

# Destination Borderlands

Don't cross it,  
go all over it



ARCHITECTURE



NATURAL SPACES



FLUVIAL ACTIVITIES  
AND THERMALISM



ENOLOGY



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go all over it



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The **border between Spain and Portugal** is colloquially known as the **Raya/Raia** (the line). It was constituted for the first time in the year 1143, with the Treaty of Zamora, and its current layout was established with the Agreement of Limits of 1926.

Its 1214 kilometers in length extend, in Spanish territory, from the town of Tui, in the province of Pontevedra, to Ayamonte, in Huelva. The beginning in the Portuguese side is located in Valença do Minho, in the north, extending to Castro Marim, in the south of the peninsula. However, the Raya / Raia will not be treated here as a dividing line, but as what it really is for the inhabitants of the area, **a connecting line**.

That is why **the Spanish-Portuguese border is a destination in itself**. The surrounding municipalities guard its history; a history that includes the wars and reorganizations of the territory, the diverse peoples that occupied it and the cultures that have been shaped and transmitted over the centuries. The trace of all this can be seen at a glance in the **heritage wealth**, which is located in each corner. The visitor will discover fortifications, castles, churches..., buildings of all kinds of styles, capable of transferring those who contemplate them to remote times.

But this guide does not adhere to an overwhelming architecture; the next pages offer the traveler the possibility of feeling a territory, of soaking up their habits, of knowing their people. Thus, they present numerous **natural spaces** worthy of admiration, describe the **rivers** that bathe the area of the border, and its extensive contribution to the offer of tourism-adventure and well-being, and the visitor is offered the enjoyment of a leading **enology** in the international scene, which will be tasted accompanied by the best delicacies, since gastronomy is fundamental.

UNESCO has cataloged many places in this area as **World Heritage Sites**, and the exceptional value of the territory is also reflected in many other figures of protection.

The lines that follow invite you to discover, to live, to dream. They will convince the reader that this Spanish-Portuguese border is not to be crossed, but to go all over it; that the Raya/Raia is a destination in itself. An attractive destination, capable of conquering, full of possibilities and experiences. A destination that will always be worth returning.

Magic waits at the border, are you going to miss it?

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# **ARCHITECTURE**

**PATRIMONIAL WEALTH  
WITH HISTORY**





One of the best ways to learn about the history of Portugal and Spain is by participating in it. This can be achieved by going through these spaces, because their trajectory to this day, undoubtedly, passes through the border. That is why their past can only be understood together. The integration of the border territories is total, they are 'buttoned'; so much, that the border locations on one side of the Raya / Raia are not understood without the other.

Numerous towns occupied the zone before it was established as what we know today, as this Hispanic-Portuguese division. During their stay in different places, they left a mark on them; signs, which today can be seen in the way in which the populations are established and, above all, in their **rich heritage**.

After the border division and the independence of the kingdom of Portugal, wars and attempts of conquest in the territory of the Raya / Raia continued. That is why the **walled cities**, with **great fortresses and castles**, will be characteristic at the border, because throughout history they have been fundamental for the defense of their peoples.

The amount of reigns through which this space has passed, has also fattened the number of constructions of this style. Many of these buildings have survived over the years and can still be visited today, as they serve as a framework to develop various activities. Most are framed in various protective figures.



But the patrimonial wealth of the border territories does not stop there. On both sides, there are numerous buildings that cover all historical eras and all styles.

The practically constant preoccupation by its state and conservation have made possible that they can be studied, visited and enjoyed in our days.

Thus, through this guide, cities that are considered World Heritage by UNESCO are exhibited, National Monuments are indicated, **patrimonial assets** that are cataloged for their conservation, **unique artistic and historical pieces** in the world..

If reading it is overwhelming, imagine discovering it, going through it, feeling it.

The story waits at the border.

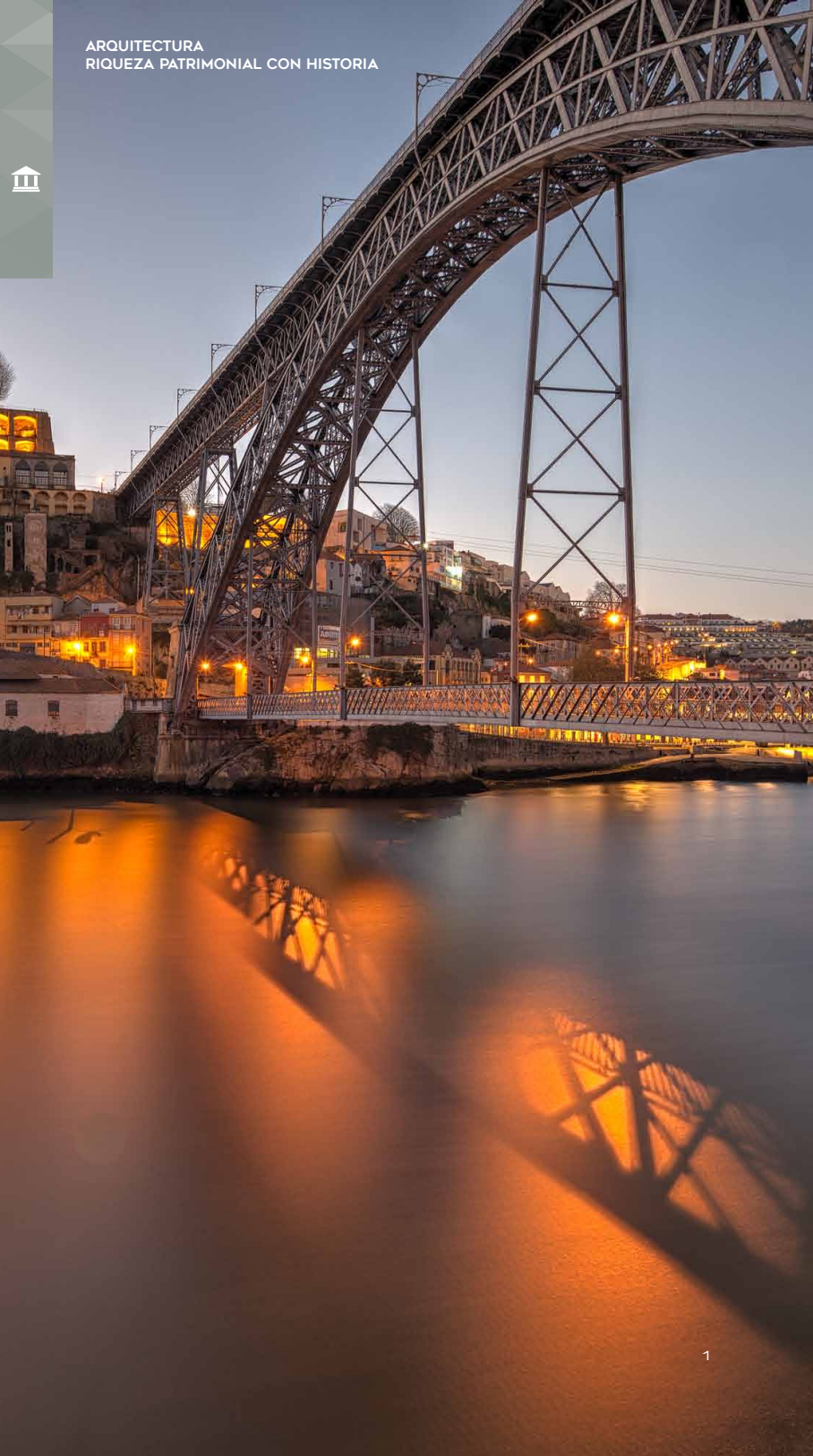


- 1 PORTO
  - 2 VIANA DO CASTELO
  - 3 VIGO
  - 4 A CORUÑA
  - 5 VERÍN
  - 6 'ROUTE OF THE CASTLES'
  - 7 ZAMORA
  - 8 TORDESILLAS
  - 9 SALAMANCA
  - 10 'HISTORICAL VILLAGES'
  - 11 COIMBRA
  - 12 CASTELO BRANCO
  - 13 CÁCERES
  - 14 CASTELO DE VIDE
  - 15 MÉRIDA
  - 16 ÉVORA
  - 17 JEREZ DE LOS CABALLEROS
  - 18 'LOW GUADIANA'
  - 19 PROVINCE OF HUELVA
- Other cities and sites shown on the map include: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, LUGO, PONTEVEDRA, OURENSE, BRAGA, BRAGA, GUIMARÃES, BARCELLOS, GAIA, SANTA MARIA DA FEIRA, VISEU, GUARDA, ALMEIDA, CIUDAD RODRIGO, SABUGAL, FUNDÃO, PLASENCIA, CASTELO DE VIDE, MARVÃO, PORTALEGRE, ELVAS, BADAJOZ, OLIVENZA, ZAFRA, LLERENA, Aracena, Niebla, Moguer, Palos de la Frontera, El Rocío, VALLADOLID, TORO, and CASTELO DE MIRANDA DO DOURO.
- Castles and historical sites include: Castelo de Vinhais, Castelo de Penas Róias, Castelo de Mogadouro, Castelo de Algesos, and Castelo de Miranda do Douro.

# ARCHITECTURE MAP

- 1 PORTO / GAIA / SANTA MARÍA DA FEIRA
- 2 GUIMARÃES / BRAGA / VIANA / BARCELOS
- 3 VIGO / PONTEVEDRA / OURENSE / LUGO
- 4 SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA / A CORUÑA
- 5 EUROCITY CHAVES-VERÍN / BRAGANÇA
- 6 ROUTE OF THE CASTLES
- 7 ZAMORA / TORO
- 8 ALMEIDA / CIUDAD RODRIGO / TORDESILLAS / VALLADOLID
- 9 SALAMANCA
- 10 VISEU / GUARDA / SABUGAL / FUNDÃO / HISTORICAL VILLAGES
- 11 COIMBRA
- 12 PLASENCIA / CASTELO BRANCO
- 13 CÁCERES
- 14 ALCÁNTARA / CASTELO DE VIDE / MARVÃO / PORTALEGRE
- 15 MÉRIDA / BADAJOZ
- 16 ELVAS / OLIVENZA / ÉVORA
- 17 ZAFRA / JEREZ DE LOS CABALLEROS / LLERENA
- 18 LOW GUADIANA
- 19 PROVINCE OF HUELVA

ARQUITECTURA  
RIQUEZA PATRIMONIAL CON HISTORIA



# PORTO GAIA SANTA MARIA DA FEIRA



The city of **Porto** is in the north of Portugal, next to the mouth of the Douro River. Its historic center is listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Its monuments stand out as the neoclassical building of the **Stock Exchange Palace** (Palácio da Bolsa), a beautiful building, both outside and inside, which offers a guided tour. The **Cathedral of the Sé**, located in the neighborhood of Batalha, next to the walls that once protected the city, is the most important religious building. Cataloged as a National Monument, it guards the "treasure of the cathedral", a collection of religious goldsmith articles located in its cloister.



2

The **Episcopal Palace**, in the Baroque style, was built between the 12th and 13th century, although it underwent an important reconstruction in the 18th century. The **Church of the Clérigos** and its tower, National Monument, are one of the most emblematic monuments of Porto.



From the tower you can enjoy the best views of the city. The **Gardens of the Crystal Palace**, the **Casa do Infante**, and the **City Hall** (Câmara Municipal do Porto), from the beginning of the 20th century, in which the clock tower stands out, are also significant in terms of heritage. Also worth a visit is the **Mercado do Bolhao**, or the **Lello and Irmão Bookshop**, in neo-Gothic style, built in 1906, which served as inspiration for some scenes of the famous Harry Potter saga.



3

The characteristic **Luis I bridge**, with its iron skeleton, joins Porto with **Vila Nova de Gaia**, located on the other Bank of the Duero. Likewise, the **bridges of María Pita**, **Ponte de Arrábida**, **San João**, **Freixo** or **Ponte do Infante**. Another option to cross the river and enjoy the views is the cable car.



4





In the panoramic view of Gaia the visitor can see the names of the historical wineries of Porto wine in great signs, and the “rabelos”, boats that formerly transported wine and that today are part of the tourist appearance. The **Serra do Pilar Monastery**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located there. The church is also a National Heritage Site, and the cloister, with its ornamentation of Ionic columns in Mannerist style, is an unprecedented case in Portugal.

The **religious buildings** of Vila Nova de Gaia allow a route that includes the Monastery of Grijó, the Corpus Cristi Convent, the Monastery of Pedroso, the Igreja de Santa Marinha, the Senhor da Pedra Chapel or the Bom Jesus Chapel.

The municipality of **Santa Maria da Feira** is on the route from Oporto to Coimbra. Its **castle** stands out as one of the most complete examples of Portuguese architecture, as it suffered, over more than 1,000 years, successive transformations. You should also visit the **Museum Convento dos Lóios**.



5



[www.visitporto.travel/Visitar/Paginas/default.aspx](http://www.visitporto.travel/Visitar/Paginas/default.aspx)



[www.cm-gaia.pt/pt/turismo/vivenciar/ver-visitado/patrimonio](http://www.cm-gaia.pt/pt/turismo/vivenciar/ver-visitado/patrimonio)

[www.cm-feira.pt/portal/site/cm-feira](http://www.cm-feira.pt/portal/site/cm-feira)

## GUIMARÃES/ BRAGA/VIANA/ BARCELOS

**Guimarães** city, a World Heritage Site, is located just 40 minutes from Porto. It has a quote that reads 'Here Portugal was born' in one of the entrances of its wall; the reason is that here the battle of São Mamede took place, in which the infant Afonso Henriques confronted his mother, Doña Teresa; years later, Afonso Henriques would become the first king of Portugal. You can appreciate more than one thousand years of history in the buildings and streets of the village.

The **Castle of Guimarães** was built in the middle of the 11th century to defend against invasions and reaffirm the power of Countess Mumadona. It was gradually losing importance until it was abandoned, and was recovered in the 20th century. The **Church of San Miguel** is located right in front of this, where King Afonso Henriques was baptized.



7



The **Palace of the Dukes of Braganza**, luxurious and majestic, dates from the 15th century. Nowadays it is one of the most visited museums.

Also worth mentioning are the **Santo António dos Capuchos Convent**, which was a hospital in the 19th century, and the **Santa Clara Convent**, which since 1975 has been the city hall of Guimarães and has a notable cloister.

Santa Maria Street, in the center, still retains the medieval air; vestiges of the wall are discovered at its end. The church of **Nossa Senhora da Oliveira**, which is as old as the castle, was a collegiate church, a must-visit point for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela (Spain). Also worth a visit is the church of Nossa Senhora Da Consolação e Santos Passos, better known as **São Gualter church**, since the Gualterian Festivities are celebrated in honor of the patron saint of the city.



8

**Braga** is less than 25 kilometers away. Known as the city of the archbishops, it is a historic city and third of the Portuguese country.

On the outskirts, on top of a hill, one can see one of the most visited sanctuaries in Portugal, **Bom Jesus do Monte**, which receives many pilgrims. A neoclassical church preceded by the impressive **baroque**



**staircase** known as Escadaria do Bom Jesus, with 116 steps and 17 landings, decorated with symbolic fountains, allegorical statues and baroque details dedicated to various themes: the Via Sacra, the Five Senses, the Virtues, the Terreiro de Moisés and, on top, the eight biblical figures who participated in the Condemnation of Jesus. Also noteworthy are its gardens, and the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora do Sameiro, on the same hill. Another option to save the difference is the elevator, which was the first funicular that was installed in the country.



9

The **Sete Fontes** (Seven Fountains), which in the 18th century provided the city with running water, and the **Theatro Circo**, an architectural icon inaugurated in 1915 that continues to serve Braga as a cultural space, are attractive to visitors.

The **Cathedral of Braga** is one of the most important points of Portuguese Romanesque, the **Visigothic chapel of São Frutuoso de Montélius**, dating from the 6th century, and the **Castelo de Dona Chica** are also worth a visit, this castle despite its abandonment is very interesting for its eclectic characteristics on a romantic style.

The route will continue on the A11, and after a journey of just over 20 kilometers you will reach the next destination, **Barcelos**. The city is known for its **rooster**, symbol and emblem of the place.

The legend tells that a Galician pilgrim who was on his way to Santiago stopped at Barcelos, where he was accused of robbery and sentenced to be hanged. When he declared before the judge who at that moment was tasting a roast rooster, he said: "I am innocent, and as proof of that, that rooster will rise up and sing." When they were going to execute him, the rooster sang, proving the innocence of the pilgrim and saving him from death.



10

This story is represented in the *Cruzeiro do Senhor do Galo* (Cross of the Lord of the Rooster), engraved on stone. It can be visited in the Archaeological Museum, located in the **Palace of the Counts of Barcelos**.

This is the most characteristic building of the city, and is classified as a National Monument, it is a Gothic palace-fortress dating from the fifteenth century. Some of his exterior canvases are still standing, and a curious single surviving fireplace of the original four ones.

Also outstanding in Barcelos is the heritage that includes the churches of Terço, Senhor da Cruz, Vilar de Frades, Abade de Neiva, Menéente and its tower, and the chapel of Nossa Senhora da Franqueira.



11

2 BARCELOS

**Viana do Castelo** is said to have been a town founded as the residence of kings, and the place has a rich heritage. It will therefore be another interesting stop on this journey to the north.

**Praça da República** is surrounded by elegant buildings, and a beautiful Renaissance fountain stands in its heart. Nearby the old city hall, and one of the greatest achievements of the Renaissance in the Portuguese country, the visitor can see the **Hospital da Misericórdia**, of 1589.



12

The work of the two architects Pritzker Prize, Álvaro Siza and Soto de Moura, is on its **promenade**; the works of the winners with this commonly named 'Nobel of Architecture' can be visited in the Praça do Eixo Atlântico, where the museum ship Gil Eannes is also moored.

The façade of the **Câmara Municipal** is very beautiful, because the building is dated in the Middle Ages. While strolling, the **Igreja Matriz** (Mother Church) is also discovered, with a remarkable Gothic door.



Viana do Castelo offers much more, such as the **Municipal Museum**, a perfectly preserved 18th-century mansion. It is a walled municipality, and out-side these walls one can see the **Eiffel Bridge**, a road-rail bridge over the Limia river, and the **Basilica of Santa Lucia**, on the Santa Lucia mountain, with wonderful views.



13



[www.cm-guimaraes.pt/p/conhecer](http://www.cm-guimaraes.pt/p/conhecer)  
[www.cm-braga.pt/es/0101/conhecer/  
historia-e-patrimonio/apresentacao](http://www.cm-braga.pt/es/0101/conhecer/historia-e-patrimonio/apresentacao)  
[www.cm-barcelos.pt/visitar/](http://www.cm-barcelos.pt/visitar/)  
[www.cm-viana-castelo.pt/pt/apresentacao](http://www.cm-viana-castelo.pt/pt/apresentacao)

VIGO/  
PONTEVEDRA/  
OURENSE/LUGO

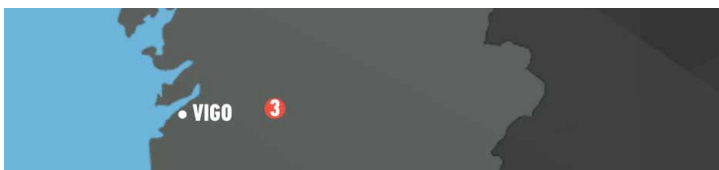
Continuing the journey, in less than an hour you reach Spanish territory, where it is worth stopping at the well-known 'ciudad olívica' (city of olives). The history of **Vigo** is attested by the amount of dolmens and burial mounds found in the municipality, which also recorded the presence of the Castro culture.

**Casa do Patín**, from the 15th century, is the oldest building in the city. As early as 1670, the Pazo de Lavandeira was built, today **Pazo de Castrelos**, home of the **Quiñones de León Museum**, with outstanding architecture.

Currently, in the **mount of O Castro** and in the **Praza do Rei**, the rest of the fortress of O Castro and the castle of San Sebastián, that date from 17th and 18th centuries, are conserved. Joined together through tunnels and passages, they intended to protect Vigo from the invaders.



15





Of the more than 30 churches, chapels and monasteries of the town, the following ones stand out: the Cathedral of Santa María de Vigo - known as **La Colegiata** (Collegiate Church)- in neoclassical style, although its towers are of Baroque style, located in the Casco Vello - an area that the visitor must walk and in where there is also the old town hall, a building of 1859-. And the **Church of Santiago de Vigo**, from 1907, with a beautiful neogothic facade.

In 1900 the construction of the **Municipal School of Arts and Crafts** was completed, in an eclectic medievalist style with Romanesque and Gothic elements. The **Museum of Contemporary Art of Vigo**, from the mid-19th century, is classified as an Asset of Cultural Interest.

In terms of heritage, the tower houses of Pazos Figueroa and Ceta and Arines, both historical-artistic monument, the El Pilar building, the Mülder Building, the Post and Telegraph House, the Hermitage of A Guía, or the Church of San Francisco, among others.



16

**Pontevedra** is just 30 kilometers away, crossed by the Lérez river. It was born next to the **Bridge of O Burgo**, and later the **Bridges of A Barca, Os Tirantes and As Correntes** were constructed.



It is worth visiting its historic center, reserved for pedestrians, where the chapel of its patron saint, **A Peregrina** (the Pilgrim Virgin), stands out in a round shape and in which you can visit its dome, which has been declared a historical-artistic monument.

**Praza da Ferrería** is next to it, with some of the oldest buildings in the city combining different architectural styles. **Praza da Leña**, of medieval atmosphere, is very close. It is presided by a cross and gives way to the **Church of San Bartolomé**.



17

In Praza de Santa María there is the minor **Basilica of Santa María a Maior**, which allows access to its bell tower. Praza de España hosts the boulevard and the town hall, as well as other noteworthy institutional buildings, and also the ruins of the **Church of Santo Domingo**.



18

**Ourense** is a bit more than 100 kilometers away, in the homonymous border province. In this locality it is necessary to take into account its location, in a valley crossed by the river Miño.

Thus, the arches of **Ponte Vella**, of Roman origin and medieval layout, stand out here. It contrasts with the avant-garde that is observed in the **Millennium Bridge**, and both are established as symbols of the city.



19

Its historical center includes a remarkable monumental heritage, in which **the Cathedral** is imposed. It is one of the oldest religious buildings in Galicia, because it is the most important medieval building in the community, and it conserves remarkable artistic treasures, among which the **Pórtico do Paraíso** (Portico of Paradise) stands out, with a polychromy that turns it into the cathedral's jewel in the crown.

The architecture of the city guides the traveler through its two thousand years of history, the traveler will enjoy the medieval, renaissance, baroque, modernist Ourense. And it will even be moved to the Roman and pre-Roman city, famous for the Miño gold, and the hot waters of As Burgas. All in a tour of its streets and, above all, **As Burgas fountain**, one of the symbols of the city.



Following the course of the Miño River towards Lugo, 47 kilometers far from Ourense, there is the city of **Monforte de Lemos**, here its **medieval castle** stands out, a whole fortress built in the twelfth century and which ended up giving the city its name: Montis Forte. Today is a national Parador.

The **Museum of A Nosa Señora da Antiga** is a must-visit, it is located in what is popularly known as the "Galician Escorial" due to the size of the architectural building, managed by the Piarist Fathers. The biggest jewel in the museum is its small art gallery, which has two oil paintings by El Greco.

Half way between Monforte and Lugo there is one of the points of reference of the Route of Santiago, **Sarria**, where it is worth visiting the **Monastery of Samos**.



20

Once at **Lugo**, after a tour that will be around half an hour's journey, the visit should start at the **Roman Wall**. It is the best preserved Roman wall in the world, and runs the entire perimeter of the old city, approximately two kilometers. The five original doors of the Roman period are conserved, in addition to other five that were later added. Something essential for the visitor must be walking through the wall in the **Paseo de Ronda**.





The **Cathedral of Santa María** is another of the monuments of the city, with Romanesque foundations, its multiple reforms have left their mark and various styles can be seen in it. It has a beautiful northern Romanesque facade, and also the western one; in addition, you can visit their towers.

Within the wall, the **Church of San Frollán** is another important visit; it has a baroque style and was part of the hospital of **San Bartolomé**. **The Episcopal Palace**, of the 18th century, is also baroque.



21



22

The **Casa dos Mosaicos** in Lugo is one of the most interesting museums in the city, where it is also worth visiting the Praza Maior. The **City Hall**, a two storey building, by Antonio Ferro Caaveiro, is located there.

On the ground floor, there are eight semicircular arches supported on pillars. On the first floor, 8 window-doors stand out. Shields, gargoyles and a couple of towers complete this beautiful facade.



[www.turismodevigo.org/es/paseos-por-la-arquitectura](http://www.turismodevigo.org/es/paseos-por-la-arquitectura)  
[www.visit-pontevedra.com/es/que-ver](http://www.visit-pontevedra.com/es/que-ver)  
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[www.sarria.es/](http://www.sarria.es/)  
[www.turismolugo.info/](http://www.turismolugo.info/)

## SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA/ A CORUÑA

World Heritage City by the UNESCO, it is the culmination of the Route of Santiago, European City of Culture... **Santiago de Compostela** is a privileged destination for all types of tourism. Located in the heart of the Galician community, the origins of the city go back to the discovery, in the year 813 of the tomb of the Apostle Santiago.

As it is considered heritage, it is necessary to start with the **Cathedral**. The first basilica was built in the ninth century and the current cathedral, which began in 1075, is the result of the passing centuries.

In it, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical styles can be seen in harmonious balance. It is one of the most important monuments of medieval Spanish art.





When crossing its western entrance the visitor discovers the **Pórtico da Gloria** (Portico of Glory), perhaps the most exquisite and select work of the Romanesque style, summit of the universal art.

The naves and side chapels lead to the **Altar Maior** (Main Altar), which is presided over by the image of the Apostle. Its relics are conserved in the crypt of the inferior floor. The cloister, the museum and the library, as well as the **'Botafumeiro'**, are a must-see as well.

Its main façade is located in the **Praza do Obradoiro**, the façades of Azabacherías and Praterías are also imposing, granting beauty to the squares. **La Quintana** is also beautiful.



25

Around it, majestic buildings such as the **Pazo de San Xerome**, **Pazo de Raxal**, the **Hostal dos Reis Católicos** - an old pilgrim hospital, now converted into a tourist Parador -, and the **Pazo de Xelmírez**.

It is worth a journey through the historical heritage of the university and its more than 500 years of history.

Actually, all its streets and squares form an exceptional, harmonious and homogeneous set, as they treasure palaces, monasteries, temples and squares. Also they emphasize the **Museo do Pobo Galego** (Museum of Galician People), the **Galician Center of Contemporary Art**, and the **Alameda**.

60 kilometers far, the city of **A Coruña** is spotted. There the visitor can see the oldest active Roman lighthouse in the world, the **Tower of Hercules**, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



26

Just below you can visit the Rosa Dos Ventos (Compass Rose), a huge mosaic that represents the nautical directions as a compass.

**Praza de María Pita** is the most important square in the city, the beautiful building of the city hall is there.

At the beginning of the promenade, there is the fortress of **San Antón Castle**, from the 16th century; this was used as a prison, and today it is a museum.



27



To walk through the **old town** is to walk through its history, and it is worth visiting its **Praza de Lugo Market**.

In A Coruña you should also visit the **Domus museum**, by architect Arata Isozaki, awarded with the Pritzker Prize.



28



[www.santiagoturismo.com/](http://www.santiagoturismo.com/)  
[www.turismocoruna.com/web/](http://www.turismocoruna.com/web/)

## EUROCITY CHAVES-VERÍN/ BRAGANÇA

In this area you can enjoy a route through the fortresses and castles of the **Spanish-Portuguese border**. Here, the Raya / Raia crosses the Tâmega valley and the mountains surrounding it in a capricious way. The river runs through it ignoring the man-made divisions, but the observant traveler will notice how villages and landscapes change.

This route takes the visitor around **Chaves-Verín** showing its old defensive structures. From the Middle Ages and, in particular, since the formation of the Kingdom of Portugal, in 1139, **fortifications** were built and rebuilt along the Raya / Raia. These were consolidating the border line and contributed to the creation of a borderlands culture.



30

VERÍN  
EUROCITY  
CHAVES

5



From this period, the **Torre de Menagem** (Homage Tower) and the **medieval walls of Chaves**, as well as the **castles of Monforte and Monterrei**, stand out and are a must-visit.

These castles, with the Guerra de Restauração (Restoration War) -which in the 17th century ended the domination of the Spanish crown after 60 years-, were reinforced and adapted to resist the artillery.

Thus, armored walls and abalone-shaped enclosures were built in which the **forts of São Neutel and São Francisco**, in Chaves, were erected, which transformed this city into one of the largest in the kingdom of Portugal.



31

Between castles and fortresses, you go through towns that tell the other side of the Raya / Raia, with the movement of people, the mix of accents, the old smuggling and mixed people, as Lamadarcos formerly seated on the same border and party in two kingdoms.

In Chaves-Verín, its **urban centers** stand out. Chaves is typically medieval. Its **City Hall**, a neoclassical noble house built in the first half of the 19th century, is located in the heart of the historic center, in Praça Camões, next to the **Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Loreto** and the **Palace of the Dukes of Braganza** (now the Museum of the Flavian Region), and just in front of the **Igreja Matriz** (Mother Church).

In the Middle Ages, Chaves was walled, this led to the construction of balconies that today represent a hallmark of the city.

Its Roman Bridge, also known as **Trojan's Bridge**, over the Tâmega River, all in granite, dates back from the time of that emperor, year 104 BC. It is a remarkable engineering work, with about 150 meters long, formed by 18 round-arcs, of which only 16 are currently visible.

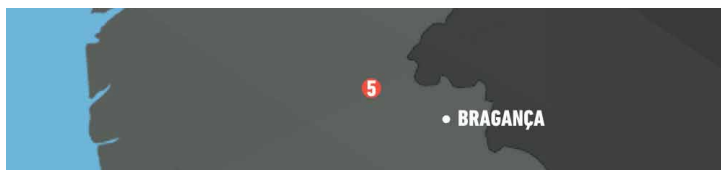
In Verín, it is worth visiting its corners and squares. The **Casa dos Acevedo** and the **Convent of the Mercedarians** are essential stops. And also the **neighborhood of San Lázaro**, as a whole, which has been rehabilitated and has an urban route; you can find the **Chapel of San Lázaro**, from the 18th century, by crossing the bridge of the Tâmega river, in front of the **Casa do Escudo**.

In front of it you can see **Cruceiro da Piedade** (Cross of Piety) and, after it, the royal road guides the visitor to the **Monterrei Hill**, where **Fortress Castle** is standing. Verín also surprises and conquers the Cigarrón sculpture, and the Museum can be visited in the cloister of the Convent of Mercy.



32

The municipality of **Bragança** is located less than 100 kilometers away from the Chaves-Verín Eurocity. Also close to the border, where its **castle** stands out, it preserves a unique heritage.



The fortress retains most of its original construction. It is located within the walls of the city, it was built in 1187 and restored in the 1930s. The **Homage Tower** is outlined.

You should also visit the **Domus Municipalis**, the **churches of Santa Maria and São Vicente**, the **Museum of Abade de Baçal** -an old episcopal palace- and the **ancient Cathedral of Bragança**.



33



[www.cm-braganca.pt/pages/302](http://www.cm-braganca.pt/pages/302)

## ROUTE OF THE CASTLES

In the northwest of Portugal there is a series of **castles with history** that will trap the visitors, transferring them to past times. All of them are declared as **National Monuments**, and are located near the northwest border of the Portuguese country, so they were strategic enclaves at the time, and when you visit them you travel through history.



34

The route begins in the north zone; in the **Castelo de Vinhais**. Its vestiges are located in the homonymous town, in the district of Bragança. The initial construction of the fortress dates from the thirteenth century, although it was subjected to various improvements later, during the reigns of D. Dinis, D. Fernando, D. João I and D. Alfonso V. It was very important in the military aspect, in the eighteenth century the castle was demolished to build on it the main church. Parts of the oval wall and a tower are still preserved.



35



The **Castelo de Miranda do Douro** will be the second stop on this route.

Located at the entrance of the historic center of the town, it dates from the late 13th century. In the 15th century, with the arrival of gunpowder, a tower and a new wall were added (to shoot).

It was razed in 1762 and its ruins can now be visited, surrounded by gardens, from which there are fragments of walls and gateways to the city, as well as a medieval tower.



36



The **Castelo de Algosó** is located in the municipality of Vimioso. It is estimated that it is a building of the 12th century, it stood at 681 meters of altitude and, for its history, it is worth noting that it is one of the



most important medieval fortresses. Today you can still glimpse the Homage Tower, a gateway, and part of the wall.



37

The **Castle of Penas Róias** was one of the most important medieval fortresses in the area, as it played a decisive role in its defense.

It is located on the top of a hill and from there some nearby fortifications could be observed.



38

6 'ROUTE OF THE CASTLES'

Castelo de  
Penas Róias ●

The **Castelo de Mogadouro** completes the route. Of uncertain origins, it is estimated that it dates back to Roman times.

The Homage Tower is the most important rest that is conserved, and part of the barbican that remains can be observed in the south-east slope.



39

In spite of not having the figure of protection of National Monument, in the zone there are other important castles like the Castelo de Rebordãos, the Castelo de Oleiros, the Castelo Velho and the Castelo dos Mouros.



[www.rotaterrafria.com/](http://www.rotaterrafria.com/)

## ZAMORA/ TORO

The capital of the border province of **Zamora** is the city of the same name. Surrounded by the Douro River, its old town is classified as a historical-artistic ensemble, and much of it is surrounded by walls. The town is known as '**the Romanesque city**' due to its outstanding heritage.

It also highlights its set of modernist buildings, which include it in the European Route of Modernism. It counts up to fifteen temples declared of Cultural Interest, so, in spite of being a small city, the historical and patrimonial offer is enormous.

The **Cathedral of Zamora**, Romanesque, is a National Monument. Dedicated to El Salvador, it dates from the 12th century and its hallmark is its spectacular dome of Byzantine influence and with stone scales.



41



Its tower, 45 meters high, Puerta del Obispo (Bishop Door), on the south facade, is an example of architectural decoration almost without sculpture, and the only one that remains complete.

The **Church of Santa María Magdalena**, from the 12th century, is another of the most interesting and presents an elegant interior. **Santiago de los Caballos** (James of the Horses), from the mid-11th century, also known as Santiago el Viejo (James the Elder), is the simplest temple of the Romanesque style in the city.



42

The **Castle of Zamora** was never a palatial castle, but a fortress. Built in the 11th century, it enjoys maximum protection within the Spanish Historical Heritage. Its stone bridge preserves the charm of past eras, as it is original from the 12th century despite having been renovated in numerous occasions.

It conserves remains of a wall, the most outstanding in it is the Portillo de la Tradición o la Lealtad (Port of Betrayal or Loyalty), and the Puertas del Obispo y Doña Urraca, the most complete of all the doors, so called because of its proximity to the Palace of Doña Urraca.

It is worth visiting the **churches** of San Vicente, Santa Lucía, Espíritu Santo, San Antolín, San Andrés, Santo Sepulcro, and San Esteban, among others.

It is very pleasant a night walk through the city, because the lighting of the monuments is exceptional.

Following the Douro, you reach **Toro**. City of Tourist Interest and Historical-Artistic Monumental Ensemble. Its origins go back to the Celtiberian period and it conserves a rich heritage.

The **Collegiate Church** is the main church, notable is the 'Portada de la Majestad' (Portico of Majesty), 13th century, carved in stone and with its original polychrome.



43

It is essential to visit the **Clock Tower**, baroque, of the 18th century, located on the Puerta del Mercado (Market Gate), vestige of the old wall, which was annexed to the Alcázar, from the 10th century. A military construction with four towers, solid and sparse in decoration.



44



In addition to the historical ensembles of Zamora capital and Toro, the Province of Zamora has 4 more historical ensembles: Alcañices, Fermoselle, Puebla de Sanabria and Villardeciervos, as well as Santa Cruz de los Cuérragos, declared an Asset of Cultural Interest with the category of Ethnological Ensemble.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/patrimonioartistico](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/patrimonioartistico)

## ALMEIDA/ CIUDAD RODRIGO/ TORDESILLAS/ VALLADOLID

The historical *aldéias* (villages) of Portugal are 12 emblematic towns, full of heritage, which make up the history of the Portuguese country. **Almeida** is one of the historical villages. It is protected behind a beautiful bastioned fortress and, if viewed from above, you can contemplate its star shape with twelve points.

The town is marked by the War of Independence. In 1810, after the French siege, **the wall** was, surprisingly, the little that remained standing.

Today it is its hallmark. It was built between the 17th and 18th centuries, and its perimeter is 2.5 kilometers. The Puerta de San Antonio and San Francisco de la Cruz, which welcomes Almeida, stand out; it is a double door, the exterior is from the 19th century and the interior, called Magistral, from the 17th century. The Church of Mercy is behind it, of the same century, presided over by its Main Chapel.



46



Next to the Gardens of the Plaza de la República is the **Mother Church**, which was used as a hospital and as the barracks throughout its history, which began in the 18th century.

At the same point they built **Las Casematas**, underground galleries that had the objective of military protection, today headquarters of the Historical-Military Museum of Almeida. Next to the remains of the Castle is the **Clock Tower**, from 1930 and a style that mixes neoclassicism and baroque.



47

On the border with Portugal, there is the Spanish town of **Ciudad Rodrigo**, historically the military capital of the province of Salamanca. Its medieval and baroque walls delimit one of the most beautiful urban perimeters of the Castilian community of León.



48



**San Felices de los Gallegos**, the town dominated by the castle and a medieval air, opens the doors to the regional park of Las Arribes.

The **archaeological site of Siega Verde**, very close to Ciudad Rodrigo and a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, offers the largest number of Palaeolithic engravings in Spain.



49

In the town of **Tordesillas** the visitor can find the **Monastery of Santa Clara**, a Mudéjar palace similar to the Alcazar of Seville, and in which the influence of contemporary Nasrid art is also perceived.



50

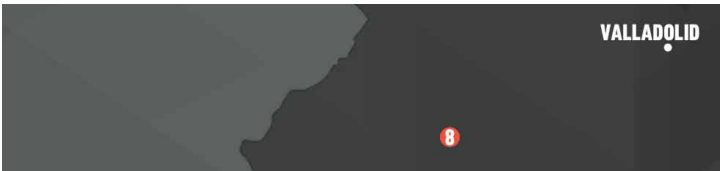


**Valladolid**, capital of the homonymous province, preserves an attractive old town. It presides over the **Plaza Mayor**, reformed in the sixteenth century after a great fire, and its structure has been copied in other Spanish cities.

A must-visit in the city, among others, are the **Museum of the Academia de Caballería** (Cavalry Academy), and the **National Museum of Sculpture**, in the Colegio San Gregorio, of the 15th century, which shows the transition between the medieval and the modern.



51



[ciudadrodrigo.es/turismo/](http://ciudadrodrigo.es/turismo/)  
[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/destinos/  
ciudad-rodrigo-y-la-frontera](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/destinos/ciudad-rodrigo-y-la-frontera)



# SALAMANCA



The city of **Salamanca**, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, personifies the capital of thought and culture thanks to its famous university, the oldest in Spain.

The **Plaza Mayor** presides over the city. It finished being built in 1755, and around it, the semicircular arches and the medallions with illustrious characters are characteristic.



53

Salamanca has **two cathedrals**, to differentiate them they are referred to as 'the new one' and 'the old one'.

**The new one**, Gothic style, was built for more than two centuries and was completed in 1733. During its reform, in 1992, an astronaut was recorded on its side, which tourists try to locate on the facade.

The **old Cathedral** is a unique representation of medieval Romanesque, it was begun at the beginning of the 12th century and was finished in the 13th century, in which the famous Torre del Gallo (Tower of the Rooster) stands out.



54



55

Neoclassical style, it is also located in Salamanca and can be seen in the **Palace of Anaya**, a construction of 1760. On the wall of the city, **Casa Lis** was created at the beginning of the 20th century, whose stained glass windows on the south facade are not easily forgotten. This modernist building now houses the Art Nouveau and Art Deco Museum.

The **University of Salamanca**, founded in 1218 by Alfonso IX, always houses a lot of people around it. They look for a frog on its facade, which is perched on a skull on the right side of it.

Observing the ensemble, carved in stone, is spectacular. In the visit it is worth stopping to also know the patio and the Paraninfo (hall).



56



Between the university and the Plaza Mayor, in the surroundings of the Plaza de San Isidro and Calle de la Rúa, there is this stately mansion from the late 15th century known as **La Casa de las Conchas**. With more than 300 shells on its facade, it combines Mudejar, Gothic and Renaissance styles.

The Church of La Purísima and the Baroque church of Clerecía, together with the old convent of the Jesuits, also deserve a stop on the way.

As well as the convent of San Esteban and the palaces of Fonseca and Monterrey, the latter is one of the greatest exponents of the Plateresque artistic style.



57

The **Route of the Historical Ensembles** consists of fourteen municipalities that articulate the province of Salamanca from the touristic point of view. Cities and towns that have preserved their heritage and identity traits with the same naturalness with which they have developed their daily life for centuries.

The largest concentration of historical ensembles is located in the south of the province in the vicinity of the Sierra de Francia. The rest are scattered throughout the province.



[www.salamanca.es/es/](http://www.salamanca.es/es/)  
[www.salamancaemocion.es/](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/)



# VISEU GUARDA SABUGAL FUNDÃO HISTORICAL VILLAGES



The town of **Viseu** is surrounded by mountains in the center of Portugal. Its historic center, in a perfect state of preservation, has winding and cobbled streets, the **Praça da República**, also known as the Rossio Square, stands out.

From the top, the **Cathedral** presides over the city; next to a primitive Suebian-Visigothic temple, it began to be built during the reign of Afonso Henriques, and its subsequent restorations and additions justify the current mix of elements from different eras.



59

The old Episcopal Palace now houses the **Grão Vasco Museum**. Other interesting places to visit are the **Church of Mercy**, in the Baroque style and with two bell towers, and the **Art Museum**. In the heart of the wine region of Dão, curious travelers can discover one of the most fascinating collections of urban art in the picturesque streets of Viseu.



A few kilometers away, there is the city of **Guarda**, it is the highest-altitude town in the country, and throughout its history played an important role due to its proximity to the border.

The Tower and the Porta dos Ferreiros, Porta da Erva and Porta do Rei, as well as some stretches located near these gates, are preserved from their **old walls**, restored and in good condition. The Celtiberian peoples, the Romans, and the Arabs inhabited the region that Guarda now occupies, endowing it with history and heritage.

Its old town hides medieval vestiges, and in **Praça Velha** there are several references, such as the statue of King Sancho I, founder of the city. The old City Hall building, in Praça de Luís de Camões, as well as Sé de Guarda, its granite cathedral with a fortified appearance, really deserve the visit of the traveler.



60



61

But Guarda offers much more, like its **museum**, next to the old Episcopal Palace, from the 17th century, the Church of São Vicente, with its magnificent 17th-century tile panels, the Santo André fountain and the Dorna one, which preserves the remains of a Roman road, the building and café-concert of the Municipal Theater, which present a contemporary architecture to highlight, and, in this same style, the International Campus of Contemporary Sculpture.



**Sabugal** is a little further south, it is integrated into the beautiful Nature Reserve Serra da Malcata. There you can find indications of prehistoric occupation and vestiges of the Age of Bronze and Iron, later occupied by the Romans.

The area was the scene of various conflicts and battles, and the town is surrounded by various defense fortifications.

The **Castle of Sabugal**, on the hill, overlooking the Côa River, is one of the most beautiful in the country. It is a fortress built during the 13th to 14th centuries, declared a National Monument, and the entire complex is admirable.

There you can see the **Torre das Cinco Quinas**, unique in Portugal; it is for its pentagonal shape and its majesty, because it reaches 38 meters high. Its interior, gothic, is divided into three floors and has vaulted ceilings.

Other spaces stand out here, such as the Church of Misericórdia, the castles of Vilar Maior and Alfaiates, and its Municipal Museum.



62



The nearby city of Fundão is especially relevant for its cherries, however, it is not just a rural city, it has an interesting heritage.

There the visitor will find the **chapels of Santo Antonio, Nossa Senhora da Conceição**, of the 16th century, and **Espírito Santo**, constructed in the same time.

The **Mother Church of Fundão** has its first references in 1314, but the baroque building that is currently observed is from 1707.

Casa dos Maias, which dates back to the 18th century, although it underwent modifications in the 19th century, and the Archaeological Museum are also worth a visit.



63



In the surroundings of these cities, several towns stand out. Almeida has been referenced previously, highlighting its heritage. As mentioned, it is part of the **Historical Aldéias of Portugal**.



In total, the list of them covers twelve towns. As a whole, it was the first Portuguese destination to receive the Biosphere Destination certification, endorsed by UNESCO, which is based on parameters related to sustainable tourism, from a natural, economic or social point of view.

Surrounded by the Serras of Estrela, Açor, Gardunha, Marofa and Malcata, all the Aldéias are enclaves that played an important role during the 12th century, when the current Hispano-Spanish border was defined.

To visit these villages, the traveler can visit '**A rota das Aldéias**', following the GR-22 route of Portugal, which has a series of marked circuits.

They are small villas, defended by imposing castles, high walls, or hidden in deep valleys. They condense a history constructed by diverse towns, kings, invasions, and wars by the conquest of territories.

In its medieval granite and slate streets, the Aldéias show their fortresses, noble houses, palaces, feudal coats of arms, royal shields, pillories, and some legend.



64

**Idanha-a-Velha** is a National Monument. It was the ancient Egitanica of Roman times (1st century BC) and one of the municipalities that contributed to the construction of the monumental Roman bridge of Alcántara, as it is indicated in an inscription of the bridge.

It is remarkable its **Roman wall**, of 750 meters of perimeter and its eight semi-cylindrical defensive towers, the Church of Santiago and the Pantheon of the Cabrais. You should also visit the synagogue and its museums, the 'Judaico' and the 'Discovery of the New World'.

Jews expelled from Spain arrived in **Belmonte**. In its castle, its Homage Tower stands out, as well as the Manueline window geminated in the exterior wall of the palace, and the walled enclosure. The Roman presence in the territory has its maximum representation in the fabulous Centum Cellas Tower.

**Piodão** is a small village, the only historical aldéia without fortress or castle, but protected by the natural defense of the deep and lost valley of the Serra do Açor. It combines in its constructions, the slate with doors and windows, painted in a luminous blue color.

**Castelo Rodrigo** reflects the history of a territory often scattered on both sides of the border. It has fortifications along the Côa River.



65



66

The village of **Sortelha** preserves a beautiful medieval layout. The castle is imposing, as well as the Homage Tower. It does not seem to have changed its urban landscape for centuries.

They say that **Trancoso** retains an aura of national glory. With its powerful castle of fifteen towers, it protected the border and the Portuguese territory.

The small village of **Castelo Mendois** located 10 kilometers from the Spanish border of Fuentes de Oñoro. Its medieval past can be perfectly seen, and the main gate that crosses the wall is known as "Porta dos Berroes".

Like many of its sister villas, **Marialva** shows the wounds of the past. The tribe of the Aravos - founder of the village - faced the Roman invasions.

The castle of **Linhares da Beira** is considered one of the most important gothic fortresses of the Beira Interior. The old medieval village was developed under the protection of the fortress and today you can walk through its old medieval Jewish quarter and narrow streets between fountains, old hospitals, granite houses with gargoyles and doors and windows of Manueline tastes.



67



68

Also the village of **Castelo Novo** was born under the protection of its castle of Gothic lines. The Manueline pillory marks the center of a square dominated by Casa da Câmara and the fountain of Don João V in an urban network of narrow streets that meanders to the Homage Tower.

**Monsanto** is known as “the most Portuguese village in Portugal”. The Castelo is located on the top, built by the Templars, and its walls provide spectacular views. Next, the São Miguel chapel, where you can see tombs carved into the rock. In its disordered streets there are different chapels and fountains among which the Lucano Tower is crowned with a huge “Galo de Prata” (Silver Rooster), awarded for being the “most Portuguese Aldéia in Portugal”.



## COIMBRA

Surrounded by the Mondego River, **Coimbra** is located in the center of Portugal, the country of which it was the capital in the past. It preserves in good condition its medieval old town, in which its historic **university** is located, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



69

Located at the top of the city and presided over by its tower, it is one of the oldest universities in Europe, since its origin goes back to 1290 and was the only one in Portugal until the beginning of the 20th century.

It houses several unique buildings, such as the Church of Santa Cruz, an ancient royal palace, its bell tower of the eighteenth century, or a botanical garden, along with the faculties, some of them from the 16th century.



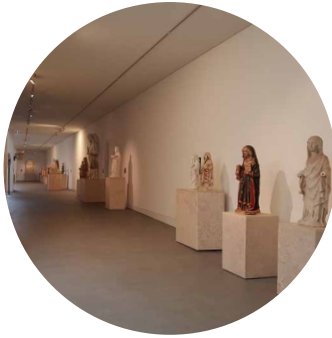
70

You can also visit the **Joanina Library**, which is spectacular for its walls and ceilings. Built in 1717, there are more than 250,000 books on its shelves.

The two lower floors of the library house more books and a former university jail.

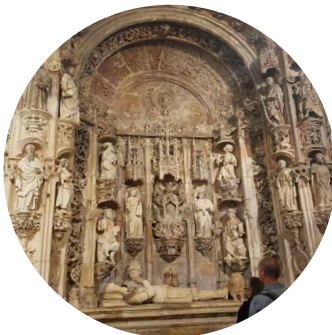
The Porta Férrea (Iron Gate) gives way to the **Patio das Escolas**, a large esplanade around which all these historical buildings of the university are concentrated, a statue of Joao III crowns the patio. It is also allowed to climb the Clock Tower.

Next to the university, in the Old Episcopal Palace, the **National Museum of Machado de Castro** is located.



71

The streets of the city, narrow, plagued by alleys and stairs, achieve the magic and spread the history and tradition of the place. The **Praça do Comércio** and **Praça do 8 de Maio** deserve a visit, in this last one the Church of Santa Cruz is located.



72

The **Old Cathedral** or Sé Velha was built in the 12th century and the style is Romanesque. With a fairly squared facade and crowned by battlements, it is one of the most important buildings of that style in all of Portugal.

It is the only Portuguese Romanesque cathedral from the time of the reconquest that has survived practically intact until today. The **New Cathedral**, in Mannerist style, built in the 16th century, is higher up.



73

On the right bank of the Mondego River sits the lower part of the city, which is accessed by crossing the **Arch of Almedina**.

There, the bustle of the markets and restaurants reflects the more commercial nature of Coimbra, and true works of art such as the **Mosteiro de Santa Cruz** can be contemplated.

On the other side of the river, in the Santa Clara neighbourhood, the **Santa Clara-a-Velha convent** and the **San Francisco de Assis convent** stand out.



74

In Lago do Rossio, in Santa Clara, **Portugal dos Pequenitos** is located. A work by Professor Dr. Bissaya Barreto, designed by the architect Cassiano Branco, built in 1940.

It is the theme park dedicated to children most visited in Portugal, with miniatures of its most outstanding architectural monuments.



75

## PLASENCIA/ CASTELO BRANCO

**Plasencia**, city of medieval origin, is in the north of the province of Cáceres, next to the Vía de la Plata. Celts, Romans and Arabs left their mark on it, and it is known as the "Pearl of the North". It has an aqueduct that is still standing. Its **wall** had 71 towers, of which 21 are preserved.



The **Torre Lucía** stands out, where today the **Medieval Culture Interpretation Center** is located.

From where a tour of the wall can be made. You can visit 6 of its access doors, although initially it had 8. Trujillo's door was the main one; others are Coria, Berrozana, Talavera...



77





The **Plaza Mayor** is the nerve center of Plasencia. Since the Middle Ages, it hosts a market every Tuesday. From this tradition arises the main party of the city, the Major Tuesday, that is celebrated the first Tuesday of August.

The **town hall** is also in this square, a Renaissance Gothic transition building of the sixteenth century.



78

The Palace of the Marquis of Mirabel, the Palace of Monroy, the Episcopal Palace or La Casa del Dean are also located in the square of the cathedrals.

Plasencia has two; the **Old Cathedral**, a transition from Romanesque to Gothic, offers a Romanesque portal with a semicircular arch, a Cistercian cloister, and the Torre del Melón (Melon Tower).

The **New Cathedral** began to be built to replace the old one, but it was not finished. Therefore, they overlap, being separated by an interior wall.



79

The New Cathedral is of Renaissance style, with two magnificent facades of Plateresque style, in its interior the vaults of the ribs are striking.

The best treasure kept by these cathedrals is the impressive **choir stalls**, by Rodrigo Alemán, carved in walnut, flamboyant Gothic style. The perfection in the accomplishment of all the details make this choir one of the most beautiful in Spain.

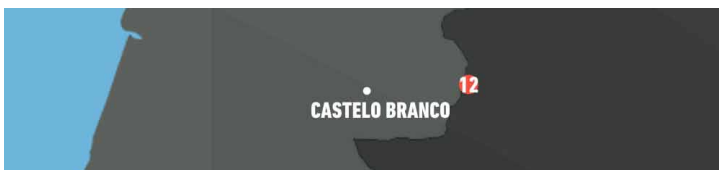


80

**Castelo Branco** is a border city, capital of the Beira Baixa and maintains the charm of times gone by. Known for its **castle**, from which it receives the name, and which was built in the likeness of "Chastel Blanc". It was restored in 1930, leaving a piece of wall and part of the Homage Tower, as well as the remains of the Palacio de los Comendadores (Palace of the Commanders).



81



The city presents monuments such as **La Catedral**, better known as São Miguel Church, the convent and the church of Nossa Senhora de Graça.

They emphasize the **Paço Episcopal and its garden**, one of the treasures of Castelo Branco; Baroque style, with perfectly sculpted hedges that are combined with statues and ponds. All its elements refer to something.



82



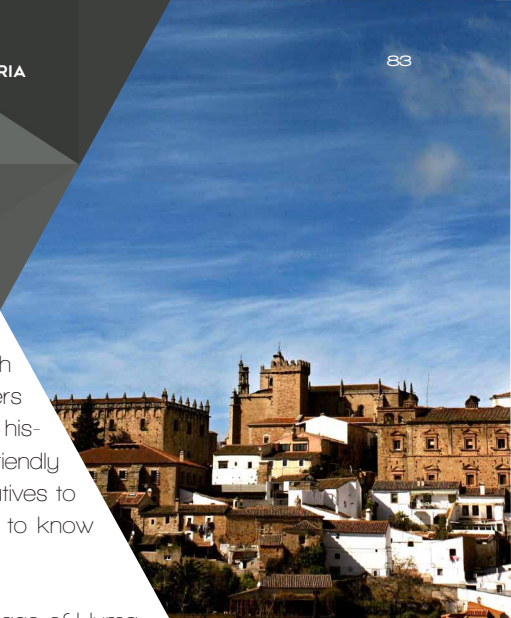
## CÁCERES

**Cáceres** is located in Spanish territory, just 100 kilometers from the border. It is, in itself, history, heritage and nature. A friendly city, full of charm and alternatives to make everyone who comes to know it enjoy.

Declared in 1986 World Heritage of Humanity, its **historic center** is the third best preserved monumental ensemble in Europe and the first in Spain.

Located next to the Vía de la Plata, it was inhabited since ancient times, as the remains of different civilizations left their mark.

Thus, the **Maltravieso Cave** contains evidence of Paleolithic or previous settlements, making Cáceres one of the oldest human cities in the world.



84





It was once a large Roman camp, according to some sources, the largest in Spain: **"Castra Caecilia"**. During the Muslim occupation it was known as Hizn Qazirs, becoming an important defensive enclave.

Cáceres has a medieval attraction, and as you enter the city with narrow walls, where the stone takes center stage, spaces like Plaza de Santa María are discovered.

In it you can see the **Church-Cathedral of Santa María**, Romanesque style transition to the Gothic, where is "The Black Christ", the most representative image of the Holy Week in Cáceres, festival of international tourist interest.



85

Next to the cathedral you can see the **Palacio de los Golfines de Abajo**, one of the most beautiful in the historic center. Of Gothic style with Plateresque facade, it was used as a home by the Catholic Monarchs.



86

In the high part, the **Palace of the Storks** stands out, in whose tower the birds nested, which gave origin to the name.

The poultry fauna is another of the singularities of this monumental city, since it has the qualification of Special Protection Area for Birds, SPAB, giving another powerful attraction to the city.



87

A few meters away, the visitor can contemplate the **Palacio de las Veletas**, built in what was the Arab fortress and where the Museum of Cáceres is currently located, which houses the best preserved well in Spain.

You can continue the visit through the Monumental City walking through the **Jewish Quarter**, which contrasts with its small houses with lintelled doors and whitewashed facades. In the heart of these irregular streets was the old synagogue, today **Ermita de San Antonio**.



88

But Cáceres has other resources of enormous appeal.

On the outskirts, in the **Mining Village of Aldea Moret**, one can contemplate one of the most singular urban designs of the 19th century.

For the design of its framework reference was made to the English garden-cities, giving it an unusual structure in these lands.



89



# ALCÁNTARA CASTELO DE VIDE MARVÃO PORTALEGRE



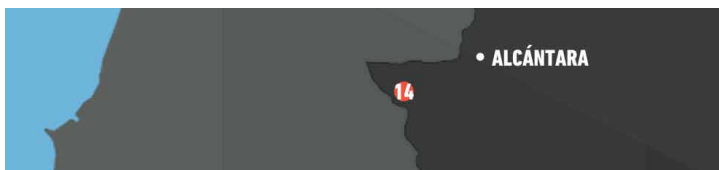
In the southwest of the province of **Cáceres**, **Alcántara**, with a strategic location. Inhabited since prehistoric times, successive civilizations have left their mark.

There is a dolmen ensemble consisting of 50 dolmens, a menhir, Visigoth remains...



91

It is a walled enclosure of Arab origin. It has an extensive heritage as a sign of the establishment of the Military Order of Alcántara, whose headquarters was the Convent of San Benito, 1505, which highlights the Renaissance gallery of Charles V.



In addition, today it is known that the cooking of this Military Order is the cradle of avant-garde cuisine.

His culinary delicacies were shown to the world during the War of Independence; the French general Junot saved the cookbook used by the friars from burning, and sent it to Paris. In France, recipes such as consommé or partridge Alcántara style were adapted.



92

In the old town, manor houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its beautiful Jewish Quarter with narrow and steep streets.

The Church of Santa María de Almocóvar, with a beautiful Romanesque portal. In front of it, the Church of San Pedro de Alcántara on the birthplace of the Saint. On the way to Portugal, there is the Puente Romano de Alcántara; from the time of Trajan.



93



In **Castelo de Vide**, its castle surrounded by white houses does not leave the visitor indifferent. It was the refuge of many of the Jews expelled from Spain, and belongs to the Network of Jewish Quarters of Portugal.

The ascent to the castle is through the "Gothic Quarter", the Jewish quarter, where the Fonte da Vila is located.



94

In the Castelo the Museum of Medieval History and Architecture and the Megalithic Center are located. Among the wonderful views of the mountains and the town, we can see the Fort of São Roque -a sample of military architecture- and the Mother Church or Santa Maria da Devesa.



95

CASTELO DE VIDE • 14

**Marvão** is located a few kilometers from the Spanish border. With a strategic position, it played an important role in different wars. Its narrow, white, cobbled streets intertwine within its walls. When walking through them, you can see Manueline windows and Gothic arches.



96

It is worth to go to the Castelo, visit its gardens and enjoy the views from the Homage Tower. The Church of Santa Maria is there, which houses the Municipal Museum inside. Also noteworthy is the Governor's House, Praça do Pelourinho or Torre do Relógio (Clock Tower).



97



**Portalegre** has a strong industrial tradition and was developed mainly from the sixteenth century, when it was considered a city and capital of a diocese.

From the Middle Ages, woolen cloth was manufactured, a production that has seen an important development since the 17th century and, in the following, with the founding of the Royal Lanifices Factory, at the initiative of the Marquês de Pombal.



98



99

In the 16th century the Robinson Factory was created, dedicated to the preparation and transformation of cork, which is part of the memory of Portalegre and has a valuable heritage of industrial archeology. In 1947 the Manufacture of Tapestries of Portalegre arises and, by its originality and artistic value of its works soon it was transformed into the "ex libris" of the city.

Portalegre is the capital of the North Alentejo and is located in the center of the Natural Park of the Serra de São Mamede. It is a medium-sized city, with a strategic location in relation to the Iberian Peninsula and Europe.



## MÉRIDA/ BADAJOZ

In **Mérida**, capital of the border autonomous community of Extremadura, its great Roman archaeological ensemble, the remains of the following civilizations and the modernity of an administrative capital are mixed. Its archaeological ensemble is declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



Its **Roman Theater**, which is still used today for cultural events, is spectacular for its size and conservation. Next to it, it is the Amphitheater, which hosted the gladiator fights. The National Museum of Roman Art is attached to them.



101





One way to get an idea of what Roman houses were like is to visit the **Casa del Mitreo** or the Amphitheater, where you can see paintings and mosaics.

Another of the most striking monuments is the Temple of Diana, and also include the Pórtico del Foro, the Arco de Trajano and the fascinating Roman Bridge, one of the longest of its time.



102

The **Arab Alcazaba**, next to the Roman Bridge, is the oldest one that is conserved in the Iberian Peninsula, in its landscaped grounds you can visit the cistern and see samples of the different cultural stages that Mérida lived.

The water reached the city through **aqueducts**, of which the most preserved structure is that of the Miracles, with an imposing arcade of three floors.

As a Lusitanian capital, Mérida was very well connected, through which the *Vía de la Plata* passed, and also the Camino Mozárabe (Mozarabic Way), which connects different towns in Andalusia with the *Vía de la Plata*.



103

**Badajoz** is on the banks of the Guadiana River, of a defensive nature for being a border city, it hides a rich heritage that invites you to stroll through its streets.

Its **walls** were growing at the same time as the city, until in the seventeenth century they were reinforced by the construction of a bastioned wall. Today there are enough bastions that can be visited.



104

**The Alcazaba**, considered one of the largest in Europe, can be traversed by the parapet of its wall. The entire perimeter is reinforced with quadrangular towers, highlighting the Torre de Espantaperros that is octagonal and has become one of the emblems of the city.



105



The **Provincial Archaeological Museum** is also located there, in the Palacio de los Duques de la Roca (Palace of the Duke of the Rock). The Plaza Alta is attached to the Alcazaba, which surprises the visitor by its decoration of geometric drawings.

You should visit its churches and convents, as well as the **Cathedral**, with its fortified appearance and Gothic interior, which holds some jewels such as the magnificent Plateresque choir.



106

## ELVAS / OLIVENZA / ÉVORA

The small Portuguese city of **Elvas**, next to the Spanish border, surprises the visitor. Its privileged situation made it a defensive bastion during the Portuguese War of Independence, transforming it into a fortress city.

The set of walls and dry moats creates **one of the largest fortifications in the world**, which is why it has been named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



The heart of the city is the **Praça da República**, which houses the church of Nossa Senhora da Assunção, former Sé. In the back of the cathedral is the Church of As Domínicas; its interior is very striking, octagonal and completely covered by tiles.



The city invites you to get lost in its narrow streets, with white facades with ocher profiles, and to visit the beautiful churches and squares. On the way up to the castle you can see remains of the old wall.

The **Castle of Elvas**, an Islamic fortress rebuilt in the 13th and 14th centuries that did not reach the current aspect until the 16th century, integrated into the bastioned system of the city. Its walls were crossed by four doors: the Ferrada, the Porta Nova or the Encarnação, the Santiago and the Bispo.



109

Another attraction of Elvas is the impressive **Aqueduto da Amoreira**, more than 7 km long and more than 30m. high, divided into four rows of arcades, and considered one of the largest in Europe.

When leaving the historic center you can visit the **Fort of Santa Luzia** where the Military Museum and the **Fort of Graça** are now a masterpiece of military architecture.



110

**Olivenza**, founded by the Templars, was not ceded to Portugal until 1801. It mixes Spanish and Portuguese monuments, as well as traditions and customs. It has one **Alcazaba**, whose Homage Tower is one of the highest of the Raya / Raia.

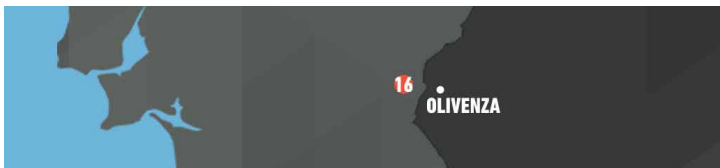


111

The Ethnographic Museum is there, and you can also visit the Bakery of the King. **The Church of Magdalena** is nearby, where you can enjoy the wonderful Gothic-Manueline, you can also see this style, at the door of the town hall, which is located in the **Palace of the Dukes of Cadaval** and has become a reference identification of the city.



112



The city of **Évora**, in the center of Portugal, is one of the most beautiful in the country. It is a World Heritage Site, and its wealth is very broad.

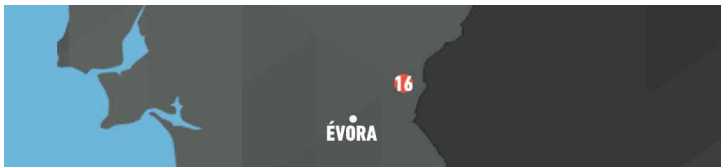
Many call it 'The City Museum', because its historic center is very well preserved. The splendor of Évora occurs between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

**Praça do Giraldo** is the neuralgic center of the city. From here you can go up to the Sé, **Cathedral of Santa Maria**, in Romanesque and Gothic style with a granite facade, flanked by two towers and an ogival portico. Inside there is the baroque chapel, the cloister and the terrace, where you can enjoy a panoramic of the city.

Next door is one of the most representative monuments of Évora, the **Roman Temple of Diana**, formed by 14 marble columns of Estremoz. Another icon of the city is Capela dos Ossos, which is located in the convent of São Francisco. A particular chapel whose walls are covered by bones and human skulls.



113



## ZAFRA/ JEREZ DE LOS CABALLEROS/ LLERENA

**Zafra** is located in the south of the province of Badajoz, also on the Vía de la Plata, it has been declared a historic-artistic site of national interest.

The oldest part of the town is formed by a network of narrow streets, with the **Plaza Chica** and **La Plaza Grande**, a meeting point for merchants, artisans and cattlemen.

The most relevant monuments are the **Alcázar de los Duques de Feria**, current Parador, the **Collegiate Church of Santa María de Candelaria**, the **Monastery of Santa Clara** or the **Convent of Santa Catalina**.



115





**Jerez de los Caballeros**, southeast of the province of Badajoz, offers whitewashed streets in which you can visit many churches, which fill the profile of the village with baroque towers. **Santa María de la Encarnación** is one of the oldest church in the town or the **Church of San Bartolomé**. The rich religious heritage has a large number of convents and hermitages. The Holy Week is of National Tourist Interest.

You should also visit the **Templar Fortress** with its walls, it keeps several towers, the best known is the Homage Tower or Blood Tower, where, the legend says, the last knights were executed.



116



117

**Llerena** is also in the south, with a rich monumental heritage. Its historic center is of Cultural Interest, the Gothic-Mudejar style is mixed with the Baroque. The **Church of Nuestra Señora de la Granada** is in its wide Plaza Mayor, the bell tower can be seen from anywhere in the town.

El **Palacio del Obispo** (Bishop's Palace) or the **Patio del Tribunal de la Inquisición** (Courtyard of the Inquisition Court) stand out for their architecture. In the streets, palatial houses such as the Maestral, the Zapata, or the Episcopal Palace alternate with a large number of houses with coats of arms.



JEREZ DE LOS CABALLEROS 17 • LLERENA



## LOW GUADIANA



The municipalities of Vila Real de Santo António, Castro Marim, and Ayamonte constitute the Eurocity of the South of the Iberian Peninsula, the **Guadiana Eurocity**.

The Mother Church of **Vila Real de Santo António**, built between the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties of the eighteenth century, has a longitudinal plan, with a single nave and a main chapel preceded by an imposing neoclassical style triumphal arch.



119

After the 1755 earthquake the city was destroyed. It was designed and built again by the Marquis of Pombal, and its name was given to the main square of the city. The Manuel Cabanas Gallery Museum contains the largest collection of wood engravings in the country.



In the Portuguese village of **Castro Marim**, located on the right bank of the Guadiana River, from early on its inhabitants have become accustomed to living with the peoples of the Mediterranean and living under the constant threats of Moors and Castilians, this made it the main defensive bastion of the Algarve and has granted a unique heritage, liable to be known through a historical visit to the town and its monuments: the Revelim de Santo António, the Castle and Fort San Sebastián.



120

Located in the spectacular natural area of the mouth of the Guadiana River, **Ayamonte** owes its unique physiognomy to its position as a fluvial frontier between Spain and Portugal. Here the neighborhood of La Villa stands out in the highest part of the city and the oldest in Ayamonte. There you can see the church of El Salvador, built in the fifteenth century on an Arab mosque. Particularly relevant is the tower in Mudejar style.



121



Other important monuments are the church of San Francisco, in the neighborhood of La Ribera, the main altarpiece of the 16th century, made in Renaissance style, and the Museo de la Soledad.

Next to the church we find the Palace of the Marquis of Ayamonte, from the beginning of the 17th century.

In **Alcoutim** there is the Castelo da Vila, whose construction began during the reign of D. Dinis (13th century). It is also worth visiting the Castelo Velho, a defensive structure of the Islamic period that was built between the 8th and 9th centuries.



122



## PROVINCE OF HUELVA

In the Spanish border province of **Huelva** the visitor will experience different sensations through their heritage. Here it is about feeling; thus, its '**Route of the Columbian Places**', declared a historical-artistic ensemble, will move whoever crosses it to past times. It will do so because he or she will travel through the places that were the scene of the preparation of Christopher Columbus' first voyage, which resulted in the discovery of America. The route is also cataloged as an Asset of Cultural Interest.

Both protection figures include two Huelva localities as a historical ensemble. One of them is **Palos de la Frontera**; where you can find the Monastery of La Rábida, a Franciscan convent of the 14th-15th centuries, in which Columbus stayed before leaving for the new world. Its Gothic-Mudejar church stands out, and the monastery is considered a National Monument.



124



Very close to it, in front of the José Celestino Mutis Botanical Park, and on the banks of the Tinto River estuary, at 'El Muelle de las Carabelas', (the Wharf of the Caravels) there are replicas of the three ships that managed to reach America for the first time: Pinta, Niña and Santa María, all in a unique enclave, where the feeling is to be part of that glorious adventure.



125

The other municipality in Huelva that is part of the 'Lugares Colombianos' is **Moguer**, where, through its heritage and its people, the traveler will be able to feel part of the environment in which the feat was made. Here the atmosphere is steeped in lyrics, because the Nobel Prize for Literature Juan Ramón Jiménez, author of 'Platero and I', was originally from these lands. Some lands that now develop that route of 'Platero and I', and that also have more than 3000 hectares of land included in the National and Natural Park of Doñana, declared a World Heritage Site.



126



In the municipality of Moguer the visitor can visit the castle, built in the 14th century, a reformed and enlarged Almohad building, also the Monastery of Santa Clara, the Hermitage of San Sebastián, the Convent of San Francisco, or the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Granada.

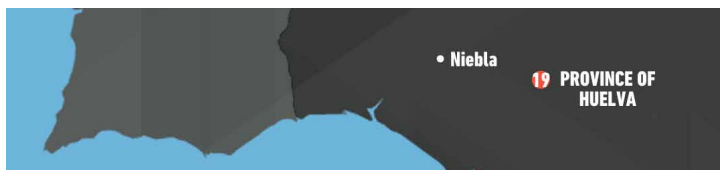


127

The city of **Niebla**, the cultural capital of western Andalusia today, was the capital of the only existing county in what is now the province of Huelva and which was called County of Niebla back in the fourteenth century.

Knowing the history of this place on the peninsula is entering the only Huelva city with an Almohad walled enclosure of more than two kilometers, which jealously protects the Castle of the Counts of Niebla, from the 17th century. The parish church of Santa María de Granada, 15th century, merged with the old mosque Aljama de la Labla andalusí, the old hospital of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, an architectural jewel of the 16th century, and the remains of a very unique building such as the Church of San Martín (15th century), where the front and the apse are separated by a square.

The five Arabic doors of the walled enclosure of Niebla invite the visitor to enter the historical heart and contemplate the prayers of Walabonso, to know the Roman past of Ilipia, to learn of the numerous Visigoth vestiges and to investigate in the life of Ellen Mary Whisaw, the lady of the stones.



Niebla is one of the most beautiful villages of Huelva, with a long walled Almohad enclosure that protects the Castle, and the Santa María de Granada parish church, merged with the old Ajama mosque of the Andalusian Labla.



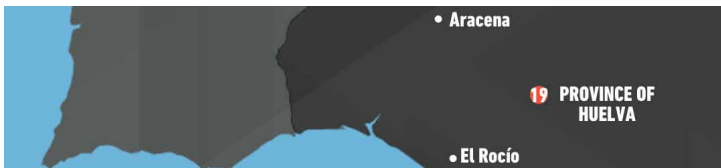
128



129

The hermitage of **El Rocío**, which houses its Virgin, la Blanca Paloma (the White Dove), the Queen of the Marshes, shines in a privileged place, fifteen kilometers south of Almonte, on the edge of Doñana and almost feeling the sea. Four roads lead to the village; the road from Sanlúcar through Doñana, the one from Los Llanos from Almonte, the Camino de Moguer in the west and the Ajolí road in the east. From the four cardinal points, the Rocío is, in the depths of its locals, the devotion and the collective beat that combines popular religiosity and faith, with the joy of its festivals and pilgrimages.

In the city center of **Aracena**, the 'Gruta de las Maravillas (Grotto of Wonders)' extends over 1200 meters. The majesty of the Gran Salón (Great Hall), the fragility of the Cristalería de Dios (Glass of God), or the rounded shapes of the Sala de los Garbanzos (Hall of Chickpeas) are amazing; there you can find numerous rock formations such as stalactites, stalagmites, columns, gour, eccentrics, coraloids, curtains, aragonites, etc. It opened its doors in 1914, so, the Grotto of Wonders is a pioneer in the underground tourism of Spain.





# **NATURAL SPACES**

**CORNERS TO  
DISCOVER**





The natural spaces are one of the most precious assets of these border territories. In this line, the traveler will discover large tracts of land that have barely been altered by the human being despite the passage of time.

Spaces declared by UNESCO as World Heritage or Biosphere Reserves, up to four National Parks, more than a score of Natural Parks... **Countless places cataloged in various protection and conservation frameworks**; and all of them, unique, different, magical.

The diversity of characteristics and particularities found in all these places is the key in this BorderLands Destination. From north to south, on both sides of the Raya / Raia; the visitor will find **special corners** at any point of the route. From small ecosystems to large tracts of land, which invite enjoyment and contemplation.

Nature is capricious, that is why the characteristics of each of these destinations will not always be marked by logic. But neither will it be a matter of chance. The location and weather of each of these spaces will, in most cases, be responsible for molding them, providing an explanation of their nature. Of course, so have humans, who have been key in all these landscapes; however, far from modifying them, the humans have helped to preserve them, to promote them in order to fit them in different protection figures, who have lived with them adapting to their particularities, and have studied them.



That is why the trip that is made through these natural spaces will allow you to know an exceptional flora, very diverse, and a fauna in which there are many species in danger of extinction. In addition, **ornithology** acquires special relevance in the route. There are many birds that can be seen in these spaces, either because they have made them their home, or because they are part of their migration route.

Throughout the next pages we can see the richness of these lands, capable of attracting all types of tourism; speleologists, athletes of various disciplines, cyclists, walkers, wellness or adventure tourism, as a family, alone, as a group... Taking advantage of these natural spaces, visitors can discover its history, the municipalities that participate in them, **various routes, and endless activities** to complete the experience. Options designed so that whoever discovers the place does not remain only in the impressive panoramic view.

Thought in a way so that you can get into them. Feeling part of each of these paradises.



# NATURAL SPACES MAP

- 1 NATURAL PARK OF THE NORTH COAST
- 2 MONTE ALOIA NATURAL PARK
- 3 ILLAS ATLÁNTICAS MARITIME-TERRESTRIAL NATIONAL PARK
- 4 PENEDA GERÊS NATIONAL PARK
- 5 BAIXA LIMIA-SERRA DO XURÉS NATURAL PARK
- 6 O INVERNADEIRO NATURAL PARK
- 7 ENCIÑA DA LASTRA NATURAL PARK
- 8 MONTESINHO NATURAL PARK
- 9 LAGO DE SANABRIA AND SIERRAS DE SEGUNDERA AND PORTO NATURAL PARK
- 10 SIERRA DE LA CULEBRA NATURAL SPACE
- 11 LAS LAGUNAS DE VILLAFÁFILA NATURAL RESERVE
- 12 ALVÃO NATURAL PARK / ALVÃO-MARÃO SITE
- 13 VALE DO TUA REGIONAL NATURAL PARK
- 14 TERRAS DE CAVALEIROS GEOPARK
- 15 DOURO INTERNATIONAL NATURAL PARK
- 16 ARRIBES DEL DUERO NATURAL PARK
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- 21 SERRA DA MAROFA
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- 24 SERRA DA MALCATA NATURAL RESERVE
- 25 NATURAL SPACES FROM EXTREMADURA
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## NATURAL PARK OF THE NORTH COAST

The **Northern Litoral Natural Park** comprises a length of 18 kilometers of **coastline in the north of Portugal**. Between the rivers and the sea, its 476 hectares cover all the existing beauty from the mouth of the Neiva River to the municipality of Viana do Castelo.



It is one of the most beautiful landscapes of the Portuguese coast, because everything is here. Throughout this space various natural wonders are encompassed and, being enjoyed as a whole, they acquire if possible a greater degree of sensitivity. Thus, the visitor can enjoy in one place dunes, paradisiacal beaches, the sea of the Atlantic Ocean, rivers and estuaries, mountain ranges, viewpoints, forests... That is, a complete experience.



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An area devoted to the sea, and with many outstanding features, since it is one of the most important tourist destinations in Portugal.



As for the beaches, those of Ofir, Esposende and Apúlia are the most visited, however, it is also possible to find quieter beaches, such as Belinho or Rio de Moinhos.

The **Neiva and Cávado rivers** are the main ones, the most remarkable, and it is in their estuaries where the most biodiverse areas are located, as they are inhabited by species such as the lamprey or the eel. From the banks of these rivers you can also identify the migratory birds that cross the park, such as the gray heron, the tern, the mallard, the cormorant or the herring gull.



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133

As for the vegetation in the area, there is reed in the lagoon, while around it there are several forests of willows and oaks. It is a surface vegetation that contributes to the fixation of the sand, because here the dunes also prevent the advance of sea water towards agricultural lands. This type of land, here, are fertilized with "sargassum", the seaweed that the sea brings to the beaches. In fact, the collection of seaweeds has been, over time, the traditional activity of people in this area.

The visitor should not miss visiting the municipality of **Apúlia**, since in addition to the beach and the extensive sandy area, it has a lake that is a nesting place for various species during migration, so bird watching has here one of its reference places. Various routes to get to know it in depth are also offered from the park, as well as the possibility of doing various water sports.



[www.icnf.pt](http://www.icnf.pt)

## MONTE ALOIA NATURAL PARK

**Monte Aloia Natural Park**, which was the first in Galicia to acquire this cataloging, is adjacent to the Raya / Raia and only 30 kilometers far from the city of Vigo. It covers part of the Serra do Galiñeiro, and its extension reaches 746 hectares. In addition, it is also included in the **Natura 2000 Network**.

It has a granite subsoil and a very rugged relief, since its altitude ranges between 80 meters and 629 meters from Alto de San Xiao, a watchtower from which the Miño river can be seen, practically reaching its mouth. This place is also classified as a Zone of Special Protection of Natural Values (ZSPVN).



135

In this park there are also various remains of **Celtic culture**, as well as elements of ethnographic interest among which there are the mills, the canalization system, a wall of the fifth century, or the hermitage of **Alto de San Xán** - the most visited place of the park and center of the popular

2.  
MONTE ALOIA  
NATURAL PARK

traditions-, a sanctuary of Romanesque origin and that owns a perron until the Fuente del Santo (Fountain of the Saint), reconstructed in the 18th century.

Approximately 100 years ago, at the beginning of the 20th century, forestry engineer Rafael Areses Vidal carried out repopulation in the area with cypresses, firs and cedars. Today, his house has become the center of visitors, and it is thanks to him that Mount Aloia presents a **great diversity of trees**. This, together with numerous streams that die in the river Miño, is responsible for the great biodiversity of the area.



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As far as flora is concerned, small areas of autochthonous forest are also located here, and mushrooms stand out. The rabbit, reptiles, amphibians and birds of prey make up the fauna.

It has approximately **10 km of trails** in an environment worth discovering. On clear days, the pano-ramic views will also conquer the visitor. It has five viewpoints and wonderful views over the river Miño, and in the park there are also various sports and leisure activities outdoors. The most outstanding, hiking, with many routes that depart from various points of the nearby geography.

In the visitor center, in addition to numerous information about the park, you can visit a permanent exhibition.



[parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/monte-aloia](https://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/monte-aloia)



## ILLAS ATLÁNTICAS MARITIME-TERRESTRIAL NATIONAL PARK



The **Illas Atlánticas Maritime-Terrestrial National Park** is a real natural paradise that guards the Rías Baixas. From the Arousa estuary to the Vigo estuary these islands are linked, since the National Park includes **four archipelagos**; three located in the province of Pontevedra, Cíes, Ons, and Cortegada, and the Sálvora archipelago, located in the province of A Coruña.

It is the **first and only space cataloged as a National Park in Galicia**, and it is the second in Spain to have that maritime-terrestrial characteristic. And it encompasses a total of 8,480 hectares of natural beauty.

This paradise has steep cliffs and a seabed that gives the park exceptional richness. The variety of scenarios that can be contemplated in this space is unimaginable, because it also has beaches of supernatural beauty, bushes, dunes...

The Illas Atlánticas Maritime-Terrestrial National Park has also been awarded the **'Starlight' label**, an international campaign in defense of the quality of the night skies and the right to observe the stars. Here, astrological observation is possible practically throughout the year.

Each of the archipelagos that make up the Natural Park contributes to its attractiveness, adding even more magic and diversity.



## CÍES ARCHIPELAGO

They are the main attraction of the National Park, and are located in the Ría de Vigo. From the port of this city, the visitor has various boat services that make the trip at different times. The archipelago is, in itself, a **Natural Park**, and is included within the **Natura 2000 Network**. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). And it is made up of the islands of Monteagudo, Faro and San Martiño and the islets of Agoreira or Boeiro, Penela dos Viños, Carabelos and Ruzo.



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The beach of **Rhodes** has been cataloged countless times by various rankings as **the best beach in the world**. Cíes has an extraordinary wealth, both terrestrial and marine, in terms of flora and fauna. Here you can find the most numerous colony in the world of the yellow-legged gull.



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The flora is scarcer, due to environmental conditions and location, but it is precisely the resistance to these phenomena that gives it a very high ecological value.

The Galician coast has one of its richest underwater ecosystems, where the important forest of brown algae stands out.

In addition, the islands are internationally known for hosting important populations of seabirds, as well as non-marine bird species and other kinds of vertebrates, especially reptiles.

It also stands out for its contrasts, as the east face offers views of the **Ría de Vigo** and quiet and protected beaches, and the west face has steep cliffs high above 150 meters.

In the past, these islands were populated, and on the ruins of the Monastery of San Esteban is now the Information Center, on the Illa do Faro (Lighthouse Island). Furthermore, there are **several viewpoints**, such as the Faro de Cíes, Faro da Porta, Faro de Monteagudo, the Pedra da Campá or the Alto del Príncipe. All of them marked, as well as the four available routes, with itineraries of different distances and slopes.

It is **necessary to request an authorization** -free- to visit the islands. It is a measure that is carried out to control the fulfillment of the maximum daily quota of visitors. This permit can be obtained online and requested one month before the visit. In addition, they have a campsite where visitors can stay.

## ONS ARCHIPELAGO

It is made up of the islands of Ons, Onza and the islet Freitosas, in front of the **Ría de Pontevedra**. It is also listed as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB). Boats regularly approach

the visitors to the island of Ons from the municipalities of Vigo, Bueu, Sanxenxo and Portonovo.



Here the dunes and Melide beach stand out. The island of Ons has a small population center. On the top, a lighthouse guarded by lighthouse keepers composes the final touch of a unique landscape. There are also several viewpoints, including the Fedorentos viewpoint.

The flora here is mostly scrub: heather, sloes, ferns, broom and gorse. The arboreal vegetation is reduced to willows, alders, and to a lesser extent, some specimen of eucalyptus, pine and Pyrenean oak trees.

There are four routes with different itineraries for the visitor, which in summer seasons and Easter can be visited by public transport, and also throughout the year you if you have the possibility of a private boat.

## CORTEGADA ARCHIPELAGO

It is located in the interior of the **Ría de Arousa** and composed by the Cortegada, Malveira Grande and Chica, and Briñas islands and the Cón islet. It consists of a very flat relief, the main difference with the rest of the oceanic islands that make up the park. Its enclave favors the culture of clam.



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As for the flora, it maintains a humid wooded laurel formation, and on Malveira Grande island we locate one of the few Pyrenean oak groves of the Atlantic coast.

In Cortegada there is an information point where you can discover the values of the island. There are two circular routes to cross it, its almost flat relief turns the visit into a pleasant walk.

## SÁLVORA ARCHIPELAGO

The Sálvora archipelago belongs to the municipality of Riveira, in the **province of A Coruña**. It is located in the mouth of the Ría de Arousa, and composed of the island of Sálvora and islets such as Vionta, Con de Noro, Herbosa, Rúa, Insuabela, Gaboteira, Sagres and Forcadiñas.



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The island of Sálvora, together with the islets of Sagres, Noro and Vionta, was the first Galician space to receive the cataloging of **Asset of Cultural Interest (ACI)**, for its enormous environmental, historical and ornithological values.

It is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) included in the Wet Co-rrubedo Complex. The landscape of the island of Sálvora is relatively flat on the surface, however the seabed is irregular due to the numerous islets. In the north of the island there is an abandoned town. The saltpeter and the wind over the years have given way to numerous original sculptures.

It has two itineraries, 'Ruta do Faro' and 'Ruta da Aldea', with which the visitor can learn more about the island and enjoy its magic. To get to Sálvora, the visitor can do it either by private boat, requesting the necessary permits, or by catamaran, since there are several shipping companies that provide this service.



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[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)

## PENEDA GERÊS NATIONAL PARK

It is the only natural space cataloged as a **National Park** of all Portuguese territory. There are almost 70,000 hectares, just 30 kilometers far from the municipality of Braga, located in the northwest corner of the Portuguese country, sharing more than 100 kilometers of border with the southwest of the Spanish province of Ourense, in Galicia; in fact, it is a continuation of the Baixa Limia and Serra do Xurés Natural Park, and together, they form the Gerês-Xurés Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.



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The National Park is formed by the **Serra de Peneda** and the **Serra de Gerês**, and granite rocks predominate here; another important geological aspect is the presence of glacial forms such as U-valleys, glacial cirques or rock shelters, evidence of relevant climatic variations that have occurred in the past.



Different shades of green cover the mountains, plagued by various **exceptional ecosystems**. Regarding its flora, the Peneda-Gerês National Park highlights its enormous botanical diversity, since it has several endemic species and others of high value for the conservation of nature.

In the above, its geographical situation acquires special relevance, since it receives the influence of the Atlantic, Mediterranean and continental climates, so, in terms of vegetation, the flora has adapted to these climatic conditions.



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Among its most characteristic habitats is the **oak grove**, since here there are some of the most important oaks in Portugal. In areas of Atlantic influence, with a more temperate and rainy climate, the oak forest is dominated by the white oak combined with the chestnut tree, with the common columbine, and with the Plymouth pear. In areas at higher altitudes the white oak is replaced by the black oak, sometimes associated with the birch. Although less frequent, you can also find also the cork oak.

It is also worth mentioning the existence of riparian vegetation, **alders** and **ash trees**, with narrow valleys and rapid water courses. In regions that exceed 700 metres in altitude, there are also forests of yew, sometimes accompanied by Portuguese laurel, holly or birch.

The **peatlands** are produced in humid areas, which, because they are scarce, are a priority habitat in Portugal. The flooding of the soil, associated with the lack of oxygen, prevents the total decomposition of the organic matter that accumulates and forms peat (a natural coal). In addition, semi-natural habitats, such as wild pine and mountain meadows, also contribute to biodiversity and landscape richness.

Regarding the fauna, diversity is remarkable, and also in this great natural space there are also endemic, rare or very limited species. **Large mammals** can be seen, such as the Iberian wolf, the roe deer, and the mountain goat.

It also locates bovine cattle, because the extension of the same serves as home to very diverse and numerous species; even those considered rare, or whose survival is threatened, such as two species of butterflies, two others of beetles and one species of slug.



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In the water courses, mountain and plateau, there are several species of **fish**, such as the bermejuela and the eel. The Iberian frog, the orange-bellied newt, and the lusitanian salamander, are just some examples of other species, in this case amphibians, associated with water lines.

In addition, up to twenty species of **reptiles** are distinguished, among which the European pond turtle, European smooth snake, the nose-horned viper and Seoane's viper stand out, as these are the ones that are threatened in Portugal.

The **bird life** of Peneda Gerês is one of the groups with more species, however, this diversity depends on the time of year, since many of these are migratory.

Due to its state of conservation, it is worth mentioning the northern wheatear, the red-billed chough, the winchat and, above all, the snipe, since it only breeds in this part of the country.

Here, human life develops and takes place in total harmony with nature. Its inhabitants do it in small population centers, since only in the territory of the National Park there are **more than one hundred villages** counted. All of them always located in the flattest areas, with good solar exposure and close to the water lines.

The protected area has several roads in its interior, although to discover and enjoy it, the best option is to explore it on foot. The levels are over 700 meters, reaching 1545 in Nevosa, in the Serra do Gerês.

This park is an idyllic paradise of pure nature, however it is very adapted and prepared for the enjoyment of the visitor, who in addition to being conquered by the panoramic views of the place and its landscapes, waterfalls, villages, highlands and forests, has at their disposal endless **activities** to perform; pedestrian walks through different circuits of different lengths, horseback riding, mountain biking, canoeing, flora and fauna observation activities, or adventure sports in this incomparable setting.



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[www.icnf.pt](http://www.icnf.pt)

## BAIXA LIMIA- SERRA DO XURÉS NATURAL PARK

**Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Natural Park**, which has 20,920 hectares, is located on the northern border of Portugal, already in Spanish territory, south of the province of Ourense. These number of hectares make it the largest natural park in the entire Galician autonomous community.

The space is also framed in other protection areas such as the Natura 2000 Network, and is declared as a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB), as well as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and a Special Protection Area of Natural Values.



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O Laboreiro, Queguas and Quinxo in the north; and Santa Eufemia, O Xurés and O Pisco, in the south are the mountain ranges that frame the Natural Park. All of them exceed 1000 meters of altitude, and their nature is mostly granitic. Thus, through this natural mountain range, the **100 kilometers of natural border** separating Spain and Portugal are established.

5 BAIXA LIMIA-  
• SERRA DO XURÉS  
NATURAL PARK

The Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Natural Park ends in it, but not the extension of relevant natural space. On the other side, in Portuguese territory, there is the only National Park of the country, as it will be explained later, it is the Peneda Gerês National Park. Together, both Parks make up the Gerês-Xurés Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

Returning to the province of Ourense, the flora of the landscape consists of scrub, rocky ways and forests. In the lower parts there are forests of **oaks** and **cork oaks**. As the height increases, the **Pyrenean oak** gradually replaces the oak, appearing **holly**, **yew**, **birch**, **wild pines**, and herbaceous plants with little coverage.



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The **landscape contrasts** of the Natural Park are really its main attraction, since its variety is what most attracts the attention of the visitor. Biodiversity is also remarkable, because with its orographic diversity and the varied vegetation, acclimatization takes place and provides refuge for the **varied fauna**, raptors such as the golden eagle or hawk, mammals such as wild boar, roe deer, rabbit, or wolf and fish like trout in their river courses.

The park proposes up to **eleven trails routes** to its visitors. In addition to touring the Serra do Xurês, the area has attractions such as Roman roads, prehistoric forts, as well as various samples of popular ancient architecture in the surrounding towns.



[parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/baixa-limia-serra-xures](https://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/baixa-limia-serra-xures)



## O INVERNADEIRO NATURAL PARK



6000 hectares of **Natural Park** located in the Galician central massif, in the province of **Ourense**. They can be accessed from the Eurocity Chaves-Verín, specifically, through the county road of Verín, since it is only 60 kilometers away.

The panoramic view of the park offers spectacular views of green mountains combined with rocky landscapes. Here the mountains reach more than 1500 meters of altitude, but this rustic charm coexists with the softness of other, much more rounded peaks.



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The climate, which causes the color of the panoramic in the different seasonal periods, records abundant rainfall, both in the form of rain and snow. However, there are also important periods of drought in the area coinciding with the summer seasons.

O INVERNADEIRO  
NATURAL PARK

6 •

One of the secrets of its charm is that in the park everything is nature. There are no human settlements in the place, so the immensity of the place and its conservation make the visit a unique experience.

In such an environment, species such as the wolf and the wild boar find their home. Also the wild goats, deer, fallow deer, chamois and mouflon, among many others. The otter can also be observed, its location in the park testifies that the fluvial ecosystems enjoy good health.



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As for the flora, it should be noted that the area suffered a major fire in 1981, before being classified as a Natural Park. After it, an environmental recovery started, and the recovery of the pine trees and the arboreal stratum was achieved. Native forests in the foothills of the hills, and shrubby representation of middle mountain.



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To visit it, it is necessary to request an access permit in advance. There are up to six different routes to travel the park, isolated in nature. Visits are also organized for groups, which can be managed from the Visitor Reception Center. The routes allow observing a glacial cirque and several remarkable waterfalls, such as Arcos.

There are also routes thought for the observation of the fauna, since some species are in semi-freedom; they inhabit fenced spaces, which facilitate the control of the populations and make their sighting one of the most pleasant memories for visitors.



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[parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/o-invernadeiro](http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/o-invernadeiro)

## ENCIÑA DA LASTRA NATURAL PARK

3,151.67 hectares of **Natural Park** located just 10 kilometers far from the municipality offering O Barco de Valdeorras, in **Galicia**, on the **border with Castilla y León**. A place with a peculiar environment, because here the limestone rock predominates, very strange in the Galician community, where the most common is granite. The special nature of the natural resources that are here give rise to a very particular ecosystem.

As you can guess, taking into account the name of the park, here the holm oak stands out, but among others, chestnuts, meadows of thyme, and various species of orchids are also located. This flora acquires special relevance, since it is 50% of the total Galician flora, located here, in only 2% of its surface.



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All the vegetation is developed adapting to that predominant limestone rock, and contains some Mediterranean characteristics, which make it exceptional in the community.

ENCIÑA DA LASTRA  
NATURAL PARK



The landscape offers a spectacular panoramic view. This place is located in the valleys of the Sil River, and its average height reaches 684 meters. The rivers have been shaping the rock, and the visitor can also enjoy **caves and grottos** that leave no one indifferent.

The caves, called Palas -synonym of pre-Roman origin-, are plagued by stalactites and stalagmites, this attracts numerous speleologists who come to this destination, and also many bats, since one of the largest colonies in Spain is located here. The Cova da Zorra (with a length of 600 meters), Pala de Xilberte, Pala Cumbeira, Pala Cubelas, Pala Pereda or Pala do Pombo stand out, but this ornithological refuge hosts many others, as it is the largest network of underground cavities in the community. To explore them, it is necessary to contact speleology associations.



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It is also remarkable, as far as fauna is concerned, the presence of reptiles and many other species as valuable as the **vulture**, since the only breeding pairs located in Galicia live here.

Visitor Center is in Biobra. There are many ways to enjoy the park, simply by walking its roads and you can admire the beauty of the environment. There are also various **routes and trails**, bordering the Sil you discover a true natural paradise.



[parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/serra-encina-lastra](http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/serra-encina-lastra)

## MONTESINHO NATURAL PARK

It extends through the northern area of the Portuguese municipality of **Bragança**, it has a total area of more than 75.000 hectares, and is characterized by a high morphological, geological and climatic diversity, which is reflected in the good adaptation of animal and plant species to the place.

Here, altitudes vary between 1486 and 538 meters. The park is also included in the Special Protection Area of the Serra de Montesinho and Serra de Nogueira and the Montesinho / Nogueira Site, in the Natura 2000 Network. In the case of endemic species, examples are maiden pink, sea pink, jasionne crisper, and the herbaceous festuca brigantina and avenula lusitanica.



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Sclerophyllous forests coexist in its territory, represented by the holm oak, stems accompanied by species such as *Thymus mastichina* and maple, black oak forests accompanied by chestnuts and birch.

8  
MONTESINHO  
NATURAL PARK

Among the high diversity of species that populate the park, the **golden eagle** with three confirmed pairs stands out, the blue rock thrush that has its largest national population here, the golden eagle, the pygmy owl, the barn owl, the gray partridge, the otter, the boar, the Iberian wolf, the Iberian lynx, and the fox, among others. It is the only place in the Portuguese country in which the deer and the roe deer have their distribution area superimposed, and it is considered as an area of capital importance for the conservation of the **Iberian wolf**.

The **Interpretation Center** of Montesinho Natural Park is located within the walls of Vinhais Castle, and the walls that support the house were built to defend the fortress. In this space a window for the Montesinho Natural Park opens. The walls now defend life in its purest form, helping to understand the natural values that make the park a place to mix with nature.



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The village of Montesinho, well known thanks to the Natural Park, is a very interesting town to visit, as it maintains the popular architecture of Trás-os Montes, being visible in several houses, some recently recovered for local businesses, such as rural tourism, craft shops and sale of regional products.

It is one of the most emblematic and best preserved villages in the northern region of Trás-os montes and is located 1030 m above sea level, being one of the highest villages in Portugal and the highest in Montesinho sierra.



[www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pnm](http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pnm)



## LAGO DE SANABRIA AND SIERRAS DE SEGUNDERA AND DE PORTO NATURAL PARK

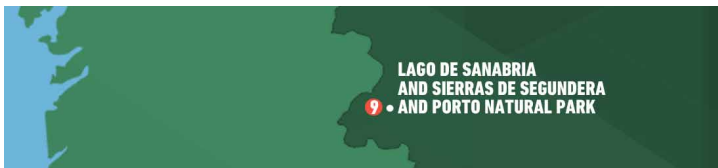


Located in the Spanish province of **Zamora**, this park comprises the largest lake in the Iberian Peninsula. It is also the only one of glacial origin, and has 318.7 hectares. Its depth reaches a maximum of 53 meters. The numerous lagoons and demonstrative canyons of the Quaternary glacial action, added to its exuberant vegetation, of great variety in all its strata, and innumerable waterfalls, streams, etc., make this area possess incredible aesthetic and landscape values.



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The most abundant forests in the vicinity of Lake Sanabria are those formed by the **Pyrenean oak**. There are also some interesting spots of **holly and yew**, while **birches and alders** are abundant on the banks of the rivers that flow from the peaks or communicate with the different lakes located inside the Natural Park.



LAGO DE SANABRIA  
AND SIERRAS DE SEGUNDERA  
AND PORTO NATURAL PARK

When gaining height, the forest is replaced by a thicket *Genista pumila* shrub and heaths. In Sanabria, the famous endemisms are also found: the *Genista tridentata* and the *Geranium bohenicum*. Within the **fauna** we can mention the golden eagle, wolf, roe deer, Bocage's lizard and Seoane's viper.

In addition to its high environmental value, the Lago de Sanabria and Sierras de Segundera and Porto Natural Park offer valuable historical, artistic and cultural resources. The visitor will be able to approach all of them and further information in the Casa de Lago de Sanabria and Sierras de Segundera and Porto Natural Park.



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Next to the interesting Romanesque monastery of Santa María, in San Martín de Castañeda - site of the Interpretation Center of the Natural Park -, the urban and monumental ensemble of Puebla de Sanabria and the numerous samples of popular architecture distributed in the villages of the area stand out.



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The park has **several trails** so that the visitor can know all the secrets of the area, the routes are diverse, and can be consulted in the Interpretation Center.

Very close to the shore of Lake Sanabria, in Ribadelago Viejo, a journey that goes through the narrow and spectacular Tera canyon begins. At the exit of the mentioned town, and always parallel to the river, is the closed gorge.



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[www.turismoenzamora.es/sanabria/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/sanabria/)

## SIERRA DE LA CULEBRA NATURAL SPACE

In the northwest of the Spanish province of **Zamora**, surrounded by the regions of El Aliste, La Carballeda, Sanabria, Tábara and, already Portuguese, **Trás-Os-Montes**, the extensive territory of the Sierra de la Culebra is raised, occupying a space of approximately 70,000 hectares.

Its relief is smooth, modest and rounded, as its highest height is 1243 meters from the peak of Peña Mira. It is the result of erosion on the ancient materials of a folding outcrop of slate, granite, quartzite and gneiss from the Ordovician period.



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Here, the primitive forests of oaks and holm oaks have been replaced by artificial reforestation of **conifers** and by extensive heather and rockrose formations. Inside, there is also the largest population of **wolves** in all of Western Europe, as well as many other species that make up the fauna.

10 • SIERRA DE LA CULEBRA  
NATURAL SPACE

Within this regional hunting reserve that is also the Sierra de la Culebra, there are remains of a Iron-Age settlement. These occupy a small space formed in the fluvial fork of the Manzanas River and the Fontano stream, but it is difficult to date their provenance with precision. The entire fort is defended by a **wall** that accommodates the topography of the place, with the southern and eastern sides being the most abrupt.

Located in the foothills of the Sierra de La Culebra, the urban area of **Villardecervos** is located, one of the most complete examples of rural architecture in the province of Zamora.



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In the natural formation of the Sierra de la Culebra, there are also two painted schematic **rock art** stations, the "covacha del Portillón" (a short distance from the Portuguese border) and the "Canchal de Melendro" which, together with those existing in the margins of the Esla in the vicinity of the Quintos Bridge ("El Castellón" and "Portal de Juanote") are the few pictorial representations that are known until today in the province of Zamora.

Along with this repertoire, it is necessary to refer to the engravings of the "sanctuary" of "El Pedroso", in San Martín del Pedroso.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/sierra-de-la-culebra/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/sierra-de-la-culebra/)

[www.turismoenzamora.es/guia-turistica-de-la-sierra-de-la-culebra/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/guia-turistica-de-la-sierra-de-la-culebra/)

## LAS LAGUNAS DE VILLAFÁFILA NATURAL RESERVE

The **Lagunas of Villafáfila Reserve** includes eleven municipal terms and occupies an area of 32.682 hectares. It is located in Tierra de Campos, northeast of the province of Zamora, where the cereal steppe is the dominant landscape.

In the center there is, as an oasis, a lagoon complex of a temporary and saline nature. This infinite agrarian landscape entails a special beauty, especially with sunrise and sunset. In addition to the landscape, man has created a rich architectural heritage of rammed earth and adobe: the «mud culture».



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The two most significant habitats of Villafáfila are the reason for the relevance of this enclave. **Wetlands** provide a refuge for such a variety and quantity of migratory birds that make this protected area one of the most important wintering areas of the Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, the **dryland plots** conserve one of the largest bustard populations in Europe, as well as other species of great interest linked

to the steppe, such as the lesser kestrel (with more than 300 nesting pairs), the Montagu's harrier, the little bustard and the black-bellied sandgrouse among others.

The lagoon complex has an extraordinary richness in aquatic invertebrates, but it is the **birds** that put the most colorful and spectacular note of the Reserve. Nearly 50% of all aquatic birds registered in Castilla y León are concentrated in it. As nesting birds, the stork, the avocet, the marsh harrier, the gull-billed tern, the pewit, the mallard, the little grebe, the white stork, the shoveler and the little ringed plover can be highlighted. As only wintering or migratory we will mention the Greylag Goose, with an average of 26,000 wintering individuals in the last decade, the crane, the gadwall, the common teal and the spoonbill.



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Since ancient times, the greatest attraction that the area has had for man has been **salt**. The archaeological museum of Zamora houses the ceramics of this period associated with the transformation of salt. However, there are hardly any vestiges of the important Roman and Visigoth settlements. Popular architecture is characterized by the use of land as the main raw material. Mixed with water, straw and a long drying in the sun provides us with "adobes". If the earth is applied in alternating layers with lime inside a formwork, it is a "tapial" (rammed earth). Most of the existing churches in the villages, built in stone and brick, have important artistic treasures. The best way to discover everything that the place offers is from the Casa del Parque, known as El Palomar. (The Dovecote)



[www.turismoenzamora.es/villafafila/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/villafafila/)

## ALVÃO NATURAL PARK / ALVÃO-MARÃO SITE

The **Alvão Natural Park** is a protected natural area, which together with the **Alvão-Marão Site** is classified as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the Natura 2000 Network.

The extension of the park includes the municipalities of **Mondim de Basto and Vila Real**, reaching an area of 7,220 hectares on the west slope of the Serra de Alvão.

The relief has irregular altitudes, ranging from 65 meters, in areas of valleys with crystal clear waters, to 1400 meters that are reached in the Serra do Marão; this and the Serra de Alvão encourage a succession of landscapes of valleys and mountains that deserve to be highlighted by their beauty.

The bed of the Olo River, which bathes the area, combines two differentiated realities. On the one hand, at an average altitude of 1,000 m, in the area of Lamas de Olo, granite predominates, the majority in the massif, adorned with high mountain vegetation; and downstream, next to Ermelo, where the altitude is around 450 m, slate prevails and the landscape is much greener.

A **waterfall** stands out, which is also one of the largest in Europe, known as the **Fisgas do Ermelo**, through which the Olo river rushes from an approximate height of 250 meters. The picture impresses, and it can be recognized as one of the most remarkable landscapes of the entire region. The waterfalls, in fact, are the symbol of the park.





As for the vegetation, the oaks are located in the highest areas, although you can also find mixed and hardwoods forests in the park. Also in the area there are stranger species, such as the *drosera rotundifolia*, commonly known as sundew, which is a carnivorous plant that is often found in flooded areas; as in this case the banks of the river.

As for the fauna, here you can see the **blue butterflies**, which find in this natural space their last stronghold of survival in Portugal. Walking the routes indicated in the park, you can also see wolves or peregrine falcons, but it will be difficult to spot a golden eagle, practically extinct.

The tourist offer also presents the possibility of **canoeing** down. The visit is completed by visiting the **villages** of Lamas de Olo, Anta and Ermelo, where day-to-day life seems to take place in older times. There are also its buildings, and you can visit the Núcleo Ecomuseológico de Arnal, which recreates the atmosphere of a traditional Alvão village.

## VALE DO TUA REGIONAL NATURAL PARK

The area of the **Vale do Tua Regional Natural Park** occupies 25.000 hectares of Low Tua, between the districts of **Vila Real and Bragança**. In the heart of Trás-Os-Montes and Alto Douro, this Regional Natural Park was designed for the protection of biodiversity values and the enhancement of nature tourism.

It integrates the municipalities of Aljô, Murça (right bank of the Tua river), Vila Flor, Carrazeda de Ansiães (left bank of the Tua river) and Mirandela, where it has its headquarters. The Tua River is born from the union of the Rabaçal and Tuela rivers, it belongs to the Douro river basin and has a north-south direction.

The landscape is diversified, marked by mountain ranges, plateaus and valleys fitted; particularly those of the Douro, Tua and Tinhela rivers. This is due to the existing quantity of lithologies and geological structures that form the basis of these reliefs. Four major **groups of ecosystems** stand out; urban, agricultural, forestry and fluvial.

The climate of the valley, very variable, will give rise to the **diversity of flora** that is located here. The Mediterranean cork oaks stand out in the drier and hotter areas, and the black oaks in the wetter areas.

More than 940 species make up the **fauna**, being 744 of terrestrial invertebrates, 15 of fish, 12 of amphibians, 20 of reptiles, 123 of birds, 29 of mammals, and 14 of bats.





To this total it is necessary to add an indeterminate number of species of aquatic invertebrates, grouped in 72 families. Due to its rarity and / or degree of threat, it is noteworthy the presence of the brook lamprey and the *Cobitis calderoni* (verdemã -do-norte).

In the case of birds, the presence of black wheatear and Bonelli's eagle stands out. And in the case of mammals, the Mediterranean horseshoe bat. Other rare and / or emblematic species of the region are the Pyrenean desman, the Mediterranean water shrew, the otter.

Beyond nature tourism, the area offers visitors an experience tourism. It is intended as a global enjoyment, because in addition to the **routes** planned to tour the park and to observe the beauty of the landscape and the richness in flora and fauna, more services are offered.

Among them, the most prominent are the **wine tourism**, because here the cultivation of the vine takes on real importance, and **thermal tourism**.



[parque.valetua.pt/](http://parque.valetua.pt/)

## TERRAS DE CAVALEIROS GEOPARK

The **Geopark Terras de Cavaleiros** (TCG) is located in Macedo de Cavaleiros, Portugal, and covers a well defined geographical area, since it coincides with the administrative limits of the municipality. It extends for approximately 70,000 hectares.

It has a particularly remarkable **geological heritage**, because through it you can travel more than 500 million years of Earth's history. This attracts geologists from around the international scene to the area. Although geotourism is the main attraction of the place, its natural heritage is dazzling.

Different landscapes, preserved by the importance of its biodiversity. Here Mediterranean and Atlantic flora of great botanical value coexist; oaks and chestnuts in the swamp areas, olive trees, vines, cork oaks, various species of orchids, medicinal and aromatic plants, and even macrofungus, make up, among others, this differentiating natural heritage.

As for the **fauna**, we find rare and protected species such as the wolf and the wild cat, and others more common such as the genet and the squirrel. As for aquatic animals, it is remarkable the possibilities of recovery that crayfish has in this area. The Geopark also stands out for its ornithological heritage, with rarities such as the red kite or the golden eagle. It is also inhabited by great tits, white-spotted woodpeckers and agile nuthatches, among others.



14 • TERRAS DE CAVALEIROS GEOPARK

The pedestrian routes are one of the best ways to observe and enjoy the landscape of the Geopark. There are up to **24 signaled pedestrian routes**, for almost 180 kilometers of land. Here there are excellent conditions for bird watching, to enjoy mountain biking, canoeing or kayaking, and also to ride a catamaran.

In this territory there are several natural areas of interest, the most relevant is the **Protected Landscape of Albufeira do Azibo**. It is a Protected Landscape integrated into the Natura 2000 Network, which covers a total area of 3281,7 hectares.

It is one of the most visited places in Trás-Os-Montes, and has a huge lake. In addition, this Protected Landscape has **two fluvial beaches** with the Blue Flag cataloging; the beach of Ribeira (one of the 7 Wonders - Praia de Portugal) and the beach of the Fraga da Pegada.



[geoparkterrasdecavaleiros.net/](http://geoparkterrasdecavaleiros.net/)

## DOURO INTERNATIONAL NATURAL PARK

The **Douro International Natural Park** is located in the northwestern area of Portugal, with 85.150 hectares established in the municipalities of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Freixo de Espada à Cinta, Miranda do Douro and Mogadouro.

Specifically, it is located in the area of the **Douro River** that establishes the border with Spain. In fact, the river is present in practically the whole extension of the park, approximately 122 kilometers. Just 60 kilometers separate this place from the most important nearby municipalities, such as Bragança, Mirandela or Macedo de Cavaleiros.



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It is a region with great thermal amplitudes, where cold winters and dry and hot summers are recorded. That is why the landscape, with steep gorges on the Douro, presents very different tonalities depending on the season of the year in which you visit it. The southern part of the park is integrated even in the Portuguese Terra Quente area.

It is worth noting the great biodiversity found in the place. Starting from the **flora**, forests of oaks, holm oaks, and diverse vegetation decorate the area and make it home to numerous species of birds, such as the blue rock thrush and the golden oriole, many of them in danger of extinction, so they also become a claim for the visitor. Among its **fauna** you can find the wild boar, the Cabrera's vole, or the snub-nosed viper.

In the surroundings of the park There are also agricultural and livestock farms; and the vines stand out on the banks, which provide the grapes with which the wine of this Denomination of Origin is produced. The **Denomination of Controlled Origin Douro** received this seal in 1756, being the oldest in the world.



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There are **several routes** to travel the planned paths to enjoy the space, which has many natural viewpoints due to the peculiarity of its orography. The best panoramic views can be obtained from the best known ones, such as São João das Arribas, Fraga do Puio, Santa Bárbara, Cruzinha, Penedo Durão, Barca D'Alva, and Colado, among others.

The place can be visited by crossing the river Douro, a point of view that attracts the attention of tourism by the clear differentiation of the Portuguese and Spanish landscape, on both sides of the river, and separated by it. In the Portuguese area the green color of their meadows is striking.



[www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pndi](http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pndi)

## ARRIBES DEL DUERO NATURAL PARK

**Arribes del Duero Natural Park** is on the other side of that natural border marked by the Douro River, in the western area of the provinces of **Zamora and Salamanca**, in the Spanish autonomous community of Castilla y León.

It is indeed where the **Duero** is channelled, forming the steepest and extensive canyons, reaching almost 100 kilometers. In its left margin the visitor will discover the region of **Las Arribes**. It is a privileged natural space in which the rustic beauty of the granite landscape stands out, and its Natural Park occupies a total of 106.105 hectares.



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The relief belongs to the dominion of the Paleozoic basement, and they mainly constitute granitic and granodiorite rocks. The beauty of the landscape stands out due to the steepness, in addition to the Duero, the rivers Huebra and Uces bathe the zone. In the canyon you can find one of the most striking cascades of the peninsula, the one of Pozo de los Humos, where the water falls from more than 50 meters of height. The image is impressive.

16 • ARIBES DEL DUERO NATURAL PARK

In the region of Los Arribes in Zamora, the vines acquire an outstanding paper in slopes of the deep precipices of the Douro, forming the traditional terraces. The flora and the fauna of the Natural Park stand out due to the great wealth and variety of species. This space acquired the category of Natural Park specially by its **fauna**. Mainly, the birds, because it counts on more than 200 species. The most emblematic is the black stork, but raptors, such as the griffon vulture, Egyptian vulture, eagle owl, golden eagle, etc., are also relevant. Species such as the bat, the wild cat, the otter, the wolf, the Iberian mouse or the Iberian midwife toad also inhabit here.



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The ecosystem has just settled for the majority of the oak **forests**, although cork oaks, hackberries, holm oaks and junipers are also found. In the bushes, thyme, cistus, retama and broom. The most important forest of the protected natural space is the **Almezal de Mieza**, since it is established on a surface superior to 250 hectares, and is considered the most extensive in Europe.

The **houses** of the park stand out, in Fermoselle, Zamora, the Convent of San Francisco is worth a visit. The Tower of Sobradillo is in the territory of Salamanca. There are two sites in which the visitor can delve into various areas in relation to the Natural Park. There you can receive information about the history, architecture, traditions, landscapes, vegetation and fauna of these lands. The **routes**, particularly the 'Senda del Duero' (Douro's trail), the tourist places, restaurants, accommodation or various organized activities can also be consulted in these houses, as well as asking for maps, information brochures or calendars with parties and events in the area.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/arribes/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/arribes/)

[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/parque-natural-arribes-del-duero](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/parque-natural-arribes-del-duero)  
[patrimonionatural.org/espacios-naturales/parque-natural/parque-natural-arribes-del-duero](http://patrimonionatural.org/espacios-naturales/parque-natural/parque-natural-arribes-del-duero)

## MESETA IBÉRICA TRANSBOUNDARY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

UNESCO declared a **Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve** between Spain and Portugal in 2015, and did so under the name of Meseta Ibérica (Iberian Plateau). It is the largest Biosphere Reserve on the Iberian Peninsula. It covers a total area of 1.132.606 hectares, belonging to the Spanish provinces of **Salamanca and Zamora**, and part of the Portuguese region of **Trás-os-Montes**, specifically to the Portuguese regions of Douro Superior, Terra Quente and Terra Fria.



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The altitude of this Iberian Plateau, due to its extension, is very diverse, and ranges between 100 and 2000 meters. This reserve includes in its surface several **protected natural spaces** of both countries; many of them have already been treated in these lines.

In Spanish territory, for example, the Natural Parks of Arribes del Duero and Lago de Sanabria stand out. In the Portuguese zone, other

17 • MESETA IBÉRICA TRANSBOUNDARY  
BIOSPHERE RESERVE

natural parks are included, such as the International Douro and Montesinho. It also includes the Vale do Tua Regional Natural Park, and various spaces of the Natura 2000 Network, such as the Cañones del Duero, Sierra de la Culebra or Albufera del Azibo, among others.

Within the boundaries of this Transboundary Biosphere Reserve there are numerous municipalities, the total population residing in it exceeds 300.000 people.



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Beyond the visual charm that it presents, the visit to these territories is enriched by its diversity. Its **remarkable flora and fauna**, as well as its **historical relevance** - because here numerous Roman and medieval remains are counted - complete a visit that turns out to be an experience, because in it the traveler can take advantage to also enter into the day to day of the people of the place; in their customs, in their gastronomy, in their villas.

Each of the spaces has specific information about it, as well as the possibility of carrying out various **routes** or adventure sports taking advantage of the terrain.

The visitor must reserve several days to travel the place due to its size, although it is true that the magic you discover there cannot be transmitted with words and images. You have to feel it.



[www.biosfera-mesetaiberica.com](http://www.biosfera-mesetaiberica.com)

[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/reservas-de-la-biosfera](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/reservas-de-la-biosfera)



## LAS BATUECAS NATURAL PARK - SIERRA DE FRANCIA



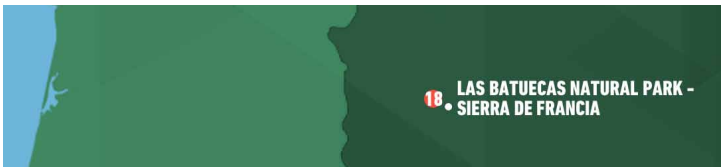
More than 30.000 hectares of extension in the province of **Salamanca** make up this natural park, located in the western foothills of the Spanish Central Mountain Range.

It covers a total of 15 municipalities, it is a space of contrasts, with great landscape and ecological value. That is why it is also listed as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, and also part of the Natura 2000 Network.



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The park is located between the watersheds of the **Tagus** and the **Douro**, bathed by the rivers Alagón, Francia, Batuecas and Agadón. The altitude here oscillates between the highest levels of Pico Hastiala (1,735 m) and the crest of Peña de Francia (1,723 m), and the lowest in Sotoserrano, on the banks of the Alagón River, over 400 meters. This causes areas with a clear Atlantic influence in the area, and others much warmer with a Mediterranean tendency, which favors its great diversity.



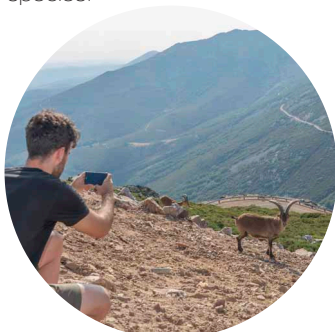
Regarding the **flora**, the armeria salmantica is noteworthy, which is a plant that grows only in the environment of Peña de Francia. The vegetation has species such as broom (Cytisus) and Pyrenean hedgehog (Echinopartum horridum). At a lower altitude, there are Pyrenean oaks and chestnut forests.

There are also areas of oak groves with birches and common oaks. In the south there are typical Mediterranean formations, such as holm oak, yew, strawberry trees, laurustinus (Viburnum tinus), and mastic trees. Great cultivated areas of fruit trees, vineyards and olive groves are also surprising, the cherry tree cultures, economic basis of many towns of the mountain range are outlined for its extension.



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The **fauna** composes 213 species of vertebrates like the griffon vultures and the black vultures. Also you can see the golden eagle, the peregrine falcon, the Egyptian vulture and the eagle owl. The black stork lives here, in danger of extinction. With respect to the reptiles it is possible to identify the small lizard of Peña de Francia, exclusive of these mountain ranges. Among other mammals, there are wild goats, badgers, wild cats, Egyptian mongooses, stone martens, Pyrenen desmans and otters. Roe deers, red deers and wild boars are also common species.



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The valley of Las Batuecas is one of the most singular places of the park, it is different because of its isolation and it has cave paintings. There is also a monastery of Discalced Carmerlites. Peña de Francia is outlined because from that place you can contemplate Pico Hastiala, Pico Mingorro, Mesa del Francés, the Cabriles, Campo Charro, the mountain ranges of Las Hurdes, Sierra de Béjar and Sierra de Gredos.

Beyond its landscaping wealth, the enclave hoards a great cultural wealth and an **important historical-artistic patrimony**, because six of their municipalities are declared like "Historical-Artistic Ensemble"; in addition, cave paintings, hermitages and monasteries can be visited here and even rests of Roman mines.

The visitors can go to the **Casa del Parque**, where they will be given the necessary information to enjoy the space and get to know the area thoroughly.

Routes, activities, gastronomy, and numerous options to really know the place. There they can check the calendar that gathers the main celebrations and events of the zone.



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[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/parque-natural-de-las-batuecas-sierra-de-francia](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/parque-natural-de-las-batuecas-sierra-de-francia)

[patrimonionatural.org/espacios-naturales/parque-natural/parque-natural-las-batuecas-sierra-de-francia](http://patrimonionatural.org/espacios-naturales/parque-natural/parque-natural-las-batuecas-sierra-de-francia)

## BIOSPHERE RESERVE SIERRAS DE BÉJAR AND FRANCIA

There are 85 municipalities that extend in the 199,140 hectares that comprise this **Biosphere Reserve** located in the Sierra de Béjar and Sierra de Francia, in the southeastern of the province of **Salamanca**.

A space that also includes the region of Campo Charro, dominated by the forests of oaks and the ecosystem of the pasture, where the brave bull and the Iberian pig live as main protagonists.



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An area that highlights the importance and the successful possibility of combining the conservation of the environment and the development and well-being of the population. It is framed between the river basins of the **Tagus** and the **Douro** River, and part of it is flooded by the reservoirs of Santa Teresa, on the Tormes River, and Gabriel and Galán, on the Alagón River.

The climate varies. As a result of its wide extension, relief, and orientation, high mountain, continental and Mediterranean climates are mixed in this Biosphere Reserve barely altered by man.

All this gives rise to a great **diversity** in terms of **flora and fauna**. Although the highest areas do not have too much vegetation and there are spaces where Atlantic and Mediterranean forests predominate.



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The fauna is made up of 213 species of vertebrates. It is relevant here the Area of Importance for the Conservation of Black Stork, which occupies much of the territory of the Biosphere Reserve and also has 11 areas declared as Critical Area of Black Stork.

The place has great mycological richness, including a great variety of edible species.

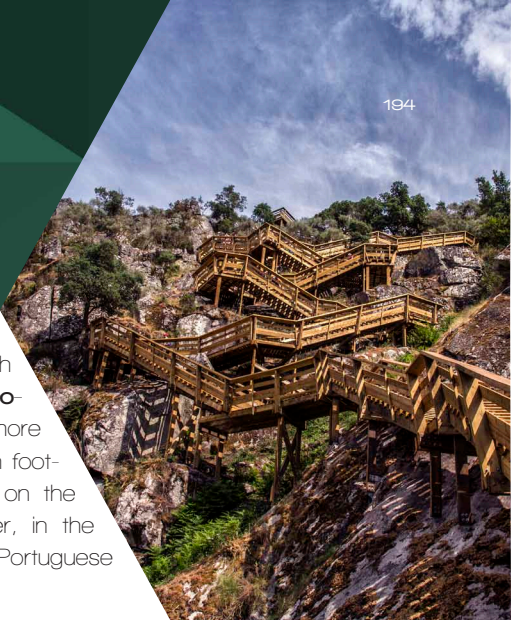
You must visit the Biosphere **Castle**. It dates from the 15th century and is located in **San Martín del Castañar**. Now it hosts the Visitors Interpretation and Reception Center of the Sierra de Béjar and Sierra de Francia Biosphere Reserve, and from there the visitor can plan stays, routes, activities... All adapted to each person or group, to be conquered by its charm, to enjoy discovering the magic of the place.



[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/reservas-de-la-biosfera](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/espacios-naturales/reservas-de-la-biosfera)

## PASSADIÇOS DO PAIVA (PAIVA WALKWAYS)

**Passadiços do Paiva**, which are part of the **Arouca Geopark**, consist of a path of more than 8 kilometers of wooden foot-bridges, which are located on the left bank of the Paiva River, in the municipality of Arouca in the Portuguese District of **Aveiro**.



The Paiva river, from the Douro river basin, has these passages from the Espinuca bridge to the Areinho river beach, and can be accessed from both points.



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In 2016, this space was distinguished for the first time with the prize of the most innovative tourism project in Europe of the World Travel Awards, specifically, in the category of **Leading Tourism Development Project in Europe**. The World Travel Awards again awarded Passadiços do Paiva in 2017 and 2018, a sign of the good conservation and good treatment the place receives.

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PASSADIÇOS DO PAIVA  
(PAIVA WALKWAYS)



Throughout this guide, natural spaces are referred to as those that have barely been altered by man, however here there are some passages, obviously the result of human modification. It happens because the passageways are simply a means. A way through which the visitor can access an **exceptional walk** through an unspoilt, virgin nature. The structure of the route is made of treated pine, and its function is only to make the place accessible.



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It is a landscape of unparalleled beauty, an authentic natural sanctuary in which the visitor observes the descents of whitewater and quartz crystals, and where you can also enjoy a diverse biodiversity, since several extinct species are observed in Europe. Geology and history are also two tourist attractions of space, because they enjoy relevance and interest.

To preserve the Passadiços do Paiva, **the number of daily visitors has been limited**. The quota amounts to 3500 people, and to visit them, those over 12 years old must buy a ticket at the symbolic price of 1 euro. The reservation can be formalized in advance by internet.

The area also has guided tours, accommodation, museums and interpretation centers, various activities and catering spaces. It is a perfect option to get in direct contact with nature and be trapped by the essence of a unique space.

## SERRA DA MAROFA

The **Serra da Marofa** is located in the municipality of **Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo**, in the Portuguese district of La Guardia. Spectacular landscapes are enjoyed from any corner, but the key is at its top, at the peak of Marofa. It is located at 975 meters of altitude and from that point you get a 360° panoramic view.

From here, towards the east, you can see the dam of Santa María de Aguiar, located very close to the Raya / Raia.



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Facing northeast, you can see the village of Castelo Rodrigo, with the remains of the fortification. Orienting the view to the north, one can see the deep Douro Valley (in the Barca d'Alva region) and to the west, the geological formation of the Colmeal Gorge.

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SERRA  
DA MAROFA

Serra da Marofa hosts a great biodiversity. As far as **fauna** is concerned, there are species such as the hawk, the hare and the partridge. On the other hand, when speaking of the **flora** of the place, we must outline the three predominant species; the almond tree, the olive tree and the pine tree.

Taking advantage of the enjoyment in the mountains, visitors should visit the **Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Fátima da Marofa**, the Vía Sacra. Nor should the visitor forget the visit to a beautiful **statue**, in granite, of **Cristo-Rei** (Christ-King), with open arms welcoming in them the whole town hall and a crypt where, on its walls, there are images of the patron saints of the Archpriest's parishes.



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It is said that, to the natural beauty of the space, the presence of Cristo-Rei must be added which, from the top of its magnificent rocky pedestal, with open arms, extends the hand over the immensity of the plain. Many people say that this monument, erected in 1956, justifies, by itself, the visit to Marofa.

Legend has it that it was a love episode between a Christian gentleman and the beautiful daughter of a rich Jew, who took refuge in Castelo Rodrigo. The name of the mountain would originate from the name of the woman, Ofa: Serra da Marofa.

The visitor must also prioritize in this area the visit to the **Historical Village of Castelo Rodrigo**. It is also advisable to visit the historical heritage of Pinhel and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo.



## SERRA DA ESTRELA



The **Serra da Estrela Natural Park** is the largest protected natural area throughout Portugal. Classified as **Estrela Geopark** by UNESCO, the site is also part of the Natura 2000 network, and covers a total of 88,850 hectares in the municipalities of Celorico da Beira, Covilhã, Gouveia, Guarda, Manteigas and Seia.

The park is, indelibly, associated with the people of the mountains, since they intervene in the promotion of grazing, in the production of artisanal cheese and, even, in the protection of the Serra da Estrela dog breed.



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It is characterized by severe winters and frequent snowfalls, so it has an enormous wealth in terms of water resources. Here three important Portuguese rivers run: the Mondego, the Zêzere and the Alva. Three types of climate are given here depending on the altitude; Mediterranean, Atlantic and continental. The superb landscapes of the mountains host an extraordinary richness of fauna and flora.

22  
SERRA DA ESTRELA

The park presents **numerous species** of mammals and birds, specially a diversity of small reptiles and amphibians, with some endemic species, like the mountain lizard.

The Serra da Estrela is the only mountain in Portugal that felt in a unique way, the glacial action, showing numerous testimonies in the landscape, such as polished rocks, boulders, glacial lakes, and deep valleys.

There are many **possibilities of routes** for the visitor, taking into account the great amplitude of the space. Some of them surpass the 100 kilometers, and are designed to cross them for one or several days, on foot, by car or bicycle.



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From the **tower**, where the 2000 meters of altitude are reached; there is a spectacular panoramic, it can be observed from the Serra de Boa Viagem in Buarcos, to the Sierra de Gredos in Spain, from Marão in Trás-os-Montes to the Serra de São Mamede in Portalegre in Alentejo.

From the Center of Interpretation of the Tower the visitor can learn about the history, or also get informed about the Lagoa Comprida, old lake glacier with 1 km of extension.

The immensity of the place creates numerous essential destinies in the visit, that will also help to understand the enchantment and the history of the park, like the Museum of the Bread, the Museum of

the Electricity, the Museum of the Toy, the own Center of Interpretation of the Serra da Estrela, the Chapel of San Pedro, or the Church of Mercy, among others. In addition, the mountain has a campsite for visitors.

**Manteigas** deserves a special mention, it is a villa located entirely in the heart of the Serra da Estrela, in the valley of the Zêzere river, surrounded by a magnificent scenery of mountains. The visit must include going to the trout hatchery in Caldas de Manteigas, which takes advantage of the crystalline waters of the mountain. There you can see specimens of trout and rainbow trout.

To get to know the area in depth, the visitor should go to the Interpretive **Center of the Glacier Valley of the Zêzere**, included in the initiative '7 Wonders of Portugal'. Its beauty and symmetry stand out, testimony of the action of the glaciers that modeled it creating its characteristic "U" shape.



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Manteigas offers a diverse landscape, with diverse, attractive, and well-preserved elements, with places of great beauty and tranquility, which promote intimate contact with nature.

The tourism of health and well-being is in the thermal stay located in **Caldas de Manteigas**. Also the sport-adventure, because in the area there are various tests of mountain bike (MTB) and paragliding nationally and internationally.

## SIERRA DA GARDUNHA

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**Serra da Gardunha** is an extension of Serra da Estrela. It is one of the most important reliefs of the Portuguese Beira Baixa, because it rises above 1225 meters of altitude.

Some **birds**, characteristic of mountain areas, are marked as the limit of this mountain range, and do not settle down further south of the Portuguese country. Gardunha, in Arabic, means refuge.



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Species such as collared dove, black redstart, blue rock thrush, bee eater, hoopoe, white wagtail or southern martin inhabit the area, from which you can also easily hear the song of golden oriole. In Gardunha, many more species can be seen, and there is a **route** designed to be able to spot them.

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SERRA DA  
GARDUNHA



The route runs up the slope to the top, and while climbing, the visitor will discover that only some isolated pines are observed. This is a consequence of the fires that devastated the area. The unpopulated scenarios of these semi-nude hillsides testify that a forest mantle existed here, in which the most common birds are now species typical of scrub areas with clearings, such as the woodlark, the whinchat, the melodious warbler, the Dartford warbler, the common linnet and the rock bunting.



207

Bird watching is one of the main claims of the Gardunha, but not the only one; if you visit the area, you must stop to enjoy the existing natural viewpoints, which provide **panoramic views** of the Cova da Beira, Serra da Estrela, Covilhã, Belmonte, Castelo Branco, Penamacor and Idanha-a-Nova.

Serra de Gardunha provides visitors with 350 km of pedestrian trails and 450 km of routes prepared for those who want to travel by bicycle. Spring is the ideal season to enjoy this space, although each season will bring different nuances to the foreigner, all of equal relevance and charm.

Taking advantage of the route through the mountains, it is worth stopping to visit the **adjacent municipalities**, such as Fundão, Castelo Branco, Covilhã, Castelo Novo, Abrantes, Alpedrinha, or Alcongosta, where you can visit the "Casa do Guarda".

## SERRA DA MALCATA NATURAL RESERVE

It is the most important natural area of the Portuguese municipality of **Sabugal**. It was created in 1981, with the aim of defending the mountain range and some of its species, such as the Iberian lynx. Border with the Spanish Sierra de Gata, the Natural Reserve of Serra da Malcata occupies an area of 16,348 hectares, belonging to the municipalities of Sabugal and Penamacor.



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Among its **fauna**, in addition to the Iberian lynx, there is the wild cat, the fox, the wild boar, the weasel or the genet. Also noteworthy are its birds, such as the black stork, in danger of extinction, and others that are difficult to observe, such as the nightingale, and the common redstar. Reptiles, such as the snake, the water lizard and the tadpole are also common. The Côa River bathes the area, where the river trout is found and in its habitat the common toad, the toad-runner, the Iberian frog and the green frog coexist.

SERRA DA MALCATA  
NATURAL RESERVE

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In the central and northern regions of the Natural Reserve, in the arboreal **vegetation** the black oak predominates (here one of its greatest concentrations is located in Portugal) or brown oak of the Beiras.

In the central area, there are also species such as the *Lonicera caprifolium*, the *Paeonia broteri*, Iberian endemism, tree heath, the spurge-laurel and the *Philyrea angustifolia*.

In the northern zone, protected by the Natura 2000 network, there are bushes of white broom from the mountains resulting from the degradation of the black oak forests.



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The reserve has several routes to get to know the area thoroughly, although it is recommended that visitors first ask about its conservation status.

From the landscape point of view, spring and autumn are the seasons that provide a landscape of more diversified colors, although the space is worth a visit throughout the year, as the festivals, pilgrimages and cultural offer complement the experience.

Around the Serra da Malcata Natural Reserve, visitors can enjoy **various points of interest** such as the Fonte dos Caçadores, the "7 municipalities" (a summit at an altitude of 1000 m, where seven of the bordering municipalities), the wall of the dam of the riverbank of Meimoa; the Alto da Machoca (the highest point of the Reserve, with 1078 m of altitude), the bridge over the Sabugal dam and its view-point, the birth of the Coa river and the castles of Sortelha (Historical Aldéia), Penamacor and Sabugal.

## NATURAL SPACES FROM EXTREMADURA

In **Extremadura** there are numerous remarkable natural areas, all of them protected by various relevant protection figures, which show their beauty and the importance of their ecosystems.

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## SIERRA DE GATA NATURAL RESERVE

In the northwest corner of the province of **Cáceres** rises the Sierra de Gata region, a space formed by a small network of protected areas of great biological and scenic interest.



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This space is included in the **Open Inventory of Natural Spaces of Special Protection**, highlighting the Ornithological Reserve of the Borbollón Reservoir, the Black Vulture Reserve in the Árrago Valley, the Landscape Reserve of the Jálama Mountain and the Sierra de Gata Biological Reserve.



It is a space of great landscape and floral diversity where mountain ranges alternate with valleys, through which the Árrago river and the Eljas river run.

It is one of the most pristine places on the Iberian Peninsula, in terms of nature and authenticity of rural life, also with an important architectural heritage.

## GARGANTA DE LOS INFIERNOS NATURAL RESERVE

This beautiful nature reserve is located in the north of Extremadura, and in the **Jerte Valley**. More than 7,000 hectares, with mountains ranging from 300 to 2,000 meters.



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This variation causes the vegetation to be very varied. On the sunny slopes **cherry trees** are grown, very famous and nationally recognized both for their fruits and for the spectacle they provide in spring throughout the Jerte region, which has led to the “Cerezo en Flor” (Cherry Blossom) festival.

The reserve has an Interpretation Center, you can make different hiking **routes**, on horseback, in 4x4, or by bicycle.



## NATURAL MONUMENT LOS BARRUECOS

A surprising place near the city of **Cáceres**, where gigantic granite boulders predominate. You can find manifestations of ancient civilizations, such as cave paintings, large amount of pots or Roman remains.



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Many aquatic birds nest in the area as well as an important colony of white **storks** in a natural state on the rock, unique in Europe, that is the reason why the town of Malpartida de Cáceres has been declared "European Town of the Stork".

The great German painter Wolf Vostell chose this enclave to create his museum (**Museo Vostell Malpartida**), one of the most important avant-garde ones, since the painter can be considered as the father of the techniques: Dé-coll / age, European Happening, of the Fluxus Movement and Video Art.



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## NATURAL MONUMENT MINE LA JAYONA

Located in the southeast of the province of **Badajoz**, it is thought that the place was already used by the Romans to extract mineral. Within the mine, the conditions of light and humidity have caused a peculiar micro climate in which fauna and vegetation proliferate.



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## CORNALVO NATURAL PARK

Located in Extremadura, in the province of **Badajoz**, and only 15 kilometers from the capital of Ex-tremadura, Mérida. It is a large natural area of more than 10,000 hectares, protected by the mountains of Sierra del Moro and Sierra Bermeja, and crossed by the rivers Aljucén and Albarregas, as well as by several streams.



Its name, Cornalvo, comes from the time of the Romans, who called the natural reservoir of the park *Cornus Albus* (White Horn), since it has the shape of a horn and whitish waters.



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The Romans were also the ones who built the dam over the **Albarregas stream**, now considered a National Monument due to its importance and careful conservation. It was used to supply water to part of the city of Emerita Augusta (Mérida).

Meadows of oaks and cork oaks predominate in the park, which extend mainly by the flat lands. On the slopes of the mountains, however, there are still areas where forest vegetation and Mediterranean scrub are preserved.

The high degree of conservation of these ecosystems and the scarce incidence of human transformations on the environment have led to the permanence in this enclave of numerous species of **fauna**, with more than 250 species of vertebrates counted.

There are some endemic species of the Guadiana, such as the loaches, the bogues, the linnets or the minnowcarp. As for the amphibians, the Iberian midwife toad will only be found, within the planet, in the basins of the Tagus and Guadiana rivers.

Travelers who prefer mammals may come to see a species close to extinction such as the wildcat. Ornithology is noteworthy, with 155 species including the black stork, the honey buzzard, the black-winged kite, the white stork, and the half thousand grottos that make the park their home every winter.



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It has **six paths** differentiated by colors, which can be covered on foot or by bicycle and which are accessible for people with reduced mobility. But to discover all the corners and routes of the park, it is better to visit its Interpretation Center, located in the Dehesa Boyal de Trujillanos, near the Hermitage of San Isidro. It houses several themed rooms with videos, exhibitions, descriptive panels, information on water management by the ancient Romans and changes in the park according to the time of day.

## MONFRAGÜE NATIONAL PARK

17,852 hectares of National Park located in the province of **Cáceres**, between the municipalities of Trujillo, Plasencia and Cáceres. It is also a Natural Park, recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve, and Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB), as it is one of the points of greatest ornithological interest in Spain.



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Here three main habitats predominate: the Mediterranean forest and scrub, the meadows, and the rocky and water masses (rivers and reservoirs).



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The land that is part of the Monfragüe National Park is crossed by the **Tagus River** and its tributary, the **Tiétar**, whose mouth is located precisely in the interior of the park, very close to one of the most representative places in the area, the Salto del Gitano or Peña Falcón, which gets its name from a peculiar legend, and from where two large ridges can be seen crossed by the Tagus.

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NATIONAL PARK

Another essential place for visitors is the **Mirador del Castillo de Monfragüe**, an old Arab fortress that has been reinforced with several observation platforms. From there, in addition to a panorama of indescribable beauty of the park, you can also enjoy the birds that fly over the area.



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A world reference area in terms of **ornithology** is located here, among its great diversity, one of the largest colonies in Europe of black vulture, golden eagle, and black stork. Its fauna is made up of more than 280 species of vertebrates, among which, in addition to the aforementioned birds, other endan-gered species such as the lynx are found.

The orientation of the mountain ranges causes a differentiation between their slopes, giving rise to humid zones of soft microclimates, and also to sunny areas. The most abundant landscape is the meadows, a Mediterranean forest with clearings of scrub and pastures. The **flora** of the place is composed of cork oaks, holm oaks, rockroses, strawberry trees, heather, ash, willows, and holly, among others.



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Other outstanding viewpoints of the place are La Serrana, El Pliegue (where one of the points of geological interest of the park is located: El Pliegue de las Cuarcitas de Caradoc), La Tajadilla, La Higuera, La B ascula or La Malavuelta, among others.



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In Monfrag e there are also numerous caves and natural shelters that contain **cave paintings**. Footprints left by the first settlements of men in prehistory. The best known is the Cueva del Castillo (located near the Castle of Monfrag e), but it is closed to the public (you can only see the outer part since the entrance is protected by a gate).

However, you can see replicas of the paintings and much information about the rock art in the Rock Art Center of Torrej n el Rubio. Also relevant are the Cueva del Peine and the Cueva de los Murci lagos; In total, more than one hundred shelters have been cataloged in the area.



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The place is also the perfect destination to enjoy **astrotourism**, because its skies, clean of light pollution, provide a wonderful scene. It has an Astronomical Observatory with a four meter dome and several telescopes, although to visit it and enjoy the experience it is necessary to have a previous reservation.

There are also several **hiking trails** to explore this natural paradise. They are identified with colors and have different extensions and degrees of difficulty, although the longer route (red) is divided into several independent sections. Some of the routes, not the most common, require prior authorization.



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The ideal thing for those who come to the National Park for the first time is to go to **Villarreal de San Carlos**, in the heart of the park. There, they will find the Visitor Center and the Interpretation Center, where they will be informed about everything necessary to those who want to be conquered by the place. The majesty of it can be enjoyed on foot, by car, by bicycle, and even on horseback.

## INTERNATIONAL TAGUS NATURAL PARK

Under the name of this protection figure, **International Tagus (Tajo / Tejo) Natural Park**, two natural spaces of similar characteristics are combined with different management bodies. We are facing another perfect link between Spain and Portugal. Half of the park is located in the southwest of the province of **Cáceres**, in the area of Alcántara (Spain), occupying about 25,000 hectares; the other half is in the east of the Alentejo, in the **Castelo Branco** area (Portugal) occupying some 26.000 hectares. It is a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, cataloged by Unesco.

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Taking into account the Portuguese zone of the park, it is the first geopark in Portugal recognized by UNESCO, the **Naturetejo Geopark**. The division of territories is nothing more than the natural course of the Tagus River, which extends linearly for 60 kilometers. The area is also known as 'la entalladura del Tajo' (Tagus carving). The terrain, steep and with a maximum altitude of 383 meters, has a small population,

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NATURAL PARK

which has favored the conservation of the environment despite the passage of time, because it is an area inhabited since ancient times. Diverse **megalithic groups** are located there, the most important ones in Europe.

The coexistence of the park with the human activities carried out there, such as agriculture and grazing, is really harmonious, and results in local products of high quality (honey, oil, cheese, and even homemade bread), manufactured through traditional techniques that the visitor can acquire directly from the producer.



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As for its **flora**, the vegetation of Mediterranean forest, with dehesas of oaks and cork oaks is outlined. The Tagus River and its tributaries crossing the land form deep valleys and steep slopes; These rugged landscapes give rise to an ecosystem in which 154 species of birds are cataloged. Among others, populations of black stork (symbol of the park), eagle owl, black vulture, or Iberian imperial eagle, inhabit this Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB). Among its fauna there are also wild boars, foxes, and deer, among others.

The park has an Observatory that tourists should visit. It is also recommendable to get close to important places such as the Ribeira de las Varetas waterfall, the Ruinas de los Alares, the natural monument of the Portas de Ródão, the Portas de Almourão, and the Belver dam.

There are **varied routes** to enjoy the surroundings; the routes can be done on foot, by mountain bike, or even by boat. To complete the experience of those who come to the area, they also offer various activities such as climbing or canoeing. Following the course of the Tagus River in Portuguese territory, the visitor also has the opportunity to discover Abrantes, Constancia, the castle of Almourol and Vila Nova da Barquinha.



## NATURAL PARK OF SERRA DE SÃO MAMEDE



The **Serra de São Mamede Natural Park** is located in the district of Portalegre, in the Portuguese region of **Alentejo**. It has a total of 55.524 hectares, and its main feature is the predominance of its relief, unusual in this area.

The mountain is a touch of green in the landscape, because it is located in an arid and stony region. Its highest summit reaches 1025 meters of altitude, and is in itself an exceptional viewpoint.



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Due to these conditions, the Serra presents a microclimate of its own and very particular if compared to that of the surrounding areas. Here the levels of precipitation and humidity are much higher, and the snow even crowns the mountain during the winter. All this allows a diverse and **different vegetation** to the one that is in its surroundings. In the north, oaks and chestnuts predominate, and in the south, holm oaks and cork oaks.

NATURAL PARK OF  
SERRA DE SÃO MAMEDE <sup>29</sup>

As for the **fauna**, you can see birds such as the griffon vulture, the Bonelli's eagle (symbol of the park), bats, or the black kite, among others.

In addition, trying to recover their natural habitat, species such as wild boar and deer are being reintroduced in the Serra de São Mamede, and otters, batrachia, wild cats, foxes or the common rabbit can also be observed.



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There are up to **eight routes** that can be done on foot or by bicycle, so that visitors can get to know this natural enclave in depth, where they will also discover remains of human presence in various historical periods.

Here you will find millenary marks in dolmens, menhirs, forts, Roman bridges from the fifteenth century, and also an immense network of roads, some of which are integrated into the pedestrian paths of the natural park.



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It is the ideal place for hiking, biking, or even climbing, and disconnect enjoying a few days of adventure in contact with nature. If you want to complete the visit, the **nearby medieval villages** of Castelo de Vide, Alegrete and Marvão or the city of Portalegre stand out.



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It is also worth noting the **gastronomic offer** of the place, for its regional specialties, among which the visitor can try lamb stew, roasted lamb and sweets such as "boleima" or "sericaia" with prunes from Elvas.

## SIERRA DE ARACENA AND PICOS DE AROCHE NATURAL PARK

The **Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park** is a natural area located in the north of the province of **Huelva**, at the western end of Sierra Morena. Its 186.827 hectares extend along 28 municipalities of the Sierra de Aracena, and its river network covers the basins of the Odiel, Guadiana and Guadalquivir rivers.

It is also part of the Sierra Morena Meadows Biosphere Reserve, adheres to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST), and is protected as a Site of Community Interest (SCI) and Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB).



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The landscape is variable, it depends on the altitude and humidity. As far as **flora** is concerned, there are populated meadows of oaks, areas of cork oaks, or in areas of higher altitude, forests of Pyrenean oaks or chestnut trees.

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PICOS DE AROCHE NATURAL PARK

In channels of rivers such as Múrtigas there are a lot of gallery forests where you can find large trees such as poplars, ash, willows and alders, along with brambles and climbing plants. This last environment provides an ideal resting place for the visitor.

All this leads to an interesting richness in its **fauna**, where mammals such as the mongoose, the genet, or the otter are found, and also a remarkable birds like vultures, kites and black storks.



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In addition, the environment has favored the breeding of the **Iberian pig**, and above this there is a business route that supports the economy of villages in the area, such as Jabugo, because the taste of these peoples is universal thanks to the Iberian jewel, the Jamón de Huelva, (Huelva's ham) quality sign with Protected Designation of Origin.

The ham accompanies the magnificent Iberian pork meat of this mountain range; the stews, seasonal mushrooms and endless traditional recipes full of patience, natural ingredients and unforgettable flavors that the visitor can not miss.

Privileged destination in the middle of the nature, surprising places like the Gruta de las Maravillas (Grotto of the Wonders) in Aracena or the Peña de Arias Montano in Alj ar, meadows full of light and more than a thousand kilometers of **marked trails** where the traditional way of life of its people lives in perfect harmony with the spectacular surroundings of the park. Skies of a thousand stars cover the most beautiful landscapes in the middle of living nature, and a multitude of colors, flavors, scents and feelings make this mountain a paradise for the senses.



## RIO TINTO PROTECTED LANDSCAPE



It is a unique enclave in the world in the province of **Huelva**. The Protected Landscape covers 16956.79 hectares, the high and middle sections of the Rio Tinto, and gathers, in addition to an admirable beauty, historical and exceptional environmental conditions.

The name of Rio Tinto (Red Wine River) comes from its reddish color, caused by its high content of ferruginous salts and ferric sulphate which, together with the lack of oxygen, give a very acid pH. Surrounding its upper course is the largest open-pit mining site in Europe.



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This has been exploited from the Tartessos by numerous cultures; the Romans, with their advanced technology, and the modern British industry were undoubtedly their times of greatest splendor. The British left their mark beyond the mountain, in Huelva and Spanish culture itself, as their presence meant the entrance of English sports in the country, including football.

Despite the conditions of the water, there are **many microorganisms** that adapt to these extreme conditions, feeding only on minerals. Many of them have not yet been cataloged.

The NASA, American space agency, studies this place to know these life forms, because they consider that there are relevant similarities between this surface and that found on the planet Mars.



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As for the **flora**, vegetation is scarce on the banks of the river, due to the acidity that it presents, however here the heather of the mines can be seen, which welcomes and feeds the fauna of the place. Bats are also found in the cavities of the mining area.

The visitor will be surprised of much more than the color of the waters and the mining deposit, the Protected Landscape presents diverse corners, infrastructures and elements that tell their history.



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A history that has marked the development and forged the culture of the adjacent towns, that must also be discovered and in which a remarkable gastronomy is enjoyed.



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Also noteworthy in the protected area is the short Peña del Hierro, due to its depth and the multicolored lake that is created in its depth. In addition, you can round off the visit with the cultural offer of the museums in the area such as the Mining Museum, 21st House, Mining Railroad, etc.

## NATIONAL AND NATURAL PARK OF DOÑANA

The **Natural Area of Doñana**, constituted by the National Park and the Doñana Natural Park, is located in the south of Spain, in the western end of Andalusia, with territory mostly in the province of **Huelva**, and a smaller part of it located in the provinces of **Seville and Cádiz**.



It has the cataloging of World Heritage granted by UNESCO, and that of Biosphere Reserve.



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The more than 100.000 hectares covered by the Doñana territory are recognized as extraordinary and this makes, if possible, more important its preservation for future generations. It is one of the **most important wetlands in Europe**, of particular relevance also due to the strategic nature of its situation (between the European and African continent, and at the confluence of the Atlantic and Mediterranean regions) and taking into account the extent of its extension.



It is a mosaic of landscapes that include lagoons, beaches, fixed and mobile dunes, preserves and marshes. It is also a paradisiacal enclave for **ornithological lovers**, as the different spaces host a rich variety of fauna and constitute the wintering refuge of more than 300.000 waterfowl per year.



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At the beginning of autumn and during the winter you can enjoy the presence of thousands of waterfowl such as geese and ducks from northern Europe. In spring and summer storks, herons and swallows, among other species, come from Africa in search of food and a milder climate. The ecosystems formed from the wetlands, the coast, and the flora of the place (pine forests, cork oak meadows, bushes, riverbank forests...) are key in this community of birds of different species.

Among the wide variety that is in the place, it is worth mentioning two of the species in greater risk of extinction of the European fauna, the **imperial eagle** and the **Iberian lynx**. Other mammals, reptiles and birds are found in the forests, and here there is also a place for cattle, sheep, cows, horses and mares.



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Here, each year **the mares are taken out**, a centuries-old tradition that takes place in Almonte, Huelva, coinciding with the San Pedro Fair. The people from Almonte collect the mares and foals that graze during all the year in the different zones of Doñana, they do it by penetrating in the marsh, and the animals are enclosed for their cleaning, known as tuzá, and the foals are shod for their future sale. The specimens that are not sold, are returned to the marsh.



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The **flora** of this natural area of Doñana is as diverse as the park itself, in habitats of the lagoons you can find the Phragmites, the bulrush, *Scirpus holoschoenus* and the *Scirpus littoralis*.

The variety is widened when the influence of the fluvial channels is taken into account, with cork oak, strawberry tree and myrtle, among others; there is also place for forests of royal fern, ash, white poplar, sarsaparilla, honeysuckle...

In preserves and corrals the stabilized soils allow the existence of splendid forests of stone pine. Stabilizing the dunes and on the coast there are plants that withstand greater aridity and the scourge of wind, sand and salt, also called disheveled forests, such as *Corema album*, Phoenician juniper, *dianthus broteroi* and European beach-grass.

Another of the relevant points in Doñana is the system of **dunes in movement** that runs between Matalascañas and the mouth of the Guadalquivir. There are more than 25 kilometers of virgin beach and white sands; a visit to the fossil dune of the Asperillo, with more than 30 meters of height, is essential; or, already in the beach, to the cliff of the same name declared Natural Monument by its singularity and beauty.

Also noteworthy are the Bonanza, Gallega, Ribeteñilos or El Lucio del Cangrejo **lagoons**, where numerous birds feed and breed. It is very attractive for the visitor to stop and observe the surroundings here, the magic on the horizon enjoying the spectacular flight of the flamingos.



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Man has modified the area throughout its history. Traditional techniques such as beekeeping, pineapple harvesting or agriculture are still carried out. The famous village of El Rocío is here, known for the pilgrimage that takes place every year around its hermitage and the image of its patron, curiously called "The Queen of the Marshes."

Within the Natural Park, there are privately owned lands, their owners must follow the restrictions that the management of natural park obliges them to.

The environmental importance of this territory conditions the quality of the experience. The visitor can walk the extensive network of existing **trails** through hiking or cycling. There are several observatories, as well as the possibility of enjoying birdlife with a guide. Guided tours are also offered in 4x4 vehicles to get to know the place thoroughly. Also, the visitor can navigate in the Real Fernando Ship, that moves by the Guadalquivir from Sanlúcar.

There is also an offer of sports activities, and other remarkable resources of the destination are the towers of the coast, such as Carboneros, Zalabar and Pico del Loro, all built in the 16th century as a defense for pirates and corsairs.

## NATURAL PLACE MARISMAS DEL ODIEL

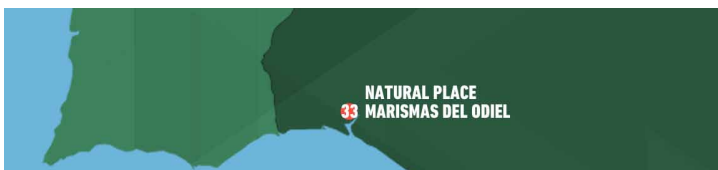
The **Natural Area Marismas del Odiel** is located on the banks of the Ría de Huelva, in the estuary complex originated by the mouths of the Tinto and Odiel rivers, bringing together a diversity of landscapes such as lagoons, salt lakes (Bacuta, Aragonesas, Batán), islands (En-medio, Saltes, Bacuta), beaches (Espigón) or forests (El Almendral, El Acebuchal or La Cascajera).

They are considered the most important tidal marshes of the Iberian Peninsula. This area of 7185 hectares maintains an excellent level of conservation, has the cataloging of Biosphere Reserve, granted by UNESCO, and is a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB).



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The **fauna richness** of the marshes includes the largest spoonbill breeding colony on the continent, which hosts around a third of the European population.



The marshes are also the habitat of royal and imperial herons, black storks, cranes and flamingos, as well as raptor species. This authentic ornithological sanctuary is a fundamental point in the migratory passages.

This natural area also has in its interior the Natural Reserves of El Burro Marsh, with 597 hectares, and the Island of Enmedio, with 480 hectares, which stand out for the excellent degree of conservation of its ecosystems.



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As for the **flora**, plants such as the *Arthrocneum* and cordgrass stand out, which characterize the landscape. In the sandy ecosystems of the wetland salt cedar, Phoenician juniper, kermes oak, mastic, black rockrose, rockrose and rosemary grow; while in the headwaters of streams and peripheral estuaries a vegetation of rushes, bulrushes and *Tamarix gallica* develops.

This Natural Park has a Reception and Interpretation Center that offers visitors different resources so you can get to know this paradise.

A network of free access **trails**, which has several viewpoints, and interpretive areas, adds the offer of guided itineraries on foot, by train or boat from where it is possible to enjoy the horizontality of the landscape and the magic of sound and color that offers the presence of the large number of birds that live and feed in these waters. A place of immense peace where you can feel nature in its purest state.

## RÍA FORMOSA NATURAL PARK

It is one of the 7 Natural Wonders of Portugal. The **Ría Formosa Natural Park** is one of the most impressive places in the **Algarve**, south of the Portuguese country, located through the municipalities of Loulé, Faro, Olhão, Tavira and Vila Real de Santo António.



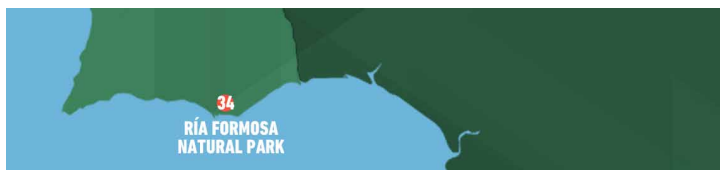
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It is an area of more than 18,000 hectares, a coastal lagoon constantly changing due to winds and tides. It has **five islands and two peninsulas**; the peninsula of Ancão (called Ilha do Faro), Ilha Barreta also known as Ilha Deserta, Ilha Culatra (where the Santa María lighthouse is located), Ilha Armona, Ilha Tavira, Ilha Cabanas and, finally, the Cacela Peninsula.



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The visitor can witness many different habitats such as barrier islands, marshes, marshes, islets, dunes, salt pans, freshwater lagoons, agricultural areas and forests that maintain an impressive **diversity of flora and fauna**.



Its location and its natural characteristics have also led it to be part of the list of wetlands of global interest defined by the Ramsar Convention and to be a place protected by the Natura 2000 Network.

It is a paradise of **birdwatching**, because the Formosa estuary can reach 300,000 birds during spring and autumn. Species such as the tern and the avocet nest here in the spring. The estuary is also a winter refuge for waterfowl such as the common shoveler, the common teal, the curlew and the gray plover. It is also very important as a stopover point in the migration routes between Africa and Europe.

And it is also the home of some rarer species, such as the western swamphen, with blue feathers, because the Formosa estuary is the only place of reproduction of this species that is known in the Portuguese country. It is therefore the perfect place for bird watching.



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In this Natural Park there are also other endangered species such as the chameleon and the seahorse, because here you can find the **largest population of seahorses in the world**. Given the scarce depth of its waters, the lagoon is also a nursery of diverse oceanic species, and shell fishing is a relevant activity in the area.

A changing landscape in its day to day, molded to the cravings of tides and in tune with the sun. A true natural paradise that the visitor can discover through guided routes, bicycle tours, boat trips, etc. and in which you can also enjoy numerous tourist and sports activities.

## SAPAL DE CASTRO MARIM E VILA REAL DE SANTO ANTÓNIO NATURAL RESERVE

In the Portuguese **Algarve**, shortly before ending at Vila Real de Santo António, the Guadiana River forms a large marsh that is flooded with the effect of the tides of the Atlantic Ocean.

This marshy area, known as **Sapal de Castro Marim e Vila Real de Santo António**, was the first declared Natural Reserve in the continental Portugal, and has a total of 2089 hectares.

It is a unique ecosystem, an ideal site for the reproduction of fish, crustaceans and molluscs, which are born here and grow, and later venture to the sea.

Throughout the year it is a good place for **birdwatching**, it is a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPAB) and there are species such as flamingos, herons, cormorants, and storks, as they have a large population in the area. The image of a stork is, in fact, the symbol of the reserve.

It is an Algarve very different from the one that the tourist assumes, since here you will not find beaches. **Salt marshes** occupy almost a third part of the protected area, and over the years they have been an important source of wealth in the area. Salt is still produced in many of them by artisanal techniques, and the result is a quality product certified by the Natural Reserve.

As for the drier areas of the place, they stand out for their agriculture, carob, fig and almond trees.



The Reserve has a visitor center and several routes for bird watching and landscape, the visitors can choose if they prefer a trip to the wetlands of the interior or if they prefer to discover the Guadiana riverbank, and also visit the traditional salt mines, where you can learn about the process of salt production.



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A good place to have a panoramic view of the entire reserve is **Castro Marim Castle**, as it offers fantastic views from its walls.



# **FLUVIAL ACTIVITIES AND THERMALISM**

**SPORT, ADVENTURE  
AND WELL-BEING**





Perhaps first of all, **adventure tourism** and **health and wellbeing tourism** can be understood as opposites, since the former calls for activation and action through sports, and the latter is more associated with rest, relaxation and disconnection. Border tourism encompasses both, and is able to combine this adventure and this well-being in a very simple way, because these types of tourism are joined by destinations. And in this case, the destination is the border.

Some **twenty rivers** are located in the Raya / Raia. At some point, they all act as a territorial boundary between both territories, allowing Spain and Portugal to take advantage of their resources and enrich the ecosystems of their natural spaces.

Because of their relevance, four of them are really protagonists in the Spanish-Portuguese border. They are the Miño river, bordering 76 kilometers before its mouth, the Douro River, which is 112 kilometers long, the Tagus River, which acts as a natural border for 47 kilometers, and the Guadiana River, which makes it in about 100.

All of them serve different border towns as a source of wealth, sometimes as a base for their industrial exploitation, and sometimes as the axis of their tourist offer.

Taking into account this second option, the visitor will be able to enjoy the **fluvial waters** not only as a natural place that embellishes exceptional spaces, but as a niche for various activities that can be developed in them.



Thus, destinations are proposed that make a **complete offer of leisure and adventure** available to the traveler by touring these rivers, either through routes and trails, or using various boats following its course. Sports such as canoeing, kayaking, kite surfing, windsurfing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, water skiing or paddle surfing can also be carried out in these river waters.

The same waters are the perfect scenario for the tourist who is looking for calm, because there are some exceptional river beaches in these areas, some of them awarded with the European Blue Flag, which certifies their category.

If the desire of the traveler goes beyond the calm that can be found on the fluvial beaches, or if the weather prevents the enjoyment of these, the **thermal offer** of the border is also overwhelming. Thermalism from the experience it brings as a historical tradition, since the Romans were who discovered the therapeutic powers of these waters.

Destination borderlands, a destination for various types of tourism. A destination for all.



**1** O CARBALLIÑO  
THERMAL BATHS

**3**

**RIVER  
MIÑO**

**2** THERMAL  
OURENSE

**4** EUROCITY OF THE WATER AND THERMAL  
WATER ROUTE VERÍN-CHAVES-VIDAGO

VERÍN

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RIVER GUADIANA

# FLUVIAL ACTIVITIES AND THERMALISM MAP

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## RIVER MIÑO

The **river Miño / Minho**, located in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, has a length of 315 kilometers. Of these, 274 pass through the autonomous community of Galicia. In its final stretch, its last 76 kilometers act as border between Spain and Portugal before its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean. The river has a total of **five reservoirs**, Belesar, Peares, Velle, Catrelo and Frieira, placing the last two already in the border section with the Portuguese country.

Its main **tributary** is the **River Sil**, both are in the **Ribeira Sacra**, a spectacular natural enclave. In addition to traveling various routes bordering both rivers, here the visitor can enjoy various activities such as canoeing, kayaking, canyoning, or visiting the **fluvial beaches** enabled in the area, such as A Cova, the quintessential beach of Miño.

An area that can also be covered by **catamaran**, since there are several piers from which to embark to discover an exceptional natural space from the river, observing from it the immensity and beauty of the canyons and gorges that nature has been shaping over time.

As it passes through the **city of Ourense**, the river becomes the protagonist. There is a whole thermal route, of five kilometers of pedestrian path, where **six thermal installations** are concentrated in which the visitor can relax and rest.



In the last stretch of the Miño, A Veronza stands out, in **Ribadavia**. A bathroom space with swimming pools, picnic area, sports areas and playground.

The river is navigable transversally and longitudinally, in small stretches like the one mentioned, and also in its last 33 kilometers. Here, at the mouth of it, it forms an **estuary** between the towns of **A Guarda and Caminha**. This is considered one of the most important wetlands of the Peninsula, with the confluence of two ecosystems, the fluvial and maritime, and has numerous figures of protection.



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**Ornithological tourism** has one of its obligatory stops here. There are several routes to enjoy the area, but among them is the PRG160, which runs along the right bank of the river, where visitors enjoy, in addition to the diversity of flora and fauna, ethnographic elements such as ceramic furnaces, fishing, the salt marshes of the mouth or the windmills on the coast.

In the area you can also enjoy various fluvial beaches such as O Codesal, O Muiño, A Lamiña or A Armona, equipped with various services and where various river sports such as kayaking, and not fluvial, such as beach volleyball, can be enjoyed.



[www.turismo.gal/inicio](http://www.turismo.gal/inicio)

## THERMAL OURENSE

**Ourense** was born as Aquis Auriensis, the city of gold and water. Its recognition of the abundance of its medicinal waters extends from antiquity to the present day. It was the Romans who baptized it as Aquis Auriensis, they did it two thousand years ago, when they established their settlement in As Burgas, emblematic thermal springs of the city from which the water emanates at more than 60 degrees of temperature.

At any time of year, regardless of the season and temperature, it is always a good time to enjoy a thermal bath in Ourense, as this activity is one of the distinctive identities of the city. Although it is a historical tradition, today it is more alive than ever and there are numerous facilities available for it, such as hot springs in the middle of nature, inspired by the Japanese tradition of the Onsen.

Among the wide offer of the city, crossed by the Miño river, the visitor can enjoy the thermal activities such as those that can be performed in the **Thermal Pool of As Burgas**; it is located in the historic heart of the city, the visitor enjoys a bath at 37° in alkaline, lithium, fluorine, silicate and slightly radioactive waters. The purpose of a bath in this pool is relaxation, as it is not usually used as a therapeutic treatment. The complex also includes a Roman bath or wet sauna.



On the banks of the Miño River you can find the thermal pools of **A Chavasqueira**. They were the first that were prepared for the enjoyment of the population in the city. After the thermal complex was burned in a fire, they are currently out of service; its reopening is scheduled for the end of next year 2020.

Just 500 meters away there is the **source of O Tinteiro**, which is also credited with healing powers such as wound healing, among others.



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The offer of Ourense does not stop there, because in the **Muiño da Veiga thermal space**, you can also enjoy a set of five pools and a glass of cold water for contrasting baths. The place offers, also for free, a large recreational green area.

The **Termas de Outariz and Burga de Canedo** complete the experience, the largest thermal space in Ourense, also next to the Miño river. Here, the visitor can enjoy various circuits beneficial to health, and combine them with relaxation activities and personal well-being.

[www.termasourense.com/](http://www.termasourense.com/)

## O CARBALLIÑO THERMAL BATHS

**O Carballiño** is a priority thermal destination in Galicia, because the spa is one of the fundamental pillars of the town, located in the extreme northwest of the province of Ourense, crossed by the basin of the **Arenteiro River**.

Trout and other fish abound in this river. It has three fishing reserves for the enjoyment of all fans of this sport.

In it, also, other sports activities such as kayak practice are developed, and many people take advantage of the path that runs alongside their course day after day.

The thermalism here dates back to the time of the Romans. It has two private spas; the **Gran Balneario**, with 118 years of history, and the **Balneario de las Caldas de Partovia**, which has been modernized in recent years.



O CARBALLIÑO  
THERMAL BATHS

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It also has a public and modest thermal area, the **Bañiño de Arcos**, located on the banks of the Arenteiro River, which has a fountain and a pond.

Its waters sprout at a temperature higher than 17°, and among its virtues its recommendation for dermatological and hepatic affections stands out.



[www.termasourense.com/tag/carballino](http://www.termasourense.com/tag/carballino)



## EUROCITY OF THE WATER AND THERMAL WATER ROUTE VERÍN-CHAVES-VIDAGO



The municipalities of **Chaves**, in the Portuguese region of Trás-Os-Montes, and **Verín**, in the Spanish province of Ourense, make up a thermal enclave known as **"the Eurocity of the water"**, a frontier destination characterized by its ethnographic, cultural contrasts, gastronomic and landscape.

A place where the tourist can enjoy a complete experience feeling part of it. The main feature of this Eurocity is water, because the largest concentration of **hot springs and mineral-medical springs** throughout the Iberian Peninsula are located here.

This constitutes a source of opportunities; so much, that this wealth has led the area to receive the classification of **Thermal Tourism Destination**.



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Here, an entire area of tourism excellence has been developed, focused on health and well-being. This is possible because from the existing aquifers water of incomparable quality flows, recognized thanks to the use made of it, either for treatments, or bottled water.

In Verín the most mentioned springs are **Cabreiroá, Sausas, Fontenova, Fuente do Sapo and Caldeliñas**. In the Portuguese territory, there are the thermal spas of **Chaves, Campilho, Vidago and Vilarelho da Raia**. The offer of the entire destination is structured through the Thermal Route and the Transboundary Water, which on foot, by car or bicycle, the visitor can enjoy accompanied by a gastronomic offer focused on well-being.



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The best of two countries in the same destination, visiting lost corners where water sources with healing properties that will satisfy the thirst of the visitor are hidden.

In addition, the **"Verín-Chaves-Vidago Water and Thermal Route"** runs along the Támega River, the multiple springs of mineral-medical water. It is the water that heals.

In Verín, the buvettes of Cabreiroá, Sousas, Fontenova and Caldeliñas are historical references. In Chaves, the Termas & Spa of Chaves, with its hyperthermal waters, nourish a tradition of health and wellness tourism that dates back from Roman times.



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Finally, the Pedagogic and Practice Spa and Vidago Thermal and the Thermal Park of Vidago Palace, where its buvettes managed to attract the most selected of European society at the beginning of the 20th century.



[www.visitchavesverin.com/es/servicios/  
ruta-termal-y-del-agua](http://www.visitchavesverin.com/es/servicios/ruta-termal-y-del-agua)

## TERRAS DE BOURO

The municipality of **Terras de Bouro**, located in the Portuguese district of **Braga**, is a mountain municipality integrated into the **Peneda-Gerês National Park**, which makes it the possessor of excellent natural cultural and tourist resources.

Here natural resources have remained unaltered, the area has a varied fauna and flora, and has become a remarkable destination for adventure tourism, since as well as walks and hiking trails, mountain sports or horse riding are becoming more popular.

Also located in the municipality there are remarkable **lagoons**, such as Caniçada and Vilarinho das Furnas, which are very attractive to visitors because of their beauty, and where different activities and water sports take place.



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TERRAS 5  
DE BOURO

The municipality also offers the possibility of being treated in the thermal villages of Gerês and Moimenta.

The **Termas del Gerês** began to be exploited by the Romans, although the first spa dates back to the 17th century. To the exceptional of its waters it is necessary to add the magnitude of the landscape, because the calm and relaxed stay in the thermal station is seen complete when locating it in the National Park.

The same happens with the **Termas de Moimenta**, destination of health and well-being in a spectacular enclave, perfect for rest.



[www.cm-terrasdeboouro.pt/index.php/2014-09-18-15-01-10/2014-09-19-07-54-15](http://www.cm-terrasdeboouro.pt/index.php/2014-09-18-15-01-10/2014-09-19-07-54-15)

## GUIMARÃES THERMAL BATHS

The village of **Caldas das Taipas** is located in the north of Portugal, a few kilometers from the center of the city of **Guimarães**, and is a perfect option to make a stop, since its attractions include its spa.



Guimarães protects and promotes its historical and cultural legacy, and here the **thermal waters** are framed. This therapeutic use of its waters goes back to the Roman Empire.

In fact, next to the main church of the town, there is a huge block of granite with an inscription in Latin dedicated to the Roman emperor Trajan Augustus, denouncing the demand and use, during the imperial era, of these medicinal waters.



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The **thermal Taipas** spa has a water rich in low-salt, sulfur, sodium, silicate and fluoride. This is indicated for the relief of diseases of the respiratory, rheumatic and musculoskeletal tracts, dermatological diseases and physical medicine and rehabilitation. Its visitors complete the 30° baths with a wide range of treatments in its wellness program.

The thermal heritage of Guimarães is added to its extensive cultural and sports program, which makes the city a remarkable destination in the north of Portugal, where health, relaxation and wellness tourism grows year after year.



[www.guimaraesturismo.com/pages/  
735?geo\\_article\\_id=447](http://www.guimaraesturismo.com/pages/735?geo_article_id=447)

## ZASNET FLUVIAL DESTINATION

In the northeast of the Portuguese region Trás-Os-Montes, in the territory of the municipalities of **Bragança, Miranda do Douro, Mogadouro, Vimioso and Vinhais** that make up the area called Terra Fría, various fluvial options and hydrotherapy are located.



The numerous **fluvial beaches** stand out here, such as **Bemposta**, which is located on the margin of the dam's reservoir, and which has a pier that allows access to the boats. Its waters are warm and calm since they are protected on both sides.

Located in the city of Mirandela, in the **Dr. José Gama Park**, the fluvial beach allows the enjoyment in the excellent waters of the Tua River, and has sand and grass spaces for bathers, as well as areas of fun for children, volleyball field and rental of recreational boats such as canoes. The **Do Colado** fluvial beach, on the Maças border river, also offers these services.

In the middle of the Protected Landscape of the Albufeira do Acibo are the **Ribeira** and **Fraga da Pegada** beach consecutively awarded with the Blue Flag, something unique in the European river beaches.

Accessible for people with reduced mobility, they offer recreational services for children, beach volleyball courts, and the possibility of renting boats, as well as lodging and catering services.

Terra Fría has many other fluvial beaches in which to enjoy the nature of its rivers, such as Cais de Juncas, S. Martinho de Angueira, Grapes, Serapicos, S. Joanico, Soeira, Vilarinho, Fresulfe, Sandim, or the Praia Fluvial from the Ponte de Frades / Lomba, equipped with picnic areas and large green areas.

The **Albufera do Baixo Sabor** has activities such as birdwatching, mycological and botanical walks, the wolf route, or taster ecoroute.



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**Terronha-Vimioso hot springs** also represent an unmissable destination. They are located on the valley of the Angueira River, where you can enjoy an environment of natural landscape, which combines flora and fauna. These waters were used in the relief, or cure, of diseases, particularly of the dermatological forum. the average temperature is of more than 17°. In this health and wellness area, in addition to the massage and relaxation rooms, the visitor has a heated indoor pool and gym, whirlpool and various types of showers.

In the area, the visit to the **waterfall Faia Da Água Alta** is a must. It rushes from a height of 35 meters, by 10 meters wide and provides a beauty to which nobody is indifferent.

[www.rotaterrafria.com](http://www.rotaterrafria.com)
[www.cm-vimioso.pt/pages/147](http://www.cm-vimioso.pt/pages/147)

[www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/amb-reg-loc/pp-albuf-azibo](http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/amb-reg-loc/pp-albuf-azibo)
[www.amtqt.pt/pages/306](http://www.amtqt.pt/pages/306)
[www.ams.pt](http://www.ams.pt)
[www.turismoenzamora.es/en-zamora-hay-playas-archivo/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/en-zamora-hay-playas-archivo/)

## DOURO RIVER

Its **897 kilometers** in length, from its source in Los Picos de Urbión, in Duruelo de la Sierra, to its Atlantic mouth in Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia, make up its own scenario, extremely enriching for **Spain and Portugal**. 107 kilometers of its route serve as a natural border between both countries.

The Douro River has historically been the engine of development in agriculture, livestock, culture, and the energy industry.

Nowadays it is also a fundamental pillar for the development of sports activities, such as mountain routes, winter activities, hiking, mountain biking, canoeing or kayaking, at all levels. All this while preserving the natural space of the river and its ecosystems.

The **'Douro Route'** aims to energize the area from the river, showing not only its charm, but also this sustainable development and the ecological commitment that exists.

The GR14 track completes the course of the river, from which files, images and video clips can be previously found.

Its almost 900 kilometers of route are divided into **four zones**; Alto Duero, La Meseta Castellana, Las Arribes del Duero and El Douro Vinhatero.



The **Alto Duero** encompasses the course of the river from Duruelo de la Sierra - in the southernmost part of Urbión Peak - to Almazán. The dense riverside forests, the unevenness, and small meanders, characterize this first part of the Douro route that comes to an end in the historic town of Almazán, which receives the visitor with beautiful views of its walled area.

La **Meseta Castellana** is the second stage, from Almazán to Villaralbo, a region in which the river is the protagonist and witness of the evolution of its towns. Wide channel, beautiful views of the historic cities that crosses, numerous bridges and a landscape of soft shapes characterize the route. Here the Pisuerga river is located, one of its main tributaries. It is an ideal area for bird watching.

Las **Arribes del Duero** run from Villaralbo until Fermoselle, here you can enjoy a deep and narrow canyon of international waters. There it receives the waters of its main tributary, the Esla River.

The last section, **El Douro Vinhatero**, encompasses the route from Fermoselle to its mouth, in Oporto. A landscape characterized by its dedication for more than 2000 years to the production of wine and and enriched by its navigability. Places like Pocinho, Pinhao or Peso da Régua offer beautiful ports for visitors.



[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/  
destinos/las-arribes](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/destinos/las-arribes)

<http://www.rutadelduero.es/>

## FLUVIAL SALAMANCA

With water as a common denominator, the geography of Salamanca offers its visitors a wide variety of tourist experiences: The visitor can enjoy incredible landscapes, such as the waterfall of **Pozo de los Humos**, in **Las Arribes del Duero**, or contemplate geographical features such as the **meander Melero**, in the river Alagón, south of the Sierra de Francia.



The fluvial resources also offer the possibility of doing fun outdoor activities, such as canoeing in the different rivers and reservoirs of the province, or boat trips on the Douro River.

In the region of **Las Arribes**, several companies offer boat trips on the Douro River; between cliffs, thick forests dominated by unique species, and landscapes of terraces transformed by man.



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The beach of Rostro in Aldeadavila, the boat in Vilvestre, and the dock of Vega Terrón, in La Fregeneda, are the starting points for these walks.

In the same region of Las Arribes, the canyon landscape of the Douro and Tormes rivers led to the construction of dams and hydroelectric power stations, which are now also tourist resources such as the Almendra, Saucelle, and Aldeadavila de la Ribera waterfalls.

Health and wellness tourism is linked mainly to traditional spas, which in Salamanca are located in Baños de Ledesma, Retortillo and Babilafuente.



[www.salamancaemocion.es](http://www.salamancaemocion.es)

## FLUVIAL CENTER

In the **Central Region of Portugal**, the visitor finds numerous leisure options, adventure sports, and activities that are part of the well-known tourism of health and well-being. All this with the rivers of the area as the main thread of the proposed offer.

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One of the possibilities is the **'Route of the 4 Rivers and the Lagoons'**, in the Serra da Estrela. It is a tour of the Mondego, Zêzere, Alva and Côa rivers, as well as the 25 glacial lakes that are located in the area. On this route it is possible to observe rock engravings and unique monuments, such as the Sequeiros Bridge, the Almeida village / fortress, or Pinhel Castle.

The tour also discovers impressive landscapes, such as the Covão de la Ametade, the Magro Pitcher, the Caldas de San Pablo, A Ponte das Tres Entradas, and the town of Avô, where you can see a castle and an island in the middle of the river Alva. The gastronomy and wines of the area complete the experience.

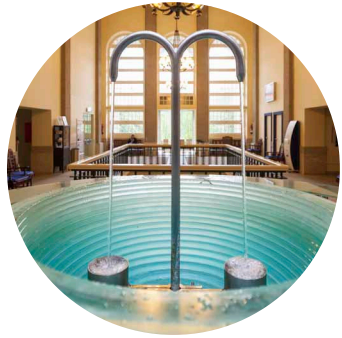
There are also several signposted routes to travel only the **'Grande Rota do Zêzere'** (GR33), the **Caminho do Xisto da Barroca** (PR1) and the **Caminho do Xisto de Janeiro da Cima** (PR2). The river marks the way, that allows to discover the villages of Xisto da Barroca and Xisto de Janeiro da Cima. Both have sports and leisure options such as diving, traditional boat rides, or picnics along the river. Here, the visitor has accommodation options.



For relaxation and rest, the area has several hot springs, such as **Termas do Cró** (Sabugal), **Longroiva** (Meda), **Manteigas**, and the **Termas de Almeida - Fonte Santa**, mineral waters that sprout in the river valley Côa. Here you will find thermal treatments, gyms, sauna, Turkish baths, massage cabinets and a medical area. In addition to well-being and the fight against stress, diseases of the respiratory system, rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases are treated.



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The region also has resources such as the Almeida Military Museum and the historic center of Almeida, which has one of the best preserved fortresses in Europe. Activities such as a bicycle ride - or pedestrian - in the vicinity, tennis, horse riding and swimming are also an option for the traveler.

Already in the Portuguese district of Guarda, a total of **15 fluvial beaches** are located. In Seia, in particular, there is the Recreation and Leisure Area of the Sabugueiro. Among the outstanding beaches are those of A Devesa, Sabugueiro, Loriga or Foios, but all are spectacular due to their enclave in the Serra da Estrela Natural Park.

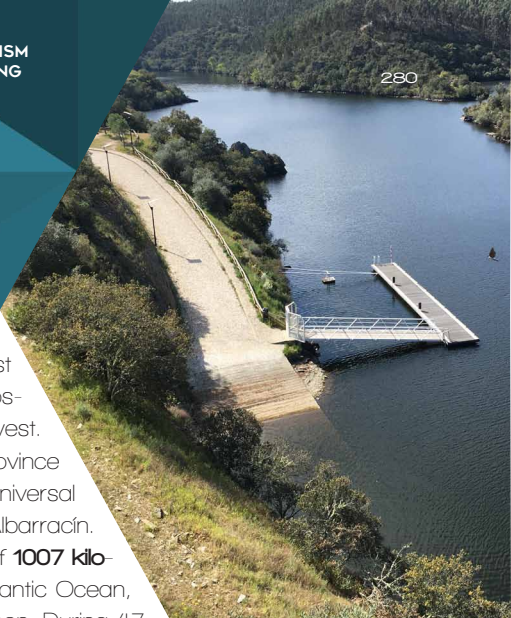
## TAGUS RIVER

The **Tagus River** is the longest in the Iberian Peninsula, it crosses it from the east to the west. It is born in the Spanish province of Teruel, concretely in the Universal Mountains, in the Sierra de Albarracín. From there, it travels a total of **1007 kilometers** to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean, it reaches it in the city of Lisbon. During 47 kilometers of its route it acts as a **natural border between Spain and Portugal**.

The upper course of the river is included in the High Tagus Natural Park, in the province of Guadalajara. Its medium-low course is also framed in the Monfragüe National Park, in the province of Cáceres. Once on the border, the Tagus Internacional Natural Park acts as a protection figure over it. At its mouth, there is the Tagus Estuary Natural Reserve.

Throughout its journey, the river brings beauty to the landscape that surrounds it and enriches its ecosystem. It also has several high-quality **river beaches**, such as Praia Doce, Porto Mulheres, Praia Fluvial de Constança or Praia Fluvial de Valada.

It also offers its visitors exceptional corners that can be reached through numerous routes and trails, and next to the river there are many municipalities that offer recreational and sports activities in it.



In the **High Tagus Natural Park** there are several navigable sections in canoes, of different levels of difficulty, ranging from whitewater to nautical tourism.

River cruises can be made in Extremadura. The Balcón del Tajo is the ship in charge of these routes, and has up to ten different routes. The visitor also has cruise options specialized in bird watching, which make their way through the **Natural Park of Monfragüe**.



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In the **Natural Park of the International Tagus** there are many places suitable for bathing, and various water activities are offered in the area. Like fluvial beaches, like Malhadal and Cerejeira (Proença-a-Nova), Alameda and Muro (Castelo Branco), Alvaro and Cambas (Oleiros). In the Spanish area of the river, the Alcántara quarry stands out, an old mine that today is an artificial lake with marine fauna, a swimming area, and indoor diving options.

Among the sport and adventure options, you can develop activities such as kite surfing, windsurfing, wakeboarding, water skiing or paddle surfing. You can also enjoy kayaking or canoeing, crossing the river or in the reservoirs. Fishing is also possible in places like the Cedillo and Alcántara reservoir, in the Spanish area, or the Cabil and Marateca reservoirs in the Portuguese area.

## RIVER GUADIANA

The **Guadiana River** has 818 km that cover **Spain and Portugal**. They do it in the south sub-plateau, in an east-west direction. It is born in Ojos del Guadiana and its outlet to the Atlantic takes place in the Gulf of Cádiz. On the left there is Vila Real de Santo António (Portugal), and on the right, Ayamonte (Huelva, Spain). In its low course it acts as a border in several sections.

During its long journey and in its course through Extremadura, it makes an important stop at the **Orellana Reservoir**, the largest of the reservoirs in the middle stretch of the river, it is included -in its entirety- within the protected space. Wetlands of International Importance”, being the only wetland from Extremadura on this list of the Ramsar Convention.

It is also a zone of special protection for birds (SPAB), because it is one of the largest enclaves of biodiversity in Extremadura, an ideal spot for sighting birds such as the griffon vulture, the golden eagle or the black stork. among other species.

In practice, it is an inland sea where you can enjoy many **water sports**; like sailing, canoeing or water skiing. The beach of the reservoir also has the distinctive “Blue Flag”, which renews each year as a symbol of the quality of its waters and facilities.



12 RIVER GUADIANA



Downstream, the Guadiana, crosses the frontier town of **Badajoz**, capital of the homonymous province, which is only 14 km away from the Portuguese town of Elvas. The city of Badajoz was born under the shelter of this river, providing defense against its enemies throughout its history, but it has also been fundamental for its sustenance throughout the ages.



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A few kilometers downstream, the Guadiana River acts as a natural border between Spain and Portugal to the largest artificial lake in Europe, the **Alqueva Reservoir**, located east of the Alentejo region and west of the province of Badajoz.

This spectacular navigable landscape offers the visitor the opportunity to perform various water sports, as well as endless experiences on the mainland; among others, you can enjoy astrotourism, as it has one of the clearest skies in Europe, being considered by UNESCO as a reserve for stargazing.

In the more than 1,000 kilometers of inland coastline of the Alqueva reservoir, the beaches of Monsaraz and Mourão in the Portuguese part stand out, and Cheles in Spanish territory, being these areas a perfect destination for a few days of tourism and relaxation, since Monsarsaz has the well-preserved Medieval Village-Museum catalog, with walls and streets that surprise.

Continuing its journey to the south, the Guadiana River is also one of the most important tourist attractions of the province of **Huelva**, leaving in its wake beautiful spaces in which, a varied flora and fauna, make up the particular landscape of Western Andalucía. The economic exploitation of the river leaves behind its industrial past as a mineral pier, and currently enjoys an emerging tourist development. Its waters are perfect for water sports such as sailing, kayaking, paddle-surfing or canoeing.

Here you can also enjoy one of the most outstanding tourist activities in the international scene, for the originality of it; it's about the **cross-border zip line**. This crosses the Guadiana River from Sanlúcar de Guadiana (Spain) to Alcoutim (Portugal) and is the only zip line in the world that unites two countries.

There are also ferry lines that make tours of the Guadiana, with departures in the ports of Ayamonte - Via Real de Santo António, Sanlúcar de Guadiana and Alcoutim.



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Low Guadiana is a Portuguese border territory, east of the Algarve. **The Great Guadiana Route** (GR15) is a signposted road in both directions that extends along the mountain range, the ravine and the coastline in this area. This great route can be made along a network of 21 small pedestrian sections that cover distances between 3 and 15 kilometers. It is about the Guadiana Roads, that add almost 135 kilometers and allow to know this region of Low Guadiana in detail.



The tours offer visitors landscapes such as the Sapal de Castro Marim Natural Reserve, the Ria Formosa Natural Park, the Mata Nacional Terras da Ordem, or the Mata Nacional Dunas Litorais de Santo António, constituting a territory of excellence for bird watching.



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The Natural Reserve of Sapal de Castro Marim, and Vila Real de Santo António, also have salt flats, where artisanal and industrial exploitation coexist. The vast built patrimony is united, with special attention to the medieval fortifications, to the traditions of the interior, and to the extensive and warm beaches of the coast.

In its wide fluvial offer, Low Guadiana is a territory that also offers visitors a fluvial beach in Alcoutim, the Playa del Pêgo Fundo, and two fluvial dams in Castro Marim; those of Odeleite and Beliche.



# **ENOLOGY**

**WINE ROUTES IN THE  
DENOMINATIONS  
OF ORIGIN**





When speaking of winemaking, we refer to the **art of making wines**. Everything begins in singular natural spaces, where the necessary qualities for the cultivation of the vine are given, and which will also be determinant in the characteristics of the grape that develops there. The wide variety of territories located along the Spanish-Portuguese border make it possible to taste numerous wines. All of them different. All of them exceptional.

Following the Raya / Raia we find many **Designations of Origin** that guarantee the quality of our wines, also certifying their production process, so it is worthwhile to enjoy each of them in their region of origin. The topography of each corner makes the wide variety possible. That is one of the recommendations of this guide, wine tourism.

Wine tourism offers visitors the chance to enjoy various wines during their trip. Besides tasting them, the different wine routes that are presented will allow the reader to know what type of grape is grown in each location, the particular characteristics of each area, and where is the secret that makes this authentic pleasure for the senses possible.

Year after year, export figures for Spanish and Portuguese wines increase, with both countries taking the lead in this sector. On this trip, we will meet up to twelve Spanish Designations of Origin, and we will visit the wine regions of Portugal. These are three, the northern zone, the central one, and the south, delimited by the Douro and Tagus rivers. In them, we will discover four other Frontier Denominations of Origin.



Enology is a complement to this spectacular journey, and the **wine routes** are the perfect experience to feel it. With them, we will also know the gastronomy that accompanies them at the table in each region, the space that surrounds them, and those who make it possible. Because the secret of each one of the producing areas is really in its people, in its way of life and in its customs. They are also many occasions in which wine is the subject of various popular festivals.

Innumerable activities complement and complete the visit, which acquires a special meaning if it is carried out in the autumnal period, since enjoying the harvest will make, without any doubt, the experience unforgettable.

Because wine is art. It's culture. It's life.



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## CDO VINHO VERDE

**Viana do Castelo** is one of the gateways to the Vinho Verde **Controlled Denomination of Origin**, located in the northwest of Portugal. It is one of the largest Designations of Origin of the Portuguese country, since it has 22.000 hectares. The zone limits it to the north the Miño river, and in its amplitude it extends bordering the Atlantic coast until practically the city of Porto. Due to its wide extension, up to **nine different sub-regions** are distinguished in it: Monção/Melgaço, Lima, Basto, Cávado, Ave, Amarante, Baião, Sousa e Paiva.

The main characteristic of this Designation of Origin is the large number of **small producers** that work in it. Traditionally, here the wine has been elaborated on a domestic scale. The vineyards are concentrated along the valleys of the main rivers. The soils are homogeneous, mostly granitic, fertile and with high acidity. It is one of the most original and differentiated regions of Portugal, marked by a clear and extreme Atlantic influence, in a green and humid landscape, with cool temperatures and abundant rainfall.

The most used **white** varieties are Alvarinho, Loureira, Arinto, Aveso and Treixadura. White wines are especially aromatic, clean and refreshing. Vinhão is used mainly in **red** production, although there are also Borraçal, Brancelho, Espadeiro. In recent decades, the region also produces high quality sparkling wines.



The sub-region of **Monção / Melgão** stands out for the production of **Alvarinho**. It achieves it by its location, since it is better protected from the Atlantic influence, resulting in a climate of continental maritime influence. The wines thus have more body and greater alcohol content.



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The exceptional beauty of the region will serve as a stage on this Vinho Verde route. Visiting the area, discovering the origin, you can savor the history of Portugal.

In its vineyards, wineries, restaurants, charming accommodations, and its varied and wonderful cuisine is part of the secret. But there's even more.

In the tour through the northwest of Portugal, visitors can enjoy beaches and mountains, valleys and rivers, World Heritage cities and much more; its people will make the tourist feel at home.



[www.vinhoverde.pt/pt/homepage](http://www.vinhoverde.pt/pt/homepage)

## DO RÍAS BAIXAS

Located in the southwest of Galicia, the **Rías Baixas Designation of Origin** extends from the vicinity of Santiago de Compostela to the Portuguese border. From Vila-garcía de Arousa you can start the tour through its more than 2700 hectares of vineyards, which are divided into **five subzones**, Ribeira do Ulla, Soutomaior, Tea County, Val do Salnés and O Rosal.

The Atlantic prints its stamp in these lands of mild temperatures and leafy vegetation, where the cultivation of the vine is a laborious process due to the excess of humidity and the delicacy of the autochthonous varieties.

The most characteristic culture structure is the trellis, although other formats are also found in the area, such as espalier.

The wines of this Denomination of Origin are the result of the mixture of some unique grape varieties - Treixadura, Loureira, Caño white and red, Castañal, Espadeiro... - among which the prevailing variety is **Albariño**.

At the end of August the 'Fiesta del Albariño' is celebrated in the town of Cambados, whose first edition dates from 1953. The commitment to native varieties is developed in a framework that combines tradition with innovative technological advances.





There are **several wine routes** to travel this region and know and visit their wineries, but in all of them it is essential to enjoy the local cuisine; seafood, fish, meat, vegetables, cheese... Products capable of conquering any palate.



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In addition to the vitivinicultural heritage, each of the routes offers breathtaking corners; walks along the banks of the Miño and Ulla rivers, quality beaches, footpaths by the sea, sports activities, charming landscapes that include pazos, mansions, fortresses, prehistoric villages...

The leisure offer is extensive during the four seasons, as well as the cultural one, since you can visit several museums and exhibitions, several of them, with a wine theme.

The cultivation of wine leaves its mark on the territory. The daily reality of the area, its traditions, its nuances, and its people, capable of transmitting it, will make the visitor feel at home while traveling through a Denomination of Origin with its own personality.



[www.enoturismoengalicia.com](http://www.enoturismoengalicia.com)

## DO RIBEIRO

**Ribeiro Denomination of Origin** is the oldest of those found in the autonomous community of Galicia. It is located on the northwestern edge of the **province of Ourense**, and its more than 2500 hectares encompass the valleys formed by the Arnoia, Avia and Miño rivers. The visitor can go into it from the city of Ourense or get closer to Ribadavia, capital of Ribeiro, from the municipality of O Carballiño.

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Its location, just 45 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean, makes it a special place, ideal for growing grapes. The particular microclimate of the area, softened by the Atlantic influence, and the orography of the mountainous terrain, with metamorphic and granitic soils, are key factors that will determine the style of these wines.

The thermal oscillation of the place also favors the slow maturation of the grape, respecting its natural freshness and its aromatic component. The wines are divided here into **five categories**: Ribeiro, Tostado Ribeiro, Ribeiro Espumoso, Ribeiro Castes, and Ribeiro Barrica.

The **whites** are made mostly with Treixadura grapes, often young wines with potential for aging in the bottle.

10% of the production of O Ribeiro is made up of red wines, the varieties of Caíño, Ferrón, Mencía and Sousón -among others- give rise to authentic wines, with character.





In this territory the figure of the **vine grower** is of vital importance, since the productive structure of the denomination is characterized by a great diversity of parcelling. This takes place between the three valleys mentioned above, and all together leave a picture perfectly representative of the Galician essence.



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The contact with its people will therefore be essential in this wine route. In an environment of wineries, traditional cuisine, medieval pazos, hot springs and nature trails.

The route through the thousands of hectares of O Ribeiro vineyard can be adapted to all types of visits and visitors, as it is complemented by catamaran trips, guided tastings, wine therapy experiences...

Discovering their magic with enology results the ideal plan for people of all ages. It's just about letting oneself go by authentic sensations.



## DO RIBEIRA SACRA

**Monforte de Lemos** is a good starting point to discover the 2500 hectares of vineyards that make up the **Ribeira Sacra Denomination of Origin**, which are located to the south of the province of Lugo and north of the province of Ourense, in the lands bathed by the Sil and Miño rivers.

It is divided into **five subzones**; Ribeiras do Sil, Amardi, Chantada, Ribeiras do Miño and Quieroga-Bibeí.

In this DO, the territories of the **Sil valley** and those of the **Miño valley** are differentiated by their characteristics. In the first, with more clayey soils, rainfall and temperatures are slightly more moderate than in the second, whose soils are of granite origin.

The history of the cultivation of the vine in this area is closely linked to the monastic life, as the hermit monks found tranquility in these lands, and they were the ones who perfected the cultivation techniques here.

That is why in the Ribeira Sacra is the largest concentration of **Romanesque churches** in Europe. The wines of the area have always been very linked to the **Route of Santiago**, in addition, here the pilgrims travel an authentic Roman road for several kilometers.



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SACRA



The personality of the place is marked by the slopes of Miño and Sil, with amazing canyons, covered with vineyards, accompanied by churches and monasteries. The wine route thus extends through the **20 municipalities** that complete the Denomination of Origin, which, due to the diversity of its flora, is presented to visitors with different colors depending on the season in which it is visited. All of them magical.

Because of the steepness of its slopes, here it is surprising to approach during the months of harvest, as the vine growers in the area complete titanic work in the collection of the grape since they have to develop their work in such a slope. It is the so-called heroic viticulture.



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In addition to the splendid natural and patrimonial landscape, here wineries of wide trajectory are visited, wine cellars, museums, specialized centers in the local enology, monuments...

Starting from wine, in Ribeira Sacra there is a universe to discover. Gastronomic experiences, crafts, traditions, winemakers, and landscape, a fundamental element in the Ribeira Sacra. On foot, by car, or on a catamaran you can see the steep orography conformed by canyons, rock gorges, water and sinuous routes capable of conquering the soul.



[www.enoturismoengalicia.com](http://www.enoturismoengalicia.com)

## DO VALDEORRAS

In the northeast of the province of Ourense, in the area of **O Barco de Valdeorras**, the **Valdeorras Denomination of Origin** is located, where the culture of attention to the vineyard goes back to Roman times. The soils of the area are varied, and the production takes place mainly in the basins of the Bibei, Xares, and Sil rivers.

Here the climate is drier than in the rest of Galicia, and autochthonous varieties such as Godello and Mencía have been recovered. Thus, the most characteristic wine of the place is the **white Godello grape**, of golden or yellow hue, a fine wine with a fruity aroma.

In **reds**, those made with **Mencía**; light, tasty, purple and with good alcohol-acid balance. From the Denomination of Origin they invest in research, its commitment to quality includes combining tradition with modernization in the production process.

Local wine entrepreneurs develop the Valdeorras wine route, willing to share with visitors the charm of their area. Thus, the winemaking heritage is present throughout the journey.

But the wine should serve as an excuse to discover the gastronomy, the landscape -with a mountainous relief of great unevenness-, the culture, and the leisure that the territory offers.





For example, the 'Valdeorras Wine Fair', held in the town of A Rúa the second weekend of the month of August. Or 'The Festivities of the Caves'; old cellars excavated in land and rock, grouped in various villages in the area. One day a year they open, and wine, music, and food are the protagonists of the day. The celebration of the caves of Vilamartín is celebrated in August, and that of the caves of Seadur, in Holy Week.

The '**Via Nova**', one of the main Roman roads in the north-west of the peninsula, runs through Valdeorras. There are also many pilgrims who travel the place, because it runs sections of the '**Winter Road**' and the '**French Way**' to Santiago de Compostela.



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This rural area is discovered by walking, discovering its surroundings with its people, farmers and wine growers who day by day shape the scene.

Hiking trails have been recovered, there are routes between vineyards and mountains, kayaking or canoeing can be crossed, caving, climbing or canyoning, and some wineries offer visits to their vineyards in 4x4 for small groups.



[www.enoturismoengalicia.com](http://www.enoturismoengalicia.com)

## DO MONTERREI

Very close to the Eurocity Chaves-Verín, on the border with Portugal, along 700 hectares that run through the Tâmega River valley, the **Monterrei Designation of Origin** is extended. It is divided into **two subzones**; Monterrei Valley and Monterrei Hillside.

This territory belongs to the Douro river basin, since the Tâmega flows into it, and has a Mediterranean climate with a continental tendency; the thermal oscillation here is remarkable. Slate soils -which will give the reds aroma-, granitic and sandy - ideal for white wines-, and sedimentary soils where materials are mixed.

The grape varieties preferred for viticulture are native, which gives their wines a character of their own, capable of expressing the particularities of the area. In **white**, we find Godello, Dona Branca and Treixadura. In **red** grape, Merenzao and Mencia.

The wine's own colors bathe the Monterrei wine route. A route that, in addition to the wine tourism itinerary through its wineries, can be completed with the history, gastronomy, cultural richness and agricultural tradition of the region.

All accompanied by hospitality and close treatment of its people. The neighbors here especially enjoy the Carnival party, where they celebrate remembering traditions and legends.





The villages that inhabit the valley represent the **traditional Galician architecture**, since constructions in stone and wood are still preserved. Special are also its streets; narrow, with hundreds of stone stairs that seek to save the unevenness for the comfort of its inhabitants... Different. Authentic.

Despite having become accommodation, you can visit the Castle of Monterrei; a medieval fortress, strategic enclave in the wars with Portugal in the 17th century.



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The route is not extensive, but there are places of those that are not forgotten. The succession of valley and mountains draws a variety of spectacular nuances. In nature the effort of those who look for her daily sustenance is observed. The contrasts make the area unique.

The route is also a place for pilgrims, since in Monterrei the **'Via da Prata'** and the **Inner Portuguese Way** converge. Churches, chapels and convents are part of the historical footprint of the territory.



[www.enoturismoengalicia.com](http://www.enoturismoengalicia.com)

## CDO TRÁS-OS-MONTES

In the northeastern end of the Portuguese country, north of the Douro region, east of the Vinho Verde region, and extending to the border with Spain, the **Trás-os-Montes CDO** is located. To reach it you have to go precisely beyond the mountains.



Specifically, it is located between the cities of **Braganza and Mirandela**. It is a region in which slate and granitic lands are located, with varying altitudes between 700 and 350 meters.

An area of changing landscapes, in which the vineyards share prominence with heathers, pine forests, and other fruit trees. Small rivers bathe the space. The climate is dry, with extreme temperatures in summers and winters.

There are **three subregions** found in this DOC; the counties of Chaves, Planalto Mirandês and Valpaços.

The first of them, **Chaves**, limits the north with Spain, here the vine is observed in the slopes of the valleys, welcomed by the main valley of the Tâmega river. It is a special area for its thermal and spa waters, because here the most famous mineral waters of Portugal are located.

The center of Trás-Os-Montes is occupied by the **Valpaços** region, a flat extension bathed by various rivers and streams, among which the Túa, a tributary of the Douro, stands out.





In the south, the region of **Planalto Mirandês** is influenced by the Douro River. The waters of all these subregions are going to be fundamental in granting to their wines that special touch of the denomination of origin Trás-os-Montes. Here the wines can be white, red, rosé, generous and sparkling. Brandy is also produced under this same name.



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The **whites** are aromatic, with a great balance and an intense fruity aroma. The recommended varieties are Cødega de Larinho, Fernão Pires, Gouveio, Malvasía Fina, Rabigato, Síria and Viosinho.

The typical **red** wines of the region, made with Bastardo, Marufo, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional and Trincadeira, have an intense color and their style is also very fruity. The warm climate of the crop gives rise to wines with higher alcohol concentration.

The routes that cross Trás-Os-Montes combine wine tourism with gastronomy, adventure, relaxation tourism in various spas, and nature tourism discovering a truly special place.



<http://cvrtm.pt/>

## DO RIBERA DEL DUERO

In Spanish territory, the **Denomination of Origin Ribera del Duero**, comprises an area of vineyards that extends over more than 22.500 hectares. This is located at the confluence of **four provinces** -Soria, Segovia, Burgos and Valladolid-, in a strip of the Douro river basin, approximately 35 kilometers wide and 115 kilometers long.

The climate of the Ribera del Duero is framed in a Mediterranean climate, with moderate rainfall. The relief of the area is horizontal, gently wavy.

The Ribera del Duero is located on the great northern plateau of the Iberian Peninsula, formed by a large ancient plinth leveled and, in part, covered by tertiary sediments.

In this Denomination of Origin, **reds** predominate, although **rosés** are also produced. The most characteristic grape variety is Tinta del País or **Tempranillo**, 90% of the production of the area is limited to this variety.

For wine to belong to this DO, at least 95% of the grape must be Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Malbec. Garnacha and Albillo grapes are allowed, but in small quantities.





The Ribera del Duero wine route will guide the visitor through one of the most important wine regions of the peninsula. This wine tourism route follows the course of the Douro, thus offering the traveler countless tourist attractions.



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Beyond the quality of its wines, and the charm of its wineries, the journey through the Denomination of Origin Ribera del Duero will make the visitor discover numerous towns possessing a great artistic, historical and cultural heritage.

The Douro route has detected a growing interest in **active tourism**, that is, that more and more visitors are taking advantage of their travel to carry out various sports or activities. Currently, the Douro is the perfect place for all this. Mountain routes, winter activities, hiking, mountain bike, canoeing / kayaking, all of them at any level, being able to do from long walks without difficulty, to mountain races.

Activities of all kinds, with enology as a reason of origin, and an exceptional natural space as a backdrop.



[www.riberadelduero.es/](http://www.riberadelduero.es/)

## CDO DOURO

From the municipalities of Vila Real and Peso da Régua, visitors will enter the **Douro Controlled Denomination of Origin**. This extends, following the course of the Douro River, from the Spanish border to practically the metropolitan area of Porto.

Here the wines that are produced in the demarcated region of Douro, which covers the **subregions** of Baixo Corgo, Cima Corgo and Douro Superior, in the north of the country, are located and thus cataloged. Each of these subregions will face a different climate, marked by its location.

In addition to being the first demarcated region in the world - it was created in 1756 -, the monumental beauty of Douro was recognized by UNESCO as a **World Heritage Site**. This region is the same one that is demarcated for the production of Porto wine, of worldwide recognition.

The variety of castes that are located in this territory is immense, but the **five varieties** that stand out are Tinta Barroca, Tinta Roriz, Tinto Cão, Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional, also selected for their excellence in the elaboration of Porto wine.

In **white** grapes, Gouveio, Malvasia Fina, Moscatel, Rabigato and Viosinho stand out.





On the wine route of Porto and Douro, enology is connected to the environmental, cultural and gastronomic dimension of each locality. The visitor only has to be trapped. In Peso da Régua, you can visit the Douro Museum and the Solar do Vinho do Porto, where you will taste and learn about this exquisite broth. The landscapes are fascinating from the viewpoints of São Leonardo de Galafura and São Salvador do Mundo.

All this can be discovered by car, by train -in an old steam train, enjoying the charm of the seasons-, or by boat, since the Douro is navigable to the Spanish border.

Among the variety of visits that can be planned, the most desired ones always include the Gaia winery, where the Port wine ages. Another option is to visit the wine villages of Barcos, Favaios, Provesende, Ucanha, Salzedas and Trevões. And you can also take advantage to visit some of the many Douro and Oporto wine producing fields, some of which are even prepared for wine tourism and organize tastings.

An authentic experience of sensations. These lands are capable of sharing their magic.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/  
alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos\\_ES.html](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos_ES.html)

## DO ARRIBES

Bordering the Douro River, in the provinces of **Zamora** and **Salamanca**, and in the framing of the Arribes del Duero Natural Park, the 750 hectares of vineyards that make up the **Designation of Origin Arribes** are located. Its border situation and far from the urban centers gives it an oasis character in the confines of Castilla y León overlooking Portugal.

Here, the relief is very rugged, causing the vineyards to be located at different altitudes and exhibitions. The floors are sandy and slate.

The relief will also condition the climate of the place, variable depending on the area, with abundant rainfall and different temperatures.

The population continues maintaining the illusion for the tradition, for the cultivation of those vineyards rooted in terraces, historical legacy of their ancestors.

The main varieties of **red grapes** are the native Juan García, Rufete and Tempranillo.

The main **white** variety cultivated in the area is Malvasía.





In addition to a natural space of singular beauty, Arribes is the cradle of an emerging wine producing region that includes a dozen wineries, located between the provinces of Salamanca and Zamora. But the Arribes wine route does not only consist of visiting the wineries. The route harbors 180 kilometers of fluvial canyons and gorges, and is one of the most beautiful routes of the peninsula, because the vineyards form a unique landscape on the steep slopes that outline the Douro River and follow its course.



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Upon entering the Natural Park environment, visitors can enjoy a relaxing catamaran ride along the Douro River in which to be dazzled, as well as its canyons, its fauna and flora. There are also many viewpoints in the area.

The cultural heritage enriches the route, here there are preserved Celtiberian remains – hill forts - and Romans - bridges, causeways, funerary steles. In addition to hermitages and Christian churches, we find old barns, wineries, mills, crankshafts for water... and many more unique elements of the traditional Castilla.

Rural lodgings and catering establishments complete the experience. In the latter, the wines are accompanied by the most typical dishes of the southwest of Castilla y León.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/)

[alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos\\_ES.html](http://alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos_ES.html)

[www.rutadelvinoarribes.com](http://www.rutadelvinoarribes.com)

[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo)

## DO TORO

5800 hectares of land make up the **Toro Denomination of Origin**, located to the southeast of the province of **Zamora** and southwest of the province of **Valladolid**. The zone is characterized by a continental climate, extreme, with Atlantic influences, and of arid character.

These climatic conditions, with light rainfall, extreme cold in winter, and a large number of hours of sunshine, provide the grape with a series of exceptional characteristics, which will be a key factor in the production of quality wines.

The soil is formed by sediments of sandstones and clays, and in it various materials alternate. This is one of the most important emerging wine regions of Spain, because its red wines do not leave anyone indifferent.

These wines are elaborated mainly with the **Tinta de Toro grape**, the autochthonous variety par excellence. The optimum degree of maturity is sought to obtain balanced and high quality wines. Due to the weather conditions of the area, the Tinta de Toro variety matures early, this allows the wineries to elaborate their wines by the carbonic maceration system (whole bunches), resulting in fragrant, fresh and aromatic wines.

In the Denomination of Origin the **Garnacha grapes** are also cultivated - also known as Tinto Aragonés-, Verdejo and Malvasía.





The route of Toro is framed within the Zamorano region that the Douro divides to the north in Tierra del Pan and, to the south, in Tierra del Vino. When visiting this route, visitors will enjoy the Romanesque architecture and the surroundings of the Natural Reserve of Las Riberras de Castronuño-Vega del Duero.

A tour that will be accompanied by the wines of the wineries that you will find in its path, as well as tastings and guided tours of these.



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Here wine is combined with history and heritage, tradition coexists with modernity, and gastronomy enjoys excellent quality. Customized personal experiences are created, and in them, all types of visitors can be accommodated.

All this surrounded by a unique place and vertebrate by the same river, the Douro. A route that starts with enology as its origin, but which is designed to leave a mark far beyond its wines.



[www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/  
alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos\\_ES.html](http://www.turismoenzamora.es/enoturismo/alimentosdezamora.info/Vinos_ES.html)  
[www.dotoro.com/](http://www.dotoro.com/)

## DO TIERRA DEL VINO DE ZAMORA

The **Tierra del Vino de Zamora Denomination of Origin** extends over more than 1700 hectares of vineyards located in the provinces of **Zamora** and **Salamanca**, in Castilla y León. It comprises both banks of the Douro River, the Spanish wine-growing river par excellence.

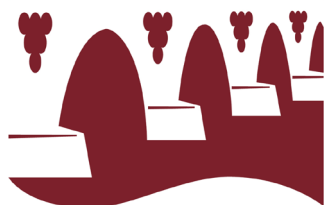
In this area, viticulture has been fundamental in the rural economy throughout history, in fact, until the 20th century, the vineyard was the monoculture of the area.

In it, the climate is continental, extreme and arid, with very dry summers and very cold winters. Tierra del Vino is crossed by several river channels, so the soils here are clayey, permeable, and with great capacity for retention. Both factors, climate and soil, with their particularities, contribute to the production of an autochthonous grape of excellent quality.

The main **red grape** of the zone is the Tempranillo, in **white**, they emphasize the Malvasía, Moscatel of small grain, and Verdejo.

The wine route Tierra del Vino de Zamora combines the rural area - where the wineries are scattered in a cluster of localities - and the capital itself - a city with the largest concentration of Romanesque buildings in Europe, since churches and hermitages in the old town are crossed by the Douro under the eyes of the old bridges-.

## DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN



## TIERRA DEL VINO



There are few designations of origin that include in their territory the municipal terms of the main capital, which is a good incentive for the wine tourism offer of the DO Tierra del Vino de Zamora.

Another key factor in the complement of the cultural offer is the South Route to Santiago, the so-called *Vía de la Plata* (Silver Way), which crosses the province from south to north and runs through the midst of vineyards and new vine plantations throughout the Land of Wine, from El Cubo de Tierra del Vino, passing through Villanueva del Campeán, until culminating in the city of Zamora, the one that was *mansio* on the Roman road of the *Vía de la Plata*, which gives its name to the second great Jacobean artery of the Iberian Peninsula.



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The image of the Tierra del Vino is defined by the landscape that surrounds it, its gastronomy, its culture, and the customs of its day-to-day lives, of its people. Thus, the result is none other than that of wineries and winegrowers greeting with pilgrims, in a rural enclave with Romanesque details, and with the seal of the Jacobean route.



[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo)

## PDO OF QUALITY WINE SIERRA DE SALAMANCA

Covering an area of 482,10 Km<sup>2</sup>, the geographical area of the **Quality Wine PDO Sierra de Salamanca** is located south of the province of **Salamanca**. Here, to find the origins of the vineyard we must go back to Roman times. In the nineteenth century, the vineyard in these lands once again rebounds, and becomes one of the economic pillars of the region.



Although the area of production is not too extensive, the territory presents a great diversity at all levels. We find, for example, several types of soil, with varied geological features. All this will translate into differential features in production.

As for the climate, humid Mediterranean, it has dry and hot summers and relatively short winters. The rains are considerable in the months of spring and autumn.

La **Rufete** is the autochthonous and predominant variety in the area. Other varieties to be highlighted in the territory are Garnacha tinta and Tempranillo, known in the area as Calabrés and Aragonese, respectively.

Both are clones of the main variety, being adapted to the peculiar characteristics of the Sierra.





There are various wine routes here, whichever you choose, you should not overlook that part of the production area of these wines enters the Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia Natural Park and is part of the Sierras de Béjar Biosphere Reserve - France. This last title, awarded by UNESCO.



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For example, in the wine route of the Sierra de Francia, in addition to knowing the authenticity of its wines, the visitor will be able to enjoy its villages, and a gastronomy influenced by different cultures over the centuries; Jewish, Muslim and Christian.

For this reason, there are typical dishes such as *patatas meneás*, the peculiar serrano lemon, the *zorongollo*, *kid*, or the *cuchifrito tostón*. All of them made with first quality foods typical of the region: products from the garden, honey, cherries, figs, peaches...

In the area, in addition, traditional festivals related to wine are held on various occasions, such as San Blas or Easter.



[rutadelvinosierradefrancia.com](http://rutadelvinosierradefrancia.com)

[www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo](http://www.salamancaemocion.es/es/que-hacer/enoturismo)

DOC  
DÃO

Dão is a Portuguese appellation of origin for wines produced in the **Demarcated Region of Dão**, north of central Portugal, in the province of Beira Alta. Instituted in 1908, it was the first demarcated region of non-liquor wines in the country. 20.000 hectares of vineyards in a territory that extends through mountains and valleys, but is sheltered by mountains of greater relief that surround it: the imposing Serra da Estrela, Caramulo, Nave and Buçaco. Three great rivers cross this sinuous region of granitic soil: the Dão, the Mondego and the Alva.

On the sunny slopes, and subject to the rudeness of the soil, the vines emerge sublime and vigorous. They are cultivated mainly between 400 and 500 meters of altitude, in the **seven subregions**: Alva, Besteiros, Castendo, Serra da Estrela, Silgueiros, Azurara and Tierras de Senhorim.

The geographical and geological characteristics of this region, fostered by the Sierras del Caramulo, Montemuro, Buçaco and Estrela, are intrinsically linked to the quality of the wines produced here, as they protect the vines from the influence of the winds.

The traditional castes are the most cultivated in this territory, in particular, **red grapes** include the National Touriga, Alfrocheiro, Aragonez (Tinta Roriz) and Jaen, and in **white** the Encruzado, Malvasia Fina, Bical or Barcelo.

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DOC  
DÃO

With hazelnut flavor and full-bodied, with an exceptional acidity, the reds have a great aging potential. The whites, rose and sparkling wines have fruity aromas and a great freshness.

The visitor must take advantage of the paths of the mountain ranges and the margins of the rivers, and be captivated by its natural beauty. Explore the corners of the historic villages, taste the wine of Dão in the cellars, climb to the Serra da Estrela and feel the tranquility of the landscape, visit Viseu, Penalva del Castillo, Tablero, Santa Comba Dão or Gouveia, and enjoy the cuisine of the region. The proposals are not lacking to be enchanted.



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The Welcome Center of the Dão Wine Route welcomes the wine-maker and provides a wine tasting experience, the possibility of buying wines, the viewing of promotional films and art exhibitions. This Route of the Wines of the Dão aims to promote wine tourism in the Demarcated Region of Dão's Wines.

## CDO BEIRA INTERIOR

The **Beira Interior Controlled Denomination of Origin** is located in the east of Portugal, on the border with Spain. Its more than 16.000 hectares of vineyards are distributed in **three subzones**; Castelo Rodrigo, Cova da Beira and Pinhel. All are located on granite or slate-like terrain, delimited by nearby mountains and influenced by the altitude at which the vineyards are distributed.

Here, the climate is certainly continental, with low temperatures during the winter and hot, dry summers. These circumstances, as well as the altitude at which the vineyards are located, will characterize the production of their wines. The mountain prints body and freshness.

The wines of Beira Interior can be white, red, rosé, straw-colored, claret or sparkling, because here we work with a great variety of grapes, both white and red.

In **white** grapes, two very distinctive such as Syria and Fonte Cal stand out, and Malvasía and Arinto variants are also worked on.

In **red grape**, the Rufete and Alfrocheiro are the most typical, although it is also produced with Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca and Tinta Roriz.

Preserving the identity of the region, after a commitment to research, changes have been introduced in the production of these wines, and with them they have managed to improve them.

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CDO  
BEIRA  
INTERIOR



Year after year, wine tourism grows in the area. The Beira Interior wine route goes through combining the enjoyment of the palate with the magic of the place. It is essential here to visit the network of Historic Villages of Portugal; Walled towns well preserved, with palaces or castles.

Also noteworthy in the area is the abundance of churches, convents, manor houses and civil buildings. The origin of all this is found in the monks of the Cistercian order, masters of agricultural techniques, who came to these lands in the 12th century, they were the ones who managed to improve the cultivation of the vine.



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The Beira Interior keeps numerous stories and legends. Literature and oral tradition have managed to overcome these over the years. Through popular and religious festivals, they will never be forgotten.

Guided tours, lunches and wine dinners on a high stage, with old vines and more than 200 cave wineries end up conquering the senses of any visitor.

## DO RIBERA DEL GUADIANA

26.000 hectares of vineyards make up the **Ribera del Guadiana Designation of Origin**, located in **Extremadura**, a benchmark in the wine culture in Spain. The Denomination of Origin has **six subzones**. They do not require homogeneity, but the natural elements of each one of them comply with the quality requirements.

Thus, we can differentiate, on the one hand, **Cañamero and Montánchez**, in the province of Cáceres. These regions are characterized by being at higher altitudes, the vineyards sit on the slopes of the mountains that have slate and brown soils.

In the province of Badajoz, there are the subregions of **Ribera Alta, Ribera Baja, Tierra de Barros, and Matanegra**. These settle on a practically flat land, with fertile soils and rich in nutrients, which show large rows of vineyards.

The largest production area is in the Tierra de Barros region, whose capital is Almendralejo. Known as the International City of Wine, in this town you can visit the Museum of Wine Sciences, which invites you to discover the different techniques of wine production.

**White** wines are young, with their own identity. The **rosés** are fresh, with fruity notes. In the **reds**, the Tempranillo variety stands out.





Another distinguishing feature of this Denomination of Origin is the production of **cava**. Almendralejo is the only city in Extremadura that can produce this quality sparkling wine, thanks to its inclusion in the Regulatory Council of Cava.

Through the Ribera del Guadiana wine route an attractive Extremadura is shown, with novel programs in which history, culture and gastronomy are found, surrounded by an impressive nature.



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The great extension of the Denomination of Origin makes it possible for the route to travel through different routes. In all of them, the visits to wineries, to be able to walk through the vineyards, to know first hand the elaboration process, the participation in tastings, and the tasting of these wines accompanied by regional gastronomy, make the plan essential for the visitor.

## CDO ALENTEJO

The **denomination of controlled origin (DCO) Alentejo** covers the wines produced in the demarcated region of Alentejo, located in the south of the Portuguese country. Alentejo is one of the largest wine regions of Portugal, where the view is lost in extensive plains that are interrupted only by small hills. Its 22.000 hectares of Alentejo vineyard are divided into **eight subregions**.



In the subregion of **Portalegre** the vines are planted on the granite slopes of the Serra de São Mamede, under the influence of a micro-climate (with lower temperatures due to the altitude).

In the center of the Alentejo, the subregions of **Borba, Reguengos, Redondo and Évora** are located, producing quite similar wines.

The subregions of **Moura, Vidigueira and Granja-Amareleja** are located in the Alentejo south (warmer and drier).

It is a very sunny area, which allows the perfect maturation of the grapes and where the temperatures are very high in the summer, making it essential to properly irrigate the vineyard.

The predominant type of relief in the region is the plain, despite the fact that the Portalegre region is influenced by the São Mamede mountain range.



In the Alentejo there are innumerable strains planted. The most important **white** strains in the region are the Roper, Antão Vaz and Arinto.

Regarding the **reds**, the importance of the strains Trincadeira, Arago-nez, Castelão and Alicante Bouschet (a French variety adapted to the local climate) is highlighted.

CDO Alentejo white wines are generally mild, slightly acidic and have aromas of tropical fruits. The reds are curved, rich in tannins and with aromas of wild and red fruits. In addition to the production in the DOC subregions, the Alentejo presents a high production and variety of regional wine, this includes the Touriga Nacional, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah or Chardonnay strains.



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With the winemaking tradition that treasures the area as a common thread, the Alentejo Wine Route proposes to pair the wines with the natural beauty and the historical and cultural heritage of this Portuguese region.

Museums, stays between vineyards, and local gastronomy, complete an offer whose success lies in the mixture of land and traditions with new technological tools.

## CDO TAVIRA

The **Tavira Controlled Denomination of Origin** is located in the Portuguese **Algarve**, specifically to the east, and is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Caldeirão mountain range and the Guadiana river.

The winemaking tradition in the Algarve dates back to the Muslim occupation. The Arabs not only cultivated the vineyards, but also exported the wine produced.

Here the climate is typically Mediterranean; hot, dry, and with a minimum thermal oscillation. This, added to the sandy soils of the region, contributes to the differentiation of their wines, as well as to their quality and particular characteristics.

To all the above we must add the proximity to the sea, another factor that favors the production of wines with their own characteristics. The **reds** are slightly acidic, although full-bodied and velvety. **Whites** appear smooth and delicate.

They are the result of traditional grape varieties, such as Castelo and Negra More, and white Aritos and Syria. Lately, varieties of Syrah and Tourgia Nacional have also been introduced. In addition, here the production of rosé wine grows year by year.

Enology is part of daily life in the Algarve, a tourist region par excellence in Portugal. Numerous scripts, military fortifications, and lighthouses, certify the tradition of wineries and vineyards in the area.





Visit the wineries of the region, enjoy their tastings, and walk through its vineyards, can be complemented with the great diversity of activities offered by this destination. To begin, a glass of wine can accompany the visitor while enjoying a sunset with incredible views of the sea. But the Algarve is much more than beaches and wines, and the secret lies in enjoying it to the full.

Leisure options for all ages, hiking trails, water activities, monuments, museums, churches... This area has an architectural heritage with centuries of history inside. The Controlled Denomination of Origin of Tavira shares part of its territory with Ria Formosa, one of the most beautiful natural parks in southern Portugal.

To complete the experience, the gastronomic note. The visitor should not leave the area without tasting the local seafood and fresh fish.

## DO CONDADO DE HUELVA

The **Condado de Huelva Denomination of Origin**, on the other hand, is a mark recognition of the quality that provides perfect climate conditions for vine growing, with warm summers, mild winters and intense light during much of the day for the approximately 6000 hectares of vineyards in the region.

The wine region is located in the depression of the Guadalquivir River, between the Sierra de Aracena and the coast, bordering the Doñana Natural Park. The area comprises flat or slightly undulating terrain, with sandy soils with a high lime content.

Plantations predominate in low strains, and the **Zalema** type grape, native to Huelva, which covers most of the cultivated area, stands out. However, **other varieties** are also found here, such as Moscatel de Alejandría, Garrido Fino, Listán de Huelva, Palomino Fino and Pedro Ximénez.

Here the wine follows a traditional production process. Wine is a child of nature and culture and is part of the history of all generations.

These genealogical ties are reflected, explained and justified through the "Condado de Huelva Wine Route", an itinerary that is essential for getting the best out of the wine tourism potential of a region that has been closely linked to its wines for thousands of years.



Currently, most of the wineries with roots in the County are in the hands of third generations, who have managed to preserve the legacy of their ancestors and committing themselves to technological innovation.

The Product Club 'Condado de Huelva Wine Route' offers visitors different options, up to 11 currently, to come into contact with this variety.



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The alternatives cover the needs of a neophyte or a person who just plans to visit a winery as well as expert connoisseurs who wish to spend three days submerged in the winemaking world. To cater to all visitors, a catalog of tour possibilities is offered, starting from the wine as a reference and expanding to other signs of identity of the Condado de Huelva and the province in general.

The bull, the horse, the gastronomy, the Lugares Colombinos, the monuments, the railroad, health and the environment that accompany in wine in the itineraries that criss-cross the County.

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