

Sakana's Oakwoods

Three nature trails to discover these age-old woods and find out how the old galleons which used to sail to the seas of Newfoundland were built

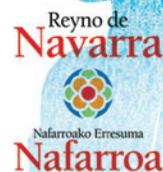


Routes

-  Dantzaleku Altsasu
-  The Unique Oak Tree Trail Etxarri Aranatz
-  The Dehesa Irañeta



Sakana



Voyaging Oak trees

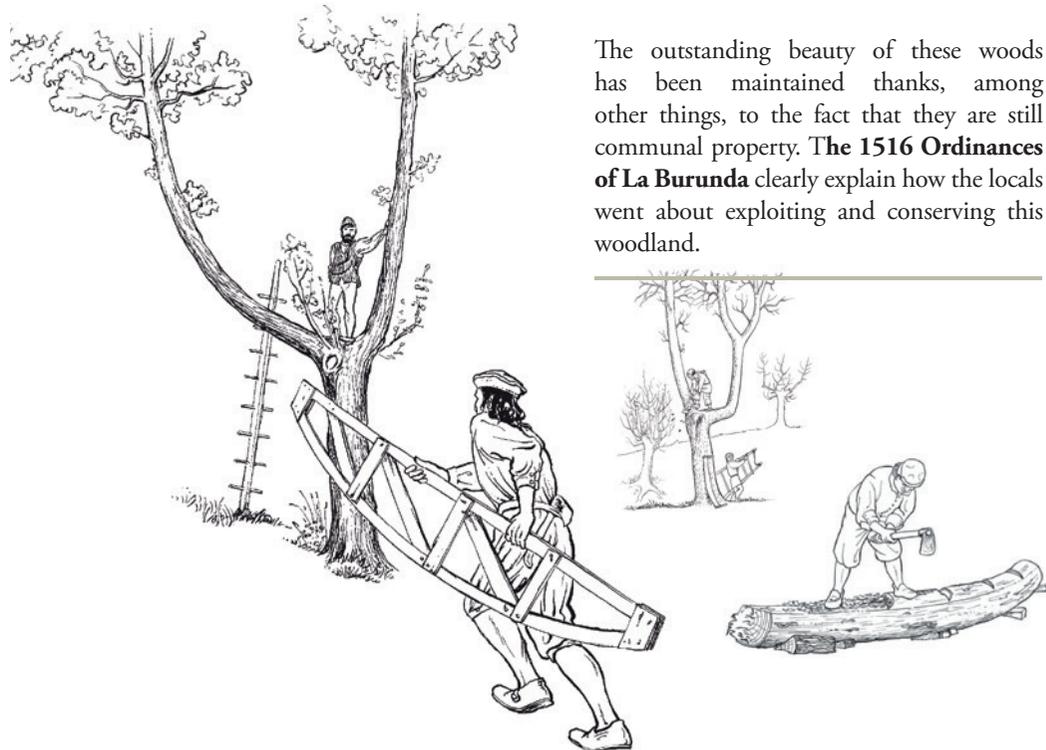
Albaola, the Basque Maritime Factory, is using the wood from the old oak trees in the **Valley of Sakana** in northwest Navarre to build a replica of the **San Juan**, a 16th-century whaling ship, just like they used to in the old days.

Using what was an advanced form of technology at the time, the trees used to be selected, trained, pruned and looked after for decades in order to obtain a specific part for a ship. Then, with the aid of muleteers, they were transported along the “**Calzada de Bernoa**” to the shipyards.

This old road on the boundary between Guipúzcoa and Navarre was crucial to the development of the region over the centuries because it permitted the transportation of goods between the Ebro Valley and the coast.

It crossed the valley from north to south, joining Ataun and the foothills of the Sierra de Aralar with the Sierra de Urbasa and Bakedano. In Iturmendi there is an information panel showing a short trail which heads both north, from Iturmendi to the boundary with Ataun, and south, from the village to the dolmen of Santa Marina in the Sierra de Urbasa.

The outstanding beauty of these woods has been maintained thanks, among other things, to the fact that they are still communal property. **The 1516 Ordinances of La Burunda** clearly explain how the locals went about exploiting and conserving this woodland.



Illustrations by: Mikel Leoz

Routes

Dantzaleku Altsasu

Located in the Dantzaleku oakwood, just a 15-minute walk from Altsasu town centre, this easy 700-metre interpretive trail is dotted with information panels and 10 silhouettes which show which parts of the trees were used to make components for ships. This method of shaping trees was known as ipiniabarrak (setting the branch) and made it possible to build lighter, stronger structures.



The Unique Oak Tree Trail Etxarri Aranatz

Trees which have grown into extraordinary shapes in order to adapt to their environments are the highlights of this stunning route, which sets off from the local campsite. There are signs indicating the different trees and bushes which grow in the area, and the different stages of oak trees over time. It is 4.6km long and fairly easy going. “The Dolmen Route” also starts here.



The Dehesa Irañeta

The Dehesa of Irañeta offers visitors the chance not only to enjoy the open landscape created by the farming activity carried out within the woods, but also to learn about the biodiversity values associated with environments of this kind from the explanatory panels. Monumental oak trees with protected status due to their size and natural importance pepper the route.

