









ZUGARRAMURDI  
PUEBLO DE LAS BRUJAS | SORKINEN  
HERRIA

-  Ibilbide nagusia / Recorrido principal / Parcours principal / Main tour
-  Begiratokia eta Infernuko zubia / Mirador y Puente del infierno / Belvédère et Pont de l'enfer / Viewpoint and Hell's bridge
-  Leze Nagusia / Cueva Principal / Grotte Principale / Main Cave
-  Akelarrearren lezea / Cueva del Akelarre / Grotte du Sabbat / Sabbath Cave
-  Infernuko erreka / Regata del infierno / Ruisseau de l'enfer / Hell's stream
-  Informazio panela / Panel informativo / Panneau d'information / Information panel



# THE WITCHES CAVE

*On the old road that leads to the village of Sare west of Zugarramurdi we find the witches cave.*

*The so called "Infernuko Erreka" (Hell's Stream) has been eroding this limestone range for thousands of years creating thus a big cavity of 120 meters long and 12 meters width that runs north to southwest.*

*On top of this big cavity two more galleries are found orientated in the same direction.*

*In 1935 the eminent basque archaeologist Jose Miguel Barandiaran found in this caves flint knaps from the Magdalenian period and some pottery rest from a later date. But what makes this emplacement special is its name "The Witches Cave".*

*Who were these witches?*

*The basque word for witch is "sorgin"; there are two schools of thought about the origin of this word "sorgin" (sortze: to be born or created egin: to do ) she who makes born or the midwife. Others believe the origin of the word "sorgin" comes from zorte: luck egin: to do fortuneteller or oracle.*

*But the overuse of the word "sorgin" has erased its original meaning, we have only received a witches legend, and not the real truth of what really happened in Zugarramurdi.*

We need to cast our mind back to the beginning of the XVIIIth century where life in Zugarramurdi was tied to the earth, and so were the customs, wisdoms and the magic world, mainly pagan in which locals believed and lived in. These people called "sorginak" were the ones who carried the knowledge of nature, plants and medicinal herbs. They also knew a lot about fertility, birth and contraceptive ways of the time, some were men but mainly, these "sorginak", were women. They used the cave as a location for their festivals and sacred rituals or ceremonies, the cave represented for them the innermost part of mother Earth or "Ama Lur".

The Earth was the bearer of mythology and owner of life in the original beliefs of these peasants who lived in Zugarramurdi, they were very closely rooted to life's cycles and to earth, however the lord and owner of the land was Fray Leon de Aranibar, abbot of the nearby Monastery of Urdax, and these peasants were also tenants and lease holders of this same land that they believed was theirs.

The Catholic Church forced them to forget about their pagan beliefs. The abbot revealed to the Inquisition that there were witches in Zugarramurdi, the Holy Office's response wasn't long to come by they sent Valle Alvarado from Logroño. This local society formed by different customs, language, beliefs, and knowledge wasn't prepared for what was to come, the Inquisition was opposed in essence to all their pagan beliefs. Incomprehension, and the will to dominate changed rites and festivals into Sabbaths, chanting to sorcery and pagan beliefs to black magic.

Power created fear, fear created suspiciousness, suspicions created silence and silence increased the power of the already powerful Inquisition.

*These "sorginak" were branded and in times of epidemic, hunger or drought this scary atmosphere they lived in was worsened by rumours.*

*Anyone could be accused of witchcraft locals spied on their neighbours and betrayed them out of fear.*

*The Inquisition arrested 300 people young, old, women and men. Forty of these arrested were transferred to be judged in the Process of Logroño in 1610. All these people were accused of: denying Catholicism, of participating in sexual orgies of adoring the devil as their god of creating potions and storms at sea. Eleven were condemned to burn at the stake but only 6 of them survived the horrible prison conditions to die by the fire. Eighteen of these accuses accepted charges and were pardoned and the rest met their conviction and were released after being dispossessed of their properties.*

*All over Europe witchcraft hunting propagated to establish the supremacy of a different knowledge and religion. The word "sorgin" hasn't yielded all its meaning, above the official History and under the flying brooms of children books, it also refers to the cruel persecution that suffered Zugarramurdi in the XVIIth century.*

*The witches who met in this cave can still be heard if you listen carefully...*

*In 2007 opened the witches Museum where you can find more information about the history of these witches, mythology, traditions and basque rituals.*

