle of cider and some good laughs in the L'Arena neighbourhood



A fantastic local cuisine

The people of Gijón like to eat, calmly enjoying not only the fresh produce of the land, but also the long after-dinner conversations in good company. That's why, whenever they can, they let themselves be carried away by the flavours, both delicate and strong, of their local cuisine. From the most traditional dishes to the most avant-garde, the city offers an honest selection of dishes that do not mask, but rather enhance, the natural flavours.

Fabada (bean and pork meat stew), *pote asturiano* (pork meat and collard greens stew) and *cachopos* (huge veal cordon bleu) are three emblematic dishes of Asturias that catapulted from the local kingdom to conquer other regions. Nothing new there if we're talking about *fabada* or *pote*, veritable stars of the Asturian table since time immemorial, whose abundant portions never cease to surprise diners.

For its part, the more recent, but just as typical, *cachopo* captures the attention of all those visiting us due to its size and

heartiness. When eating it, it's essential to follow the **8th principle of Gijonomy:**


 "The area of a cachopo is equal to the base times the height, divided by two."


In short, a dish to be shared between two or more diners, if you don't want to be called a *fartón* (see Glossary).



But in Gijón/Xixón there's a whole world of flavours that goes beyond these traditional dishes. A simple glance at restaurant menus and typical Gijón dishes shows the eternal seafaring nature of the city, as well as the generosity of the Bay of Biscay, which daily fills the fish markets with tasty rock fish and the most delicious shellfish on the planet.

Clear proof of this are the portions of *chicharrinos* (small horse mackerel), *bocartinos* (anchovies), *parrochines* (small sardines) and *panchinos* (small sea bream) that are usually savoured in the many cider bars in the city, accompanied by a bottle of cider. In this way, like the star in a good movie, local seafood products always shine in those baked

dishes that barely use any seasoning to enhance the flavour and texture of fish such as *besugo* (sea bream), *pixín* (monkfish) and *sargo*. *Gallo relleno de mariscos* (John Dory stuffed with shellfish), *congrío con arbeyinos* (conger eel with peas), *pixín con bugre* (monkfish with lobster) and *chopa a la sidra* (black sea bream in cider) are other traditional dishes that delight even the most demanding diners.

The *tiñosu* and *golondru*, (as scorpionfish and gurnard are called locally) are two rock fish that are highly prized in Gijón/Xixón. They are usually stewed with potatoes, garlic, onion, olive oil, white wine, parsley and paprika. *Salmonetes* (red mullets) are also rock fish caught

near the coast. They are commonly eaten fried or grilled, the latter being the ideal way to prepare them to maximize their flavour.

But fish is not the only thing you'll find in Gijón fish markets. Cephalopods and shellfish don't settle for playing second fiddle; jig-caught squid and octopus from the rocks right off the coast also figure prominently among the local specialities.

And finally shellfish come on the scene. In the wholesale and retail markets, restaurants and cider houses of Gijón/Xixón, there is no shortage of *langostas* (spiny lobsters), *bogavantes/bugres* (lobsters), *percebes* (goose barnacles), *almejas* (clams), *quisquillas* (brown

shrimp), *bigaros* (periwinkles), *andariques* (velvet crabs), *cigalas* (langoustines), *centollos* (spider crabs) and *ñocles* (brown crabs). But, without a doubt, the two shellfish the people of Gijón most identify with are *llámpares* (limpets) and, above all, *oricios* (sea urchins). In addition to trying the latter in restaurants, as visitors usually do, you can also enjoy them back home thanks to the tins sold in the supermarkets and specialized food shops of Gijón, the first place to begin using this preservation technique. A delicious food souvenir that lets you prolong the flavour of the Gijón/Xixón sea, much the same way you do when you comfortably stretch out on the sofa to watch your favourite film again.

As well as the sea and its salty taste, Gijón/Xixón also stands out for its sweet tooth. The city boasts of being one of the Spanish towns with the highest ratio of pastry shops per inhabitant, which already says a lot about its sweet-toothed tradition. Proof of this are the many confectionery specialities found in Gijón's cuisine, including the famous, ever so rich and sweet Asturian rice pudding. Also *charlota* (nougat tart), *frixuelos* (crepes) and *casadielles*, delicious sweet pasties stuffed with walnuts and/or almonds and anisette. Let's not forget the youngest speciality of the city's confectionery: *tarta gijonesa*. Popularized in the 1970s, it consists of a cake covered in nougat cream and is found in practically all the city's pastry shops and restaurants. In addition to these specialities, there is also room on the confectionery counters for other traditional sweets, such as



tejas, *florentinas* (two types of thin, crispy biscuits) and *pelayos*, made with apple and marzipan. Delicious excuses to include the Gijón/Xixón pastry shops on your walks around the city and so discover the *llambiión* (sweet-toothed) nature of its residents and the sweeter side of this city with a seafaring spirit where, without a doubt, you can eat exceptionally well.

Rightly deserving a prominent place on the table are Asturian cheeses,

which manage to bring the region's stockbreeding tradition to your palate. Not surprisingly, 42 varieties of artisan cheeses are produced in Asturias, which makes this destination truly a cheese paradise. Among them, the most popular are Cabrales, Afuega'l Pitu, Gamonéu and Casín cheeses, all of them with Protected Designation of Origin, as well as Los Beyos cheese, with Protected Geographical Indication.

What do I order in...?

Each season has its own seasonal products, the healthiest and tastiest at that particular time of year. Here we offer you a small guide so that you'll know when you should ask for some of these delicious foods in restaurants and cider houses or in the city markets and food stores:



Spring

Menestra

In spring, vegetables are at their best, which makes vegetable stew an ideal dish to be enjoyed in all its splendour at that time of year.

Bocartes

Anchovies, together with *parroches* (sardines), come one season ahead of the arrival of *sardinas* (large sardines/pilchards).

Llámpares (limpets)

Typical of the rocky coastal waters of Asturias, these single-shelled molluscs dodge the sun and look for salt water. They are usually prepared with beans, stewed with paprika and, above all, with cider, and just a touch of chili pepper which makes them absolutely delicious.

And don't forget the *fabes de mayo* (broad beans)...



Summer

Sardines (large sardines/pilchards)

In the warmer seasons, this oily fish accumulates a large amount of fat, which accentuates its flavour and aroma.

Bonito Fish

If there is a summer product par excellence in Gijón/Xixón, that is *bonito* (skipjack or striped tuna), which can be prepared in numerous ways: grilled, in tomato sauce, in cider, stewed, pickled... and, of course, bonito loaf, one of the most typical and popular dishes in Asturian cuisine.

Pulpu de pedreru (octopus from the rocky waters right off the coast)

At this time of year, one very typical Gijón dish is slow-cooked: *pulpín con patatines* (octopus with little potatoes). Delicious! Other variants of this dish are *pulpu con berces* and *pulpu amarisco* (octopus with collard greens and with shellfish, respectively).

And also: jig-caught squid, Somió tomatoes, red fruits, etc.



Autumn

Costañas (chestnuts)

With the arrival of autumn, chestnuts begin to fall and end up ripening on the ground. In November, the *amagüestu* takes place. A deeply rooted tradition in Asturias, this festival pairs up roasted chestnuts and freshly made sweet cider for the whole family to enjoy.

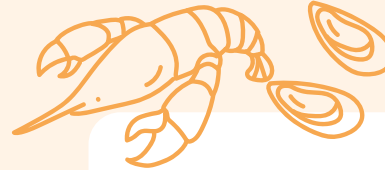
Callos (tripe)

The cold air accompanying autumn makes stews and hotpots very tempting. Outstanding among these is tripe, a typical dish in traditional Asturian cuisine. It's normally served in a clay dish, piping hot with a touch of chili pepper.

Verdines (Flageolet beans)

These beans stand out for their small size, their pale green colour and their delicate flavour. *Verdines* combine perfectly with fish and shellfish, although they're also usually prepared with mushrooms or game meats.

And also: wild mushrooms, nuts, etc.



Winter

Shellfish

Tradition says that native shellfish is better in the months that have an "r" in their name (in Spanish), although in fact the availability and quality varies according to the species and the close seasons. In any case, the coldest months coincide with the best time for some shellfish such as *centollos* (spider crabs), *ñocles* (brown crabs), *andariques* (velvet crabs) and *percebes* (goose barnacles).

Oricios (sea urchins)

During the colder months you can enjoy *oricios*, which are usually eaten raw or slightly steamed, although they can also be prepared in stews or with rice. *Pastel de oricios* (sea urchin loaf) is a local creation, which goes to show just how much Gijón/Xixón loves this food.

Fabada and pote asturiano (bean and pork meats stew; pork meats and collard greens stew)

So characteristic of our region, both dishes have traditionally been used to combat the cold, so they're eaten more frequently in winter, although they can be enjoyed throughout the year.

And also: sea bream, cod, etc.

Chapter 9

Commerce: Shopping in Gijón/Xixón



Andarica:
Velvet crab.



Javi has a passion for crafts and his life is linked to them, but let him be the one to tell you about it...

Remember that to see Javi's message you must download our app:



Friendly local trade

Gijón/Xixón just wouldn't be Gijón/Xixón without its local trade and that personalised relationship of trust and affection established on a day-to-day basis between merchants and customers. A sustainable, ecological consumption that drives the local economy, in keeping with the committed spirit of its residents. For their part, those visiting the city will find numerous shops specialising in food, culture, crafts, etc. which will allow them to take a bit of Gijón/Xixón back home.

Local trade makes Gijón/Xixón a committed city that bases its commerce on sustainability, inclusion and roots. Rapport, friendliness and mutual acquaintances and connections create a model of an organic city, clearly seen by

all the new shops that have opened up in recent years. And so it is that in the town of Jovellanos you'll always find plenty of opportunities to go shopping, whether you're enjoying a day at the beach or a long walk around the city centre.

Ana will always welcome you with a smile and the best quality products at her fish market in the Mercado del Sur (South Market)



Luisa, a German exchange student, has gone shopping. Veni doesn't know German, but he really doesn't need to!

Gijón/Xixón's shops and markets make it easy for visitors to enjoy all kinds of products and services during their stay in the city, while also giving them the chance to take the most diverse souvenirs back home with them. There are nine areas that make up the commercial map of Gijón/Xixón. Two of these, the Centre and La Calzada/Natahoyo, are organized according to the open shopping centre concept. The rest are: Constitución, Llano, Pumarín, Pablo Iglesias, L'Arena and El Coto/Viesques.

In addition, there's an ample offer of cultural products. Just a walk through the city centre is enough to discover music shops, charming bookstores, art galleries with works within the reach of any budget, etc. And as far as design and crafts are concerned, the different commercial hubs, where long-established shops stand side by side with more innovative ones, allow visitors to browse shop windows showcasing fashion, high jewelry and interior design and decoration, while the Crafts and Organic Produce Market offers original works by local artists and craftspeople.

All this without forgetting the numerous street markets held all throughout the year in different areas of Gijón/Xixón. Outstanding among these are LABSshop, an incredible showcase of art and fashion design which brings together a large group of independent creators, designers and publishers; MENAX, the Xixón Christmas Market; and ArteGijón, a consolidated craft fair where you'll find the most creative craft objects.



Handcrafted solutions just in case you want to give your mozu/a (guy/girl) a special gift

MERCADO DEL SUR (SOUTH MARKET)

Inaugurated in 1899, the farmers' market is located in a pentagonal building with a metal structure which occupies an entire block between Plaza del 6 de Agosto and Plaza Europa. It continues to conserve the essence of its beginnings, offering its customers the best products in the area with the close, trusting relationship found between those who have been doing business together for years. Pedro, a fishmonger from Cimavilla whose entire life has been linked to fishing, explains it like this:

"This is what people like. The one-on-one relationship, something personal. Here you've got fruit, fish, bread, meat and everything's top quality"

This is the South Market: an everyday luxury.

EL RASTRO (THE FLEAMARKET)

Every Sunday, locals and visitors can enjoy *El Rastro*, the largest and busiest street market in Asturias. Located behind the Palacio de Deportes (Sports Arena) near El Molinón Stadium, its stalls offer everything from antiques to the most varied food products and second-hand clothing, much to the delight of bargain seekers and vintage collectors alike. A truly charming gathering place.

CRAFTS AND ORGANIC PRODUCE MARKET

Consolidated as a regional food, crafts and tourist landmark, the Crafts and Organic Produce Market is held in the Plaza Mayor the second weekend of each month. This is a must visit to enjoy local, ecological, fair trade and native Asturian products, as well as different activities linked to traditional Asturian culture.

Crafts and Organic Produce Market



Chapter 10

Physical Education: Anatomy in Motion





Daniela is a skater and a surfer, no less. Open the app and scan this photo for her to tell you how she enjoys the sea, her friends and her favourite sports.

Remember that to see her message you must download our app:

Shared energy

In Gijón/Xixón, energy is neither created nor destroyed, it is shared. Few things feed the soul of the people of Gijón more than laughing with friends on *Cuesta'l Cholo* (Cholo's Hill), taking a dip with the gang, playing football on the beach, sharing cider or a *cachopo*... Faithful to the 2nd principle of Gijonomy, those visiting the city can also join in this way of celebrating life and enjoy the wide range of experiences it offers, all in good company.

Strolling along the Muro (beachfront promenade), playing a spur-of-the-moment football match on the beach, swimming in open water, surfing, sailing, running, paddle tennis, etc. Especially in the company of others, the people of Gijón love active leisure activities, which

go far beyond the classic walking paths and cycling routes. Water activities, golf, kayaking, and even participating in apple-picking make up just a few of the offers in this city that knows no roof but the sky. Gijón's mild climate and stable atmosphere let visitors conquer its skies in a hot-air

Paragliding over Serín Beach from Colina del Cuervo (Crow Hill)

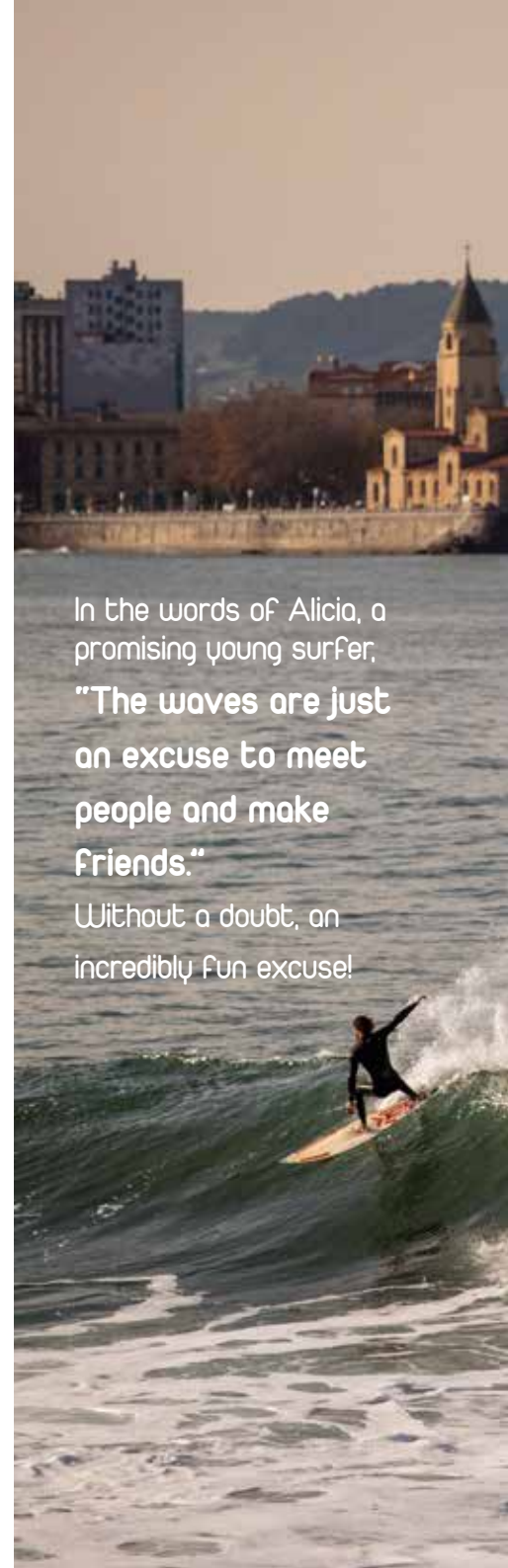
balloon or in a paraglider. You can enjoy paragliding throughout the year, either solo or in tandem with a professional. Another type of air sport available is paramotoring, which is suitable for people with reduced mobility. And, as already mentioned, those who want to go higher still can do so in a hot air balloon, an original means of transport available first thing in the morning or early in the evening, the best times of the day for these flights.



The waters of the Bay of Biscay

The Cantabrian Sea, as the Bay of Biscay is known in Spain, not only provides Gijón/Xixón with rich seafood for its gastro delights and a dozen beaches where you can relax and stroll, but also a vast setting in which to enjoy sports. For example, you can do both sport fishing and spearfishing in a wide coastal strip of the county. And dinghy sailing, one of the star water activities, can be done throughout the year. Windsurfing and sea kayaking are also activities widely enjoyed at any time by enthusiasts of all ages. Try jet-skiing or opt for more innovative experiences such as wakeboarding (water skiing on a board) or flyboarding (flying over the water using a water jetpack), an ideal option for those looking for a more daring adrenaline rush. And if the idea is to see Gijón/Xixón from a different perspective, the one provided from the Bay of Biscay, you can rent boats to go fishing, sailing or to simply cruise around.

Another very popular activity is surfing at San Lorenzo Beach, given its ideal conditions for getting started in the skill of catching waves. There are several surf, bodyboard and stand-up paddle schools. Because, okay, surfing is an individual sport, but those who enjoy this sport also find it to be a stimulating shared experience.



In the words of Alicia, a promising young surfer,
“The waves are just an excuse to meet people and make friends.”

Without a doubt, an incredibly fun excuse!

The Church of San Pedro watches the surfers at San Lorenzo Beach



Inland

The outskirts of the city are also quite frequented by the people of Gijón, who spend much of their free time exploring them on foot or by bike. **Five greenways** let you enjoy riverside forests, farmlands, meadows, cliffs and beaches. There's a wide range of routes suitable for the elderly, families with children and people with reduced mobility.

Besides hiking and cycling, in the city surroundings you can also enjoy activities such as paintball or the traditional *mayanza*, the moment during the cider-making process when the

apples are chopped up and pressed. The options are rounded out with a wide variety of guided excursions, including mountain, ethnographic, and bird, bear and other wildlife-watching routes.

In addition, a few kilometres from the city centre, golf lovers have four golf courses at their disposal: two municipal, La Llorea and El Tragamón, and two private, the Real Club de Golf de Castiello (Castiello Royal Golf Club) and Deva Pitch & Putt Golf.



Paragliding from Pico San Martín, or Picu'l Sol

Beyond the coast

Pico San Martín, or Picu'l Sol, is the usual take-off spot for paragliding flights which offer a beautiful panoramic view of the city of Gijón/Xixón. In fact, if the weather is good, you can also see Oviedo/Uviéu, the Sierra de L'Aramo, Mount Naranco and Avilés.

Here...there's something for everyone!

There are those who go swimming in the pool every day, play indoor football with friends or participate in paddle tennis tournaments. But there are also many athletes of all ages who do competitive sports in different categories. Even those sports not traditionally played here, such as rugby, baseball and American football, have already taken root among the locals.

Much more than sports

The people of Gijón love to play sports and have many facilities for doing so, both public and private. Sports clubs of a social nature deserve a special mention. There's a long tradition of these clubs in the city, where a large part of the population, especially families, exercise and spend their free time. These benchmark clubs include the Real Grupo de Cultura Covadonga (one of the largest in Spain!), the Santa Olaya Swimming Club, the Tennis Club or the Real Club Astur de Regatas (Royal Asturian Regatta Club), among others.



The girls of the Gijón Rugby Club



Eva and Ana enjoy their training session on the *kilometrín*, right by the Piles River

THE *KILOMETRÍN*

The *kilometrín* (little kilometre) is a track that for many years measured only 975m (hence its name). Located in the vicinity of El Molinón Football stadium, it daily receives a great many of the city's runners who give it their all.

Chapter 11

Recreation Time

Gijón/Xixón never stops

Cinema, music, dance, literature, performing arts, alternative leisure activities, local cuisine, sports...throughout the year, the city's agenda is full of celebrations, festivals and cultural events for every taste, budget and audience. They're just one more way to experience Gijón/Xixón. Enjoy!





Tsunami Xixon Festival
Stage at Laboral, City of Culture

FESTIVALS

In Gijón/Xixón, as in all of Asturias, an endless number of festivities, events and celebrations take place throughout the year. The ones we call “fiestas de prau” or “fiestas de prao” (but never “de prado”, be careful, because that would really grate on our ears!) are especially representative. These traditional outdoor festivals are held in the parishes and city neighbourhoods between May and September. Replete with cider and live music, they usually attract a crowd of area residents and visitors.



EVENTS festejos.gijon.es

ANTROXU

Shrove Tuesday/Carnival, Festival of regional tourist interest. February/March.

NOCHE DE SAN XUAN

St John's Eve. Bonfire, music and traditional dances. 24 June.

LA FIESTA DEL CIELO

Air show and activities related to aeronautics. July.

SEMANA GRANDE (BIG WEEK)

Week-long festivities to celebrate Our Lady of Begoña, our patron saint. August.

DÍA D'ASTURIES IN XIXÓN

Asturias Day in Gijón. Festival of national tourist interest. First Sunday in August.

NATURAL CIDER FESTIVAL

Festival of regional tourist interest. August.

CINEMA

Any brilliant city could not fail to have a high-profile festival celebrating the seventh art and Gijón is no exception, having enjoyed FICX every autumn for six decades now. If you like films, there's no better excuse for a getaway to Gijón/Xixón. For over a week, FICX turns the Jovellanos Theater into the city's centre for film buffs. The festival's programme includes the screening of the most recent independent films in different parts of the city, as well as courses, round tables, meetings with directors and live music. A renowned event not to be missed, year after year it attracts the most daring and innovative professionals on the international film scene and an enthusiastic audience which is increasingly larger and more demanding. Along with FICX, it's worth mentioning the annual Laboral Cinemateca, the film series organized within the framework of the Gijón con Ciencia science outreach programme, as well as the versatility of other festivals dedicated to documentary films (Docuxixón), short films (Cortogijón), social-consciousness films (MUSOC) and B-series films (Peor... impossible! It doesn't come any worse!). And...Action!

AND ACTION!



**Gijón International
Film Festival**



EVENTS

MUSOC

Social-consciousness and Human Rights Film Show of Asturias.
January.
musocasturias.org

CORTOGIJÓN

Gijón/Xixón Short Film Festival.
May.
cortogijon.com

DOCUXIXÓN

Documentary screening cycle.
June.
gijon.es/es/eventos/docuxixon

PEOR... IMPOSIBLE!

Low-budget and B film screening event.
August-September.
<https://www.gijon.es/es/turismo/peor-imposible>

FICX

Xixón International Film Festival.
November.
gijonfilmfestival.com



MUSIC

The people of Gijón love music and, fortunately, their love is reciprocated. The city is famous for the countless festivals, of all musical styles, which it hosts throughout the year. Outstanding among these are the eclectic Gijón Sound Festival, which is held in different areas of the city, and the L.E.V. Festival, which offers a selection of the best electronic music and the most experimental visual arts. All summer festivals and festivities prominently feature music: *Metrópoli* and *Semana Negra* (Noir Week) combine their cultural programming with daily concerts; *Tsunami Xixón* has become the great Asturian rock festival in its own right; *Euroyeyé* has been attracting mods from all over the world for over 20 years; and *Semana Grande* (Big Week) includes daily free concerts in its programming. And starting in autumn, jazz and gospel take over at festivals featuring great international stars. The *Danza Xixón* workshops and shows and the *Festival de Música Antigua* (Early Music Festival) round out a flawlessly bold and varied musical offer.



EVENTS

GIJÓN SOUND FESTIVAL

An eclectic, urban music gathering.
gijonsoundfestival.com

L.E.V. FESTIVAL

Electronic music and visual arts.
April/May.
levfestival.com

FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA ANTIGUA [Early Music Festival]

Classical music festival. July.
gijon.es/es/eventos/festival-musica-antigua-gijon

GIJÓN LIFE

Concert series. July.
gijonlife.com/

TSUNAMI XIXÓN

Rock festival. August.
tsunamixixon.com

EUROYEYÉ

Mod and sixties culture festival.
August.
euroyeye.es

JAZZ XIXÓN

Jazz festival. November.
teatrojovellanos.com

FESTIVAL DE GÓSPEL

Gospel music event. December.
teatrojovellanos.com

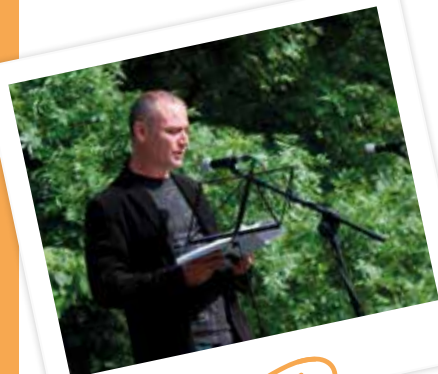


DANCE

Danza Xixón brings the most contemporary expressions of the art of movement, in its broadest sense, to various stages and settings in the city, including the street (could there be a more dramatic spot?).

LITERATURE

For decades, Gijón/Xixón has maintained a solid relationship with literature which has only grown stronger over the years. With its book clubs, presentations, readings and some of the most charming bookshops in the country, the city breathes literature everywhere. Here to stay, the budding poetry festival POEX features the different poetic languages in their various artistic expressions with the presence of the most outstanding national poets. But, without a doubt, if there is one literary event in the city you shouldn't miss, that is *Semana Negra* (Noir Week), a world pioneering multidisciplinary event that received the Spanish Gold Medal of Merit in Fine Arts in 2021. After more than 30 years, this festival revolving around noir fiction is the longest-running literary, cultural and activist gathering in Spain. Its activities include both cultural acts and various fun events, such as concerts, markets, bar terraces, fairground attractions, etc. Already considered a classic, Noir Week is a truly essential event in Gijón's summer calendar.



EVENTS

DANZA XIXÓN

Exhibition of contemporary dance and movement arts, a benchmark in northern Spain. October.

gijon.es/es/eventos/danza-xixon

EVENTS

POEX

Poetry gathering. March/April.

facebook.com/poexixon

FERIA DEL LIBRO DE XIXÓN (XIXÓN BOOK FAIR)

Books presentations and a variety of other activities. June.

gijon.es/es/eventos/feria-del-libro-de-gijonxixon

SEMANA NEGRA (NOIR WEEK)

Literary, cultural and festive event. July.

semananegra.org

PERFORMING ARTS

Gijón/Xixón is an ideal place for the performing arts, as evidenced by the meticulous efforts taken in the annual programming of events at the Jovellanos Theatre and the Laboral, City of Culture, or by the fact that the city is headquarters for the School of Dramatic Arts of the Principality of Asturias (ESAD). Among the theatrical activities offered, FETEN (European Performing Arts Fair for Children) stands out for its originality. Consolidated as the major gathering in Spain for professionals in this field, it brings together almost a hundred theatre companies which turn urban areas into a live laboratory where they can experiment with the latest creative trends.



Photo by David Álvarez López
<https://flickr.com/photos/94814431@N02/10634971754>

EVENTS

FETEN

European Performing Arts Fair for Children. February.

feten.gijon.es

JOVELLANOS THEATRE

gijon.es/es/directorio/teatro-jovellanos

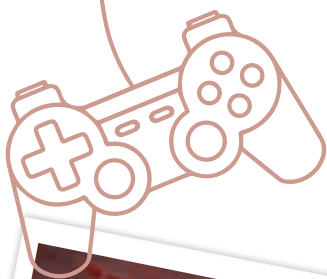
LA LABORAL THEATRE

laboralciudaddelacultura.com



ALTERNATIVE LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Gijón/Xixón has always opted for alternative culture. Proof of this is the work carried out by the *Abierto Hasta el Amanecer* (Open til Dawn) youth association, which since 1996 has implemented a leisure programme of a socio-educational nature during weekend evenings and nights. As for cultural events, the *Metrópoli* media culture and entertainment festival brings together food and current trends, music of all styles, science fiction cinema, etc. covering all branches of entertainment: comic books, video games, concerts, exhibitions, cinema, television, children's activities, board games, extreme sports, Star Wars, Cosplay, and more. In other words, geek paradise. In addition, the city's programming has in recent years included *CometCom*, the young people's convention for alternative culture and leisure. Leader among the alternative fairs in the region, it represents a veritable invasion of video games, comic books, cinema, cosplay, K-pop, etc., a culture maker with everything related to the virtual world.



EVENTS

METROPÓLIS GIJÓN

Media Culture and Entertainment Festival. June/July.

metropoligijon.com

COMETCON

Youth convention for alternative culture and leisure. September.

cometcon.org

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

FIDMA

International Trade Fair of Asturias. August.

feriasturias.es

CSIO 5 STARS

International Equestrian Competition. August/September.

hipico.gijon.es

GIJÓN/XIXÓN DE SIDRA (GIJÓN/XIXÓN TURNS OUT FOR CIDER)

Food festival in cider houses. October.

gijondesidra.wordpress.com

GIJÓN/XIXÓN PINCHOS (Finger Foods) CONTEST

Food festival. November.

gijondepinchos.wordpress.com

MERCAPLANA

Christmas Fair for Children and Young People. December-January.

camaragijon.es

Chapter 12

Nearby Tourist Destinations

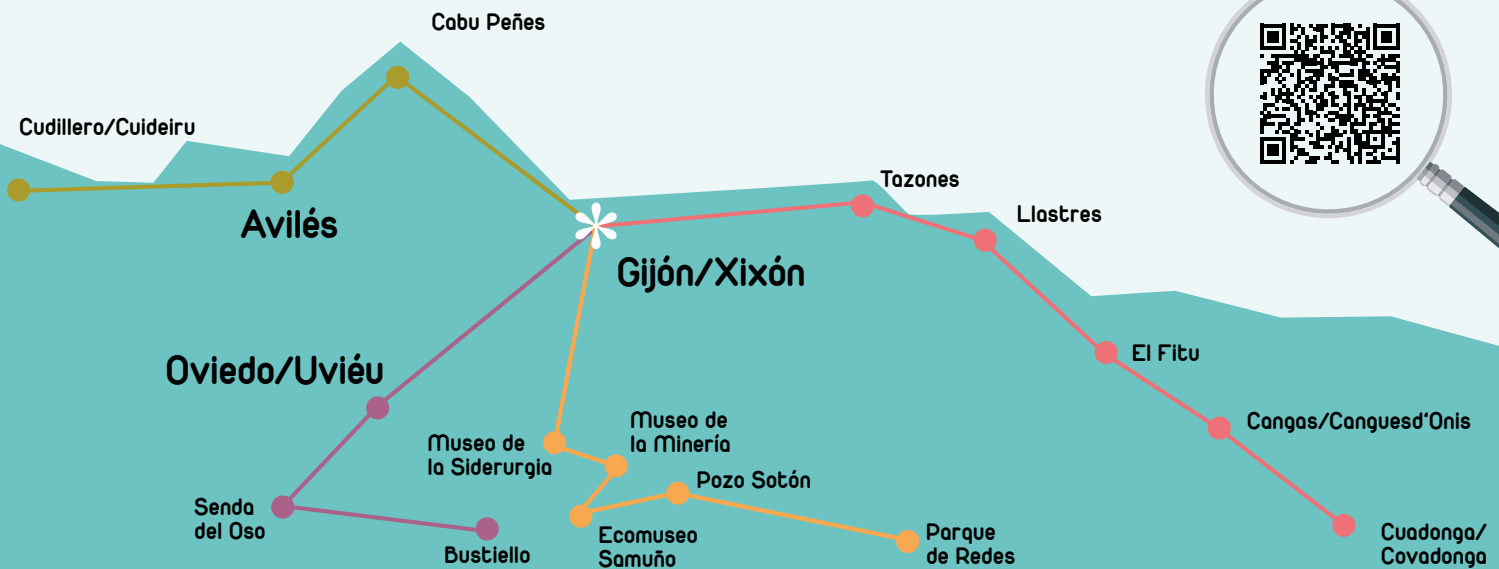


Discover paradise from Gijón/Xixón

In addition to feeling a strong connection with their Gijón/Xixón roots, the residents of the town of Jovellanos make a show of their Asturian identity whenever they can. And that's why they propose you discover the charms of the region starting from the city's privileged location. An ideal starting point from which to enjoy paradise in all its splendour.

Four routes to discover Asturias

- WESTERN COAST
- CENTRAL MOUNTAINS
- EASTERN COAST / PEAKS OF EUROPE
- COAL MINING AREA





DID YOU KNOW?

The Western Coast Protected Landscape is a narrow strip of landscape whose large expanses of meadowland and grassland are open to the sea. Its invaluable sections of coast are quite difficult to reach.

WESTERN COAST CABU PEÑES-AVILÉS-CUIDEIRU

Located in the counties of Valdés and Cudillero/Cuideiru, the Western Coast Protected Landscape marks the final destination of this almost 90km (one-way) route which discovers the beauty of the Asturian coast and some emblematic towns in the Principality. Starting from Gijón/Xixón, you have to head towards Cabu Peñas, passing through the fishing towns of Candás and Luanco/Lluanco, where its lovely beach and Maritime Museum await.

Cabu Peñas is the northernmost point of Asturias, a beautiful landscape

of cliffs about 100 metres high with spectacular views. From there, and after stopping to see the long sandy seashore of Xagó, the route leads to Avilés, where you'll surely be surprised by its old town, considered one of the best preserved in the north of the country; its estuary (don't miss the *rula* or wholesale fish market); and the Niemeyer Centre, the only building in Spain designed by this Brazilian architect. After walking around Avilés, the route continues through other areas of interest: Salinas Beach, one of the Asturian beaches tourists find most

attractive and which also has a unique open-air museum devoted to anchors; San Esteban de Pravia, where the mouth of the Nalón River takes centre stage; Somao, with its *Indiano*-style mansions, built by Asturians who had emigrated to the Caribbean to seek their fortune and then returned; and Aguilar Beach. And at last, after the beautiful, rugged northern coastline, the seafaring village of Cudillero/Cuideiru appears as the grand finale to the route, one of the most photographed coastal towns in the country.



Bustiello mining town

DID YOU KNOW?

This route lets you discover and savour traditional products and dishes such as *Afuega'l Pitu* cheese, *pote de castañas* (chestnut and pork meats stew), *cerdero a la estaca* (spit-roasted lamb) and the famous Asturian *carbayones* (almond pastries).

CENTRAL MOUNTAINS

UVIÉU-SENDA DEL OSO-BUSTIELLO

This excursion into the Asturian Central Mountains discovers both art and nature in a beautiful, winding itinerary where the peaks rise into view. The first leg of this 145km circular route connects Gijón/Xixón to Oviedo/Uviéu, where it's worth a stop to visit the pre-Romanesque Churches of San Julián de los Prados, Santa María del Naranco and San Miguel de Lillo. Another pre-Romanesque gem is the Church of San Pedro de Nora, which stands a little further on, in Las Regueras, a few kilometres from the Meandros del Nora Viewpoint, which can be reached from Priañes. The next stop

is the *Senda del Oso* (Bear Path), a 33km greenway of which you only need to walk a short 6km stretch to reach the *Cercado Osero* (Bear Enclosure). After the walk, the route continues by car up the valley to Valdemurio Reservoir, which you can reach from Bárzana, a particularly attractive spot in the autumn months. The entire way up to L'Altu la Cobertoria offers splendid panoramic views of the Quirós valley and the Ubiñas Massif. If the weather is good, this is the ideal area for enjoying a picnic and getting your second wind. After returning to the road, it's time to take the pass down towards La Pola

(Llena) and Bustiello (Mieres), where you can visit the very interesting *Poblado Minero* Interpretation Centre to find out what an Asturian mining town was like in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



DID YOU KNOW?

On La Griega Beach, in Colunga, there's a path just over half a kilometre long that takes you to some of the largest ichnites, or dinosaur tracks, ever found in the world.

EASTERN COAST/ PEAKS OF EUROPE

TAZONES-LLASTRES-EL FITU-CANGUES
D'ONÍS - CUADONGA/ COVADONGA

Along its 114 kilometres, this route towards eastern Asturias discovers sea and mountains, with the *Picos de Europa* (Peaks of Europe) rising up all along the way. The first stop is the charming fishing village of Tazones, the historical spot where Carlos I disembarked when reaching Spain. Moving on, the Ría de Villaviciosa Partial Nature Reserve showcases one of the best preserved estuaries along the Cantabrian coast, an area of tremendous environmental

value. Villaviciosa calls for a quiet walk through its historic centre and a stop at the nearby Church of San Salvador de Valdediós ("*El Conventín*"), an Asturian pre-Romanesque gem located 9 kilometres from the town. The route heads back toward the sea to Lastres, considered one of the loveliest towns in Spain, and the nearby Jurassic Museum of Asturias (MUJA), a journey back to the world of dinosaurs. On the way to Arriondas/Les Arriendes, you come to El

Fitu Viewpoint, with a spectacular view of both the eastern Asturian coast and the *Picos de Europa*. The last leg of the route takes you to the bridge over the Sella River, Cangas de Onís/Cangues d'Onís and Covadonga/Cuadonga, where the cave, the basilica and the beautiful lakes await.



Tanes Reservoir

DID YOU KNOW?

You can visit an active mine and tour its galleries. If going underground doesn't bother you, sign up for a guided tour of the emblematic Sotón Pit, located in the town of San Martín del Rey Aurelio.

COAL MINING AREA

IRON AND STEEL MUSEUM - MINING MUSEUM - SAMUÑO ECOMUSEUM - SOTÓN PIT - REDES PARK

Inland Asturias is by definition mining land, but it's also an area with beautiful landscapes and great ecological value that holds gems such as Redes Nature Park, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. This 95-kilometre route leaves Gijón/Xixón heading to La Felguera, where the Iron and Steel Museum (MUSI) is located, one of the best examples of the Nalón Valley's industrial past. The next stop at the Samuño Ecomuseum, at the old San

Luis Pit, includes a two-kilometre ride on a mining train. Mining continues to play a leading role in El Entrego, where the Mining Museum (MUMI) is located. Here you can see a reproduction of a shaft mouth and the cage that takes miners down into the mine. From there, the route leads to Entrialgo (Laviana/Llaviana) and a 17th-century rural mansion, the birthplace of writer Armando Palacio Valdés. After this stop, nature gains prominence in Rioseco/Rusecu

(Sobrescobio), a town nestled between the Tanes and Rusecu Reservoirs and the gateway to Redes Nature Park. Once there, we strongly recommend you visit the Water Interpretation Centre and Redes Interpretation Centre, walk along the *Ruta del Alba* (Alba River Route) and discover La Nalona Spring, source of the Nalón River, in Tarna Pass.

Glossary

Essential vocabulary for getting inside what Gijón/Xixón's all about

Acutar: reserve, save a place (The "Acutáu" sign on a restaurant table makes it clear that it's reserved. Just find another one!)

A ESGAYA:
a lot, abundant, in great quantity.

Afayadizu/a: welcoming, pleasant, nice; a person, place or thing that makes you feel comfortable, at home.

Amagüestu: action of roasting chestnuts; traditional festival centred around roasted chestnuts and sweet cider.

Andarica: velvet crab.

Antroxu: Shrove Tuesday, Carnival. It also refers to the part of the *gochu* (pig) given on that occasion to those neighbours who didn't slaughter pigs or to those you want to give a present to.

Arcu la vieya: rainbow.

Babayu: person who says *babayaes* (foolish, stupid things); a foolish, stupid, smug person, who shows off without knowing what they're talking about (a much loved insult in Asturias).

Ballena (ver la ballena): tell someone to get lost, clear off. Literally meaning "to see the whale", the expression has its origins in 1895, when the steamer *Sultán* found a dead whale, which was then moved to a cove in El Rinconín, causing great interest and excitement among the local residents.

Banduyu: big belly, paunch; person with a potbelly.

Cachopu: typical Asturian dish of stratospheric proportions, made up of two veal fillets stuffed with cheese, ham or other foods; it has its own principle of Gijonomy (like it really wouldn't?!).

Caleyá: alleyway or short, narrow street; mountain road, country road.

Carbayón/a: nickname given to people from Oviedo; pastry made from almonds.

Cascayu: native word to refer to the game of hopscotch.

Chigre: establishment where cider is sold, cider house or pub.

ESPIGHA: action of opening a barrel of cider. By extension, it refers to any informal party held round the cider barrels, where you eat, drink and enjoy yourself in good company.

Chiscar: splash (a term widely used on the city's beaches, and also in cider houses).

Coger en cuellu: pick up (a child), cradle (a child) in your arms.

Collaciu/a: friend, mate.

Cuélebre: a legendary creature from Asturian mythology in the shape of a winged serpent-dragon which is always up to no good.

Curiosu/a: good-looking, well-proportioned; clean, well-groomed.

Cutu: cold; If you ask about the weather in Asturias and someone answers you with the typical Asturian weather report phrase, "*Fai un cutu qu'escarabaya'l pelleyu.*" (It's freezing cold.), be sure to put a fleece jacket in your suitcase.

Duernu: container where the apple juice is collected during pressing; *sidra del duernu* is freshly pressed apple juice, sweet cider.

Emburriar: push (a very useful term to know which way to open a door).

Escamplar: (weather) clear up, clouds disappear from the sky (it does sometimes happen).

Esfamiáu/oda: very hungry, starving; weak, puny, with a hungry look.

Espoxigar: grow, develop, improve health-wise.

Faboda: typical Asturian bean and pork meats dish par excellence which needs no further introduction; if it's accompanied by cider, there's no better fuel ("*Con fabes y sidrina nun fae falta gasolina.*" With beans and cider, there's no need for petrol).

Faltosu/a: a rude, disrespectful, annoying person (insult very much to the taste of Asturians).

Fame: hunger; As the saying well points out, there is only one antidote for *fame*, apart from eating, of course: "*Cuerpu tumbáu fame resiste.*" (A body in repose curbs hunger).

Fortón/a: big eater, person who needs to eat a lot to get their fill; a big fan of overeating.

Fortucar/se: eat a lot, stuff oneself; Popular wisdom is clear: "*A fartucarnos vamos, a trabayar ya dirán.*" (We're off to pig out; we'll see if we make it back to work.)

Fíu/a: son/daughter.

Foguera: bonfire.

Folgar: have a good time, relax, laze around.

Folixa: party, noise, fun, commotion.

FORIATU/A:

Foreigner. From outside the Principality of Asturias; main beneficiary of this Treatise on Gijonomy.

Forrar: eat before or while drinking to counter the effects of the alcohol or eat a lot so you aren't hungry later.

Frixuelu: crepe, thin pancake, made with flour, milk, eggs and sugar, typical of *Antroxu*.

Furacu: hole.

Gabitu (*echar un gabitu*): help, lend a hand.

Gochu: pig; by extension, dirty, rude, foul-mouthed, indecent, etc.

Guaje/a: boy/girl, young person (It comes from mining jargon, where it referred to children who worked as helpers in the coal mines).

Ho: pronounced /oh/, shortened form of “home”, used mainly for emphasis at the end of a sentence [“¡Qué, ho!” (What?!) and “¡Calla, hooooo!” (Be quiet!) are especially useful expressions].

Home /óh-me/: bloke/dude; husband (“el mi home”, my husband).

iHome, no! But of course/not! / Oh, come off it!

Llagar: cider mill, press

Llambión/a: sweet-toothed person, fond of eating sweet things, that is, someone who devours *casadielles*, *frixuelos*, *pelayos*, *chaponas*, *bartolos*, *princesitas* and other delicious local pastries.

Mancar: hurt, injure, get/be hurt.

Marchar: to get going (an Asturian does not leave, he gets going).

Mozu/a: boyfriend/girlfriend; young single person.

Muyer: woman; wife (“*la mi muyer*” - my wife).

Muyerina: small or older woman.

Naguar: to express your mouth watering at the sight or smell of something delicious.

Ñocla: brown crab.

Orbaqu: persistent light rain so typical of Asturias.

Oriciu: sea urchin, whose strong, addictive flavour is like putting all the fury of the Cantabrian Sea into your mouth.

Pelín: native unit of measurement that's equivalent to “a little bit”.

Picar: knock on the door; by extension, ring the bell.

Pigazu (*echar un pigazu*): nap; short, light sleep “que presta pola vida” (that we love to take).

Pingar: drench, soak, drip: This is where the expression “poner pingando” comes from, meaning either “to get soaking wet” or “to haul someone over the coals” (literally, to drench someone in insults).

Plaqu/a: nickname given to people from Gijón; their own jargon, especially in the Cimavilla neighbourhood.

Prau: meadow, field.

Preñáu: stuffed, filled with chorizo, black pudding, cheese or any other delicious food (*bolu preñáu*- chorizo-filled bun).

Prestar: to cause contentment, to please, something you really like or enjoy .

Puxa: Go, Long live (“*¡Puxa Xixón!*”. “Puxa Asturias!”).

Refalfiu: monotony, boredom caused by overabundance; when you have overdone, overeaten or enjoyed something without restraint and you're sick and tired of it, then “*tas refalfíu*”.

Repunante: an unpleasant, finicky person who complains about everything and is difficult to please.

Tendal: clothesline (some are covered, because from time to time it does rain in Asturias...haha).

Uviéu: Oviedo.

¡XARÉU! :


fuss, commotion, boisterous fun, partying.

Xixón: Gijón.

Xano: figure from Asturian mythology, a nymph, fairy found in the springs and mountains.

¡HOME, NO!
CHISCAR
¡GUAJE!
EMBURRIAR





This is the Gijón I love and so adore.
This is the Gijón I treasure in my dreams.
I'll always carry it deep in my heart.
I'll never forget you, never ever,
Beloved Gijón!

Chorus to "Gijón del alma" ("Beloved Gijón"),
song by Javier Díaz Gontín



GIJŌNŌMY

A wide-angle photograph of a beach. The foreground is dominated by a smooth, golden-brown sandy shore. Gentle waves with white foam are washing onto the beach from the left. In the middle ground, several more pronounced waves are breaking, creating white foam and spray. The ocean extends to the horizon under a vast, overcast sky filled with soft, grey clouds. The overall mood is calm and peaceful.

* Living well has its science

GIJONŌMY

gijonomia.es

gijón