



# HISTORY OF THE BAKERSFIELD BASQUE CULTURE AND CUISINE

Many local Basque families are direct descendants of immigrants of Basque Country, a region located near the western end of the Pyrenees on the coast of the Bay of Biscay between northeastern Spain and southwestern France.

Today Bakersfield is home to one of the largest collections of Basque restaurants in the United States. The restaurants offer visitors the time-honored Basque food experience, carrying on the traditions of their ancestors. Customarily Basque meals are a multicourse feast, served family style at long trestle tables. Guests are generally presented first with the 'set-up', a generous offering of bread, soup, beans, salsa, pickled tongue, vegetables, french fries and spaghetti. Next one can choose from hearty entrees including lamb, chicken and seafood or may be served the entrée of the evening.

Since the first explorers of the Spanish Empire came to the area in the 19th Century, there has been a Basque presence in the Central Valley region of California. Basque immigration peaked in the mid to late 1800s following the discovery of gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

**DID YOU KNOW?  
ONE OF THE LARGEST  
BASQUE POPULATIONS  
OUTSIDE OF THE  
PYRENEES MOUNTAINS IS  
FOUND IN BAKERSFIELD.**

When the gold rush died out the majority of the Basque immigrants turned to ranching and shepherding in the Central Valley. Many more Basques arrived from Basque Country upon hearing of the success of their relatives in America.

If drinks are in order (and you're at least 21!), one can try a glass of Picon punch, a potent local specialty made from brandy, maraschino syrup and liqueur.

The restaurants are a favorite of locals and visitors, therefore reservations are encouraged.

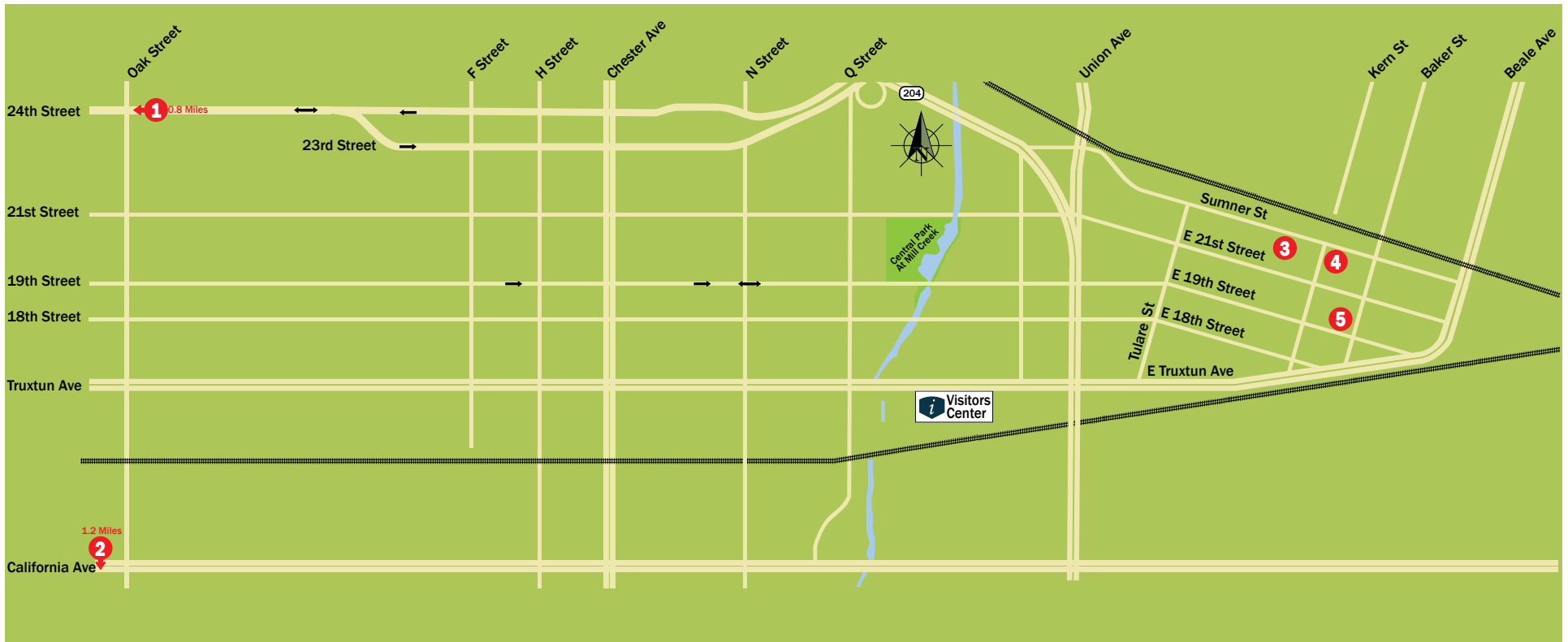


515 Truxtun Avenue, 93301  
(661) 852-7282, VisitBakersfield.com

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Artist Tom "Zak" Zackery's Basque Heritage mural can be found on the Bob's Auto Glass building in the Wool Growers parking lot.



**1. BENJI'S FRENCH BASQUE RESTAURANT**

4001 Rosedale Hwy. (661) 328-0400

Tue - Sun

Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Dinner 5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Bar open all day

**2. CHALET BASQUE RESTAURANT**

200 Oak Street. (661) 327-2915

Open: Seven days a week

11:00 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

Cocktail Lounge open til 2:00a.m.

**3. NORIEGA HOTEL**

525 Sumner Street. (661) 322-8419

Open: Tue-Sun

Breakfast: 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.

Lunch Seating 12:00 p.m.

Dinner Seating 7:00 p.m.

\*Family Style Seating

**4. PYRENEES CAFÉ**

601 Sumner Street. (661) 323-0053

Sun-Wed: 7:00 a.m.-9:00p.m.

Thurs-Sat: 7:00a.m.-10:00 p.m.

\*Family Style Seating

**5. WOOL GROWERS RESTAURANT**

620 E. 19th Street. (661) 327-9584

Open: Mon-Sat

Lunch: 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Dinner: 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

\*Family Style Seating



All information confirmed correct at time of printing.

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