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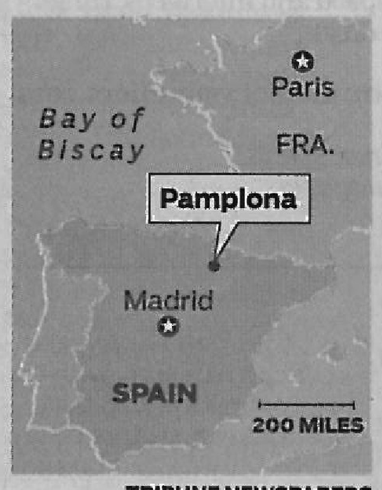
Plaza del Castillo, known as Pamplona's "living room," with its many hotels, cafes and shops, is a nice starting point for a walking tour of the old city and a great place to people watch.

Walk, don't run, in Pamplona

By Katie Morell | SPECIAL TO TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS



TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS

Nestled into Spain's northern border, the historic city of Pamplona is internationally known for one thing: bulls.

But to think Pamplona is worth the trip only to see men and women run for their lives during San Fermin (aka the Running of the Bulls Festival), July 6-14, is to miss 90 percent of the city's charm.

Located in Spain's Navarre region, Pamplona is a walled city that was settled by Romans in 75 B.C. The older portion of the city is a maze of narrow, stone-laden streets flanked by shops, restaurants and multicolored homes standing about eight stories high.

It wasn't until 1926, when Ernest Hemingway published "The Sun Also Rises," that the world took notice of Pamplona. Hemingway first came to the city in the early 1900s and fell in love with it, coming back eight times and using his experience of watching San Fermin to write his novel.

Today, Hemingway is considered the grandfather of Pamplona, and visitors can see him everywhere, from a statue in front of the city's bullring to pictures in shops and restaurants.

Here are 10 must-sees in Pamplona:

Just a 25-minute drive outside Pamplona is the eco-friendly Arinzano Winery. PHOTO BY KATIE MORELL

1 **Cafe Iruna** — Hemingway's favorite hangout, Cafe Iruna is in the heart of the city and is still a local and tourist favorite. Upon entering, make sure to belly up to the bar, order a beer and enjoy people watching around the bright, airy space, complete with oversize, French cafe-style mirrors. **cafeiruna.com**

2 **Gran Hotel La Perla** — Just steps away from Cafe Iruna, Gran Hotel La Perla is one of the city's only five-star hotels and has welcomed the likes of Orson Welles, Charlie Chaplin and, of course, Hemingway. Those interested in seeing Papa's quarters need only ask for Room 201, preserved with original furniture as well as a collection of Hemingway keepsakes. **granhotellaperla.com**
Before heading out again, grab a bite to eat at La Cocina de Alex Mugica on the hotel's basement level, where Mugica cooks up traditional, regional dishes with a twist.

3 **Cathedral of Santa Maria** — Located in the center of the city, the circa-14th century Cathedral of Santa Maria is not to be missed. Its neo-Classical exterior disguises a Gothic interior complete with soaring pillars, arches and Roman Catholic sculptures. Perhaps most impressive is the alabaster mausoleum of King Carlos III (14th century) and his wife, Leonor of Trastamara. **pamplona.net**

4 **Museum of Navarre** — Showcasing regional artifacts, it features four floors of treasures dating to the city's Roman, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque times. The museum is housed in a historic hospital. **cfnavarra.es**

5 **Cafe Bar Gaucho** — Cafe Bar Gaucho is a must visit for anyone who likes pintxos (similar to tapas). The locale gives off a lively atmosphere with a wraparound bar, Spanish-tile floor, walls peppered with culinary awards and to-die-for bites. Don't leave without trying the salmon and foie gras. **cafebargaucho.com**

6 **Palacio Guendulain** — A perfect stop for a tea break, Palacio Guendulain operated as a private residence for more than two centuries, once housing Queen Isabel II, until last September, when it was converted to a hotel. Today the property greets its visitors with iron gates, original furniture and a preserved horse carriage in the lobby. **palacioguendulain.com**

7 **Arinzano Winery** — Just a 25-minute drive outside Pamplona sits the eco-friendly Arinzano Winery. A family business since 1647, the winery features tempranillo, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay. Visitors can take a tour of the Rafael Moneo-designed property and enjoy lunch while overlooking rolling vineyards. **www.arinzano.com**

8 **Plaza del Castillo** — This is a great place to people watch. The 150,000-square-foot mall, known as the city's "living room," is surrounded by hotels with decorative balconies, outdoor cafes with colorful awnings, and souvenir shops stocked with everything from postcards to figurines of Catholic saints. It is a nice starting point for a walking tour of the old city (don't miss a photo in front of City Hall), as many streets spoke out from its center. **pamplona.net**

9 **Teatro Gayarre** — Teatro Gayarre is along Carlos III, Pamplona's main shopping thoroughfare. After a day of retail therapy, take in a theater or musical performance in the mid-1800s building. **teatrogayarre.com**

10 **University of Navarre** — Just outside downtown Pamplona sits the University of Navarre, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Europe and a popular locale for U.S. students studying abroad. The leafy campus is filled with roughly 4 million square feet of green space and a variety of architecturally significant buildings. **unav.es**

Call the Tourist Office of Spain at 312-642-1992, or visit **spain.info**