

A Companion to Basque Culture

A comprehensive account of modern Basque cultural life, written from an insider's perspective. Euskal Herria-the Land of the Basque Speakers-is a paradox: a nation without a state, a people divided between France and Spain, and a culture at once ancient and avant-garde. Long regarded as an anomaly, with a language unrelated to its neighbours and a population often imagined as rooted in prehistory, the Basque Country was, until recently, known internationally above all for the bombing of Gernika-immortalized by Picasso-and for the political violence of ETA. Yet in the twenty-first century, it has re-emerged as a vibrant cultural hub, drawing millions of visitors each year and projecting a distinctive image onto the global stage. A Companion to Basque Culture offers a comprehensive account of modern Basque cultural life. Opening with an introduction to the region's origins, geography, and historical trajectories, subsequent chapters explore language, literature, improvisational singing, the visual arts, festivals, cuisine, gender and the notion of a matriarchal culture, migration, and the dynamics of the Basque "brand." Written from an insider's perspective, this volume challenges fossilized and exoticized representations of Basque identity, examining instead how contemporary Basques negotiate the tensions between cultural distinctiveness and the pursuit of global recognition.

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