

# What to do in Eixo Atlántico!

*Routes to break routines*





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in  
Eixo Atlântico!**

*Routes to break routines*

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It almost goes without saying that the pandemic has transformed our lives and dealt a blow to recovery efforts after the 2008 economic crisis. But life goes on and we have to rebuild our daily routines and our economy as resiliently as we have always lived. Firstly, we have learned how important it is to enjoy life, to appreciate the people around us and all those little things that sometimes go unnoticed.

Today, enjoying is more important than possessing because we have also discovered our vulnerability and therefore, in addition to our traditional, cheerful, festive and fun way of being, we are rediscovering new experiences and moments. Economically speaking, we are not only building up the most dynamic sectors of our economy, but also those that make up our local community including local commerce, local tourism, our cultural creators, our nature and heritage areas. In summary, we are leaders in tourism, attracting millions of visitors every year, whether it be for the Camino de Santiago, our nature, our culture or our gastronomy.

This is exactly what you have in your hands: a guide that offers you a thousand and one things to do throughout the year, in the most diverse areas and less than two hours from your home. However, the dynamic nature of our reality and the festive and cultural events programme in our cities is becoming more and more diverse, so this guide could not remain just a paper edition, which is why from this year onwards all the events that our cities organise each year will continue to be updated in the online edition of this guide so that we don't miss a single one of them.

In each of our cities you, your family and friends are welcome, enjoy this wonderful environment, experience this wonderful cultural and gastronomic calendar, and live life creating value around you.

# Hello,

Are you planning a holiday? Do you want to make the most of that long weekend that's coming up in the calendar? No? Maybe you're just looking for a nearby place to spend your Sunday. Or are you just looking for an afternoon of relaxation? Let me know more, do you want to travel with friends? With your family? With your partner? Would you prefer to explore the countryside alone? And what are you interested in? Are you more of a sea or mountain person? How about a cultural trip? Are you in the mood for excitement, for sport? -No? Well, let me think... Maybe something a bit calmer, what about hiking? Yes, yes, I know, eating and drinking is also important, so shall we go for a culinary experience?

Well, what we're here to tell you is that this guide is yours. Yes, it really is. It doesn't matter what you answered to the previous questions, because here we have just what you are looking for. What do you mean? What are you looking for? Well, what you want is a different approach. It's disconnecting, yes, but connecting at the same time. Let me explain, *s e r e n d i p i t y*. A serendipity is a fortunate, valuable and unexpected discovery or find that occurs accidentally, by chance, or when you are looking for something else.

Let's take a step back. The discovery will be here, in the **Galicia-Northern Portugal Eixo Atlántico Euroregion**. We are talking about two countries, but only one destination. 51,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land, do you realise how much a region like this can hold? Maybe you think you do, but we've come to tell you about everything that doesn't appear on maps.

We are here to rediscover the magic of unseen natural landscapes with you. Let's bring the meaning of the word 'indigestion' to a whole new level (spoiler, you won't be able to stop eating). Don't forget the wines... just to make a long story short, there are eight Designations of Origin. But read on, I'll tell you more. We are here to tell you about those legends to impress your friends with. To tell you the stories that brought us here. To plan an infinite number of activities with you. And to make sure that, at last, you find out everything.

Just to be clear..., you'll find it all here. Here, on these pages. And here, in this location, travelling through Galicia and the Northern Portugal. There are seven routes, because you have to start somewhere and all this has to have an order, but, if you'll let us give you a piece of advice... The idea is to help you establish your own itinerary, to trace your own route. Don't adapt to this guide, because it is designed to adapt to you. Let me tell you...

01

## Máxica Route

We will start our journey through the largest green reserve in Galicia, **Ancares to Courel**, i.e., the **Máxica Route**. Fairytale villages, iconic forests, and breathtaking valleys and mountains and remains the last stronghold of the brown bear in the area. In Lugo you will discover the details of the only Roman wall in the world that has been preserved practically in its entirety. The route culminates in the **Ribeira Sacra**, a very special area in the heart of Galicia. A treasure that stretches around the rivers Sil and Miño, which hides a real hidden gem at the point where the two converge.

02

## Estrelas Route

Take note, we have only just begun. The **Estrelas Route** connects with the previous one in the city of Ourense. Let's not forget that we have to eat; we will move through the centre of Galicia, stopping in **O Carballiño** and **Lalín**, of course. And to round it all off, **Santiago de Compostela**.

03

## Marusía Route

What about the so-called 'Prolongación Xacobeá' (Jacobean Extension)? This is an epilogue to the Camino de Santiago. It involves continuing the route to **Fisterra** after reaching the Cathedral. On this **Marusía Route** we will discover the area of **Costa da Morte** and we will go further, crossing the **Rías Altas** and continuing to the **Marina Lucense** and its exceptional places.

04

## Luscofusco Route

The north coast of Galicia is amazing. But the south is equally impressive. The **Luscofusco Route** kicks off in **Ribeira**. The **Rías Baixas** will enhance the tour with essential stops, such as the only National Park in Galicia; yes, it is the **Atlantic Islands National Park**, and it includes the islands of Ons, Cíes, Sálvora and Cortegada. **Vigo**, **Pontevedra** and **Ponteareas** will also stand out on this route, which will end at the Miño river.

05

## Arraial Route

Yes, the Miño is the river that acts as a natural border between Spain and Portugal, and of course, the journey continues, because in this Galicia-Northern Portugal Euroregion, magic flows through the whole territory. Fortune is common to the whole region; the **Arraial Route** suggests an immersion in the Portuguese region of **Minho**. We will also take the opportunity to tell you when and where there is a festival in Portugal. And the history of Braga, one of the youngest cities in Europe. Or **Guimarães**, which has a historic centre declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco. And of course, we will also get to know the wide cultural offer of **Vila Nova de Famalicão**.

06

## Bravura Route

In the case of the **Bravura Route**, southeast of the Galicia-Northern Portugal territory, the urban option passes through the Greater Metropolitan Area of **Porto**; **Póvoa de Varzim**, **Matosinhos**, **Maia**, **Santa Maria da Feira**, **Vila Nova de Gaia**, **Gondomar**, **Valongo**, **Amarante**, (once home to the “Portuguese Saint Valentine” and a pilgrimage point for those looking for a partner), and the city of Porto itself will make up the route.

07

## Socalco Route

The last route, the **Socalco Route**, which could well be the first if we reverse our journey, covers the **Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro** area. **Peso da Régua**, **Vila Real** and its “crista de galo” pastries, the charm of **Mirandela** and **Macedo de Cavaleiros**, and, of course, the unique combination of nature and history of **Bragança**.

Whatever you're looking for, you're in the right place. In this guide. In this territory. You may think you have already heard of it, but let us invite you to rediscover it. Jules Verne's experiences in one of the destinations along these routes, where you will also find the only non-volcanic black sand beach in the world, as well as the only waterfall in Europe that flows into the sea, or the tallest chestnut trees on the continent. This is also where tea became popular in England, did you know that? All this in an incomparable destination of immeasurable value. If, on the other hand, this is the first time you've been to this destination... We are so jealous! The feeling of gazing at scenery and tasting flavours like these will be like nothing you've ever experienced before.

Remember what we said about '**serendipity**'? We would like to welcome you to the Galicia-Northern Portugal Atlantic Eixo Euroregion, where it will be a constant state. While admiring a beautiful landscape, you will be overwhelmed by a sunset. When you walk along a street, you will feel the embrace of the people who live there. Unexpectedly, a party will take place and you will find yourself dancing. The experience of living is not a rehearsal, it is up to us what we do with the first take; you will be making the most of it.

*« Maybe happiness is this:  
not feeling like you should be elsewhere,  
doing something else, being someone else »*

So said the teacher and writer Isaac Asimov.

We want to welcome you to your happiness, will you join us?

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*Maxica* **Route**



*Estrelas* **Route**



*Maruxia* **Route**



*Luzcastiçoa* **Route**



*Arraial* **Route**



*Bravura* **Route**



*Socalos* **Route**

01

*Maxica*  
**Route**



# 01

## *Máxica* **Route**

Although this Route does not have to be the first one in your visit to the Galicia - Northern Portugal Euroregion, we had to start somewhere. How about doing so by touring Galicia's largest natural area, along with other locations? Let's go for it!

The **Máxica Route**: Magic refers to how charming and attractive something is. Magic and charm take shape in this route, so let yourself be enchanted by it.

**ANCARES  
COUREL  
RIBEIRA SACRA  
VALDEORRAS**



**O BARCO DE VALDEORRAS  
SARRIA  
LUGO  
MONFORTE DE LEMOS  
PROVINCIA DE LUGO  
PROVINCIA DE OURENSE**

# Máxica

## Route

This is a semi-circular route that starts in the north-eastern end of the province of Ourense, at the bottom of the Sil valley, in the town of O Barco de Valdeorras.



# 01



### ▶▶ O BARCO DE VALDEORRAS

*The Sil River flows through this place on its way into Galicia and the Camino de Invierno (Winter Way) to Santiago de Compostela, which starts in Ponferrada.*

There are two theories behind the origin of the name of **O Barco**: the first places the etymological origin in the Celtic period prior to the Roman occupation of Galicia, specifically in the particle “barg” -or “barc”-, which meant “height, concavity or hollow”.

The second and more popular theory claims that it refers to the boat that was already set up in Roman times on the banks of the river Sil to transport people and goods between the two banks. The Barca del Sil was in operation until 1902 when the San Fernando bridge was built to cross the waterway.

The etymological origin of the name of the region, **Valdeorras**, is also attributed to the time of the 'guigurros' - Celtic people belonging to the Astures group who populated the region until the arrival of the Romans - as a word derived from the construction 'Val-de-iorres' or Valley of the 'guigurros'.

**DID YOU KNOW...**



- ▶ The name given to the people of O Barco de Valdeorras is "barquense"?

For a leisurely start to the day, we will visit one of the most emblematic places in the town of O Barco: the **Paseo de O Malecón**. On this walk along the banks of the River Sil you can rest at any of its green areas while you watch the water, ducks, otters, weeping willows, and so on, and where you can also enjoy the many catering services that you will find all along the walk. Along this route you can enjoy one of the best panoramic views of the River Sil, with dreamlike sunsets and two pedestrian footbridges to cross the river and appreciate the spectacular views of the area even more.



However, if we are talking about views, we must also point out those that can be seen from the **Mirador de Alixo** (Alixo viewpoint), just 5 km from O Barco and standing at an altitude of around 800 metres, or those that can be enjoyed from the **medieval tower in the village of O Castro**, perched on a **thousand-year-old Celtic fort** and from whose viewpoint at the top of the tower itself you can breathe in history and heritage, looking out over the valley at the entrance to Galicia.



Very close to O Castro is the **Monastery of Xagoaza**, where you can experience a very spiritual atmosphere with the church of San Miguel de Xagoaza, dating back to the 12th century, and the monastery building itself, which dates back to the 18th century but was later restored to house a local wine and spirits cellar whose vineyards are also located in the surroundings of the monumental complex.

The region of Valdeorras has numerous archaeological remains, such as **petroglyphs** and **fortified settlements**, including the Bronze Age petroglyphs of the parish of Arcos, located in the municipality of Vilamartín, and those of the village of Éntoma, located in the municipality of O Barco.

Romanisation was intense in a strategic territory rich in minerals such as gold. The Via Nova (the XVIII of Antonine's itinerary), which linked Braga and Astorga, passed through Valdeorras, as well as other secondary roads that made it necessary to build infrastructures that testify to that period. The **Roman bridge of Bibei** is still in use, over the Bibei river, which provides access both on foot and by car to the Terras de Trives.

The **Montefurado tunnel**, located at the exit of Valdeorras on the N-120 towards Quiroga, is another example of gold mining in the area. This tunnel was dug into the rock of the mountain to completely divert the course of the River Sil and thus extract the gold from the river bed, and is considered one of the greatest works of Roman engineering in the Iberian Peninsula.



In Valdeorras, as far as natural heritage is concerned, it is worth enjoying the **Serra da Enciña da Lastra Nature Reserve**, a karst environment of great beauty with spectacular viewpoints over the canyons of the River Sil as it enters Galicia, "palas" or caves in the rock, and spectacular flora and fauna. In addition, the location of the park - on the border with the province of León - allows you to see the surroundings of **Las Médulas**, which provide a spectacularly shaped and reddish-coloured landscape as a result of the remains of a major Roman gold mining operation, and which are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

Reporicelo is an abandoned village in O Barco de Valdeorras that Camilo José Cela portrayed in his book "Mazurca para dos muertos".

Valdeorras wine is another thing you can't afford to miss on your visit to the area. Although the region lives mainly from the extraction and sale of slate, the production of **D.O. Valdeorras wine** is one of the economic engines of the area's primary sector, together with the production of chestnuts thanks to the richness and expanse of the groves. Just 8 km from O Barco is the village of A Portela. From there you can set off on one of the best walking routes to see and enjoy the Valdeorras vineyards, passing through the village of Córcomo, where several wineries are located, and finishing in the town of Vilamartín de Valdeorras, the headquarters of the Valdeorras Designation of Origin Wine Regulatory Council. This 12 km route is circular and takes approximately two and a half hours to complete.

▶▶ ANCARES

*We set off northwards and leave O Barco de Valdeorras behind us to climb the mountain. Only two hours later, we will be in the east of the province of Lugo on the border with Asturias and León, and we will discover the mountain **ranges of Os Ancares and O Courel**, the Galician nature reserve through which it seems as if time has stood still.*

Classified as a Site of Community Importance in the Natura 2000 Network, it features unique landscapes, culture, ethnography and gastronomy. This destination's personality, an international benchmark for conservation, will never cease to amaze you, because here you can breathe history.

Os Ancares and O Courel are two sites of special scientific interest, where visitors can enjoy important natural resources at a geological, botanical, biological, ecological, and other levels.

It is the perfect place for any kind of mountain routes; it offers options for all interests; mountain biking, hiking, car routes... The area's identity is popularly marked by its traditional pallozas, castles and nature, but Ancares-Courel is much more than that! Its main attraction stems from the natural and cultural preservation of the area. The Quaternary glacial periods had a direct influence on the shaping of the landscape and the territory, which continues to affect the lives of its inhabitants to the present day.



In the Ancares, we find peaks of almost 2,000 metres in altitude. To see the summits of the highest points, you have to go to **Mustallar** and **Tres Bispos**. The mountains constitute a network of river valleys and glaciers that flow into the Navia. It is an area catalogued as a Special Protection Area for the brown bear and a National Hunting Reserve.



In terms of religious heritage, the church of Santo André stands out, with its mural paintings, as well as the church of Santa María de Penamaior. In this area you can also visit the oldest pre-Romanesque temple on the Camino Francés (French Way), the **church of Santa María A Real de O Cebreiro**, an example of early medieval Galician architecture, built in the mid-9th century as an inn to house pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James).



Another characteristic element of the area are the **pallozas**; low-walled constructions with a conical vegetated roof, thus adapting to their location in the mountains. The houses have an oval floor plan, to favour the distribution of heat, and scarcely any windows, to prevent the cold from penetrating. They date back to the pre-Roman and Castro periods, are totally integrated into nature, and were inhabited by families living together with their domestic animals. You can visit one of them in O Piornedo or in O Cebreiro, and some of them have been converted into ethnographic museums.



Legend has it that the **Holy Grail** - the cup used by Jesus Christ at the last supper - made it all the way to **O Cebreiro**, a village located at an altitude of 1,300 metres. It is the first Galician village on the Camino Francés, and it is said that at the beginning of the 14th century, a peasant from a nearby village came here, braving a heavy snowfall, just to attend mass. He arrived practically frozen and was scolded by the clergyman. He then continued with the mass, but when the moment of consecration came, a miracle occurred, the wine was turned into blood and the Sacramental Bread into meat. The priest was punished for disregarding the peasant's sacrifice and died on the spot. The bells began to ring on their own. The whole village responded to the call and watched the Holy Miracle.

In the Middle Ages, the story travelled around Europe and many visitors came to O Cebreiro, including the Catholic Monarchs, who in 1486 donated the reliquaries and the chalice that can be found in the church of Santa María de O Cebreiro.



?

### DID YOU KNOW...

In the church of Santa María de O Cebreiro lies buried Elías Valiña Sampedro, parish priest and promoter of the restoration of the **Camino Francés**. He was the instigator behind the yellow arrow signposting that is still the reference point for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago.

▶▶ O COUREL

The **O Courel mountain range** runs south of the Ancares, stretching almost as far as the River Sil. The terrain is breathtaking and includes narrow valleys, slopes and peaks such as Formigueiros. Mountains and valleys crossed by the River Lor, centenary forests, paths, Roman mines and waterfalls make for a treasure trove.

In O Courel you will find the most diverse **flora and fauna**, and the locals say that in summer you can discover all the native Galician tree species that exist. Chestnut, holly, beech, yew, oak, and birch. In addition, the alternation of soils, combined with the humid mountain climate, produces a wide variety of flowers. This varied vegetation makes the area a great fauna reserve, with one of the richest census of vertebrates in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ Remains of the **cave bear**, a species that became extinct in the Pleistocene, were found in the caves of O Courel.

This was a territory coveted by the Romans, as the gold they needed to finance their Empire's conquests was to be found here. The **Romans** carried out a large number of open-cast **mines**, and today the remains of several of them can be found in the mountain range, such as those at **Toca**, **Romeor**, **Torubio** and **Millares**.

This is an area in which the landscape is enriched by the possibility of visiting Roman and medieval remains, since as far as **archaeological heritage** is concerned, there are also several fortified settlements here, such as the **Castro da Torre** or the **Castro de Vilar**. Temples, farmhouses, hamlets and ruins of **fortresses** such as **Carbedo** still survive from the medieval period. Remains of the castle walls, part of a circular tower and a cistern are preserved, although they are in a very deteriorated state. Here you can also discover the only Romanesque marble church in Spain, the **church of San Pedro Fiz de Hospital**, in O Incio.



The **caves** are another important attraction in the area. The **Teixeira** cave, the **Tralacosta** cave in Paderne and one of the most interesting, the **Cueva da Ceza** (Ceza Cave), in Noceda, through which a stream runs. The caves of **Chao de Mazairos**, **Arcoia**, **Buraca das Choias** and **Aradelas**, which is the deepest cave in Galicia, also stand out. Some of these caves can only be accessed by professional speleologists.



You can also visit the **Covas do Courel Interpretation Centre** in the parish of Meiraos, which displays a wide range of information for visitors about the characteristics, history and interesting facts about the caves in the Courel Mountains. You can see, touch and experience how the caves were formed, the biology present in them, the description of their palaeontological and archaeological value and, finally, a vision of the caves from the point of view of speleology and access through the ravines, using different elements and audiovisual technologies.

Visitors should let themselves be enchanted by the authentic and unique **villages** of the area, which seem to be straight out of a fairy tale, such as **Seceda** and **Visuña**; the village of **Froxán**, in Folgoso do Courel, is classified as an Asset of Cultural Interest for its constructions and for the preservation of its traditions and customs. At the visitor's disposal, an itinerary known as the **route of the Palaeozoic villages**, whose traditional architecture features rocks formed in different periods of the Palaeozoic era.



The **Val das Mouras** is also worth a stop to contemplate a fantastic and mythological landscape shaped by erosion, which created a natural scenery of diverse and spectacular forms. Moss and ferns surround the caves, crevices, and passages, and the sensation is film-like.

The rivers and streams in the area give rise to **waterfalls** and pools that are worth enjoying at any time of the year, whether for a refreshing swim in summer or to enjoy the splendour of the overflowing streams. The Waterfalls at **Pedreira, Albardaira, Rexio** o **Vilamor**, or **Pozo das Mulas** - perfect for a swim - are worth mentioning.



Another very interesting stop on our route will be in the **Courel Mountains Geopark**, declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, which covers the territory located between the municipalities of Folgoso do Courel, Quiroga and Ribas de Sil. It is the perfect showcase to observe a part of the geological history of planet Earth, specifically the Lower and Middle Palaeozoic, and to a lesser extent also the end of the Tertiary and Quaternary periods.

### DID YOU KNOW...

From the mountains of O Courel and O Cebreiro originates **El Apalpador**, something like the Galician Father Christmas.



## ▶▶ SARRIA

*Now that we have left behind the impressive attraction surrounding the Ancares-Courel area, we have to choose a new destination. Do you feel like heading north or east? Don't worry, we'll break down both options. If we choose to head north, **Sarria**, in the province of Lugo, will be our next stop.*

The town of Sarria is just over 100 km from Santiago de Compostela on the **French Way**, which is the shortest distance that qualifies for the Compostela, and has therefore become the most popular starting point for all the different Pilgrims' Routes to Santiago de Compostela.

For starters, we will appreciate the rivers that flow through the town, the Sarria and the Celeiro, which have recreational areas and up to twenty bridges that cross them. Only four of them existed until 1850 and deserve a mention: **Ponte Ribeira**, **Ponte Vella**, **Ponte da Áspera** and **Ponte Vella do Mazadoiro**. Parallel to the Sarria River there is also a beautiful circular route, the *Ruta da Foz das Aceas*, where you can admire the local flora and fauna, which is very accessible for the whole family.



As for Sarria's architectural heritage, we will stop at **Villa Andrea**; a 19th century building, popularly known as **Casa del Marqués**. Today the municipality, together with a beautiful chapel and the garden, which has a huge square with different areas, owns it.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Between the 12th century and the mid-19th century, Sarria had four stone bridges and the Regiment of the Villa charged toll fees?

Continuing the route, we reach the Juan María López e Almance Square, where we will visit the church of Santa Mariña. The church dates back to 1885 and is notable for its tower with a pyramidal spire, which can be seen from all over the town thanks to its height, and its clock. The 19th-century Casa Vaamonde, although renovated in 1998, now houses the town hall.



The 13th century Romanesque **Church of San Salvador** is watched over by the remains of the **Fortress of Sarria**, also from the 13th century, today simply an impressive 15-metre high tower. It was once an authentic fortress, with a moat, counter moat and four towers, built on top of a fortified settlement, the origin of Vilanova de Sarria, founded by Alfonso IX in 1194. It was almost destroyed during the Irmandiño's revolts, at the end of the 15th century.



Following the **Camino de Santiago** we come to the Old Remand Prison which today, as well as housing both permanent and travelling exhibitions, is the headquarters of the Tourist Office. There is also the **Miradoiro do Cárcere**, from where you can see a large part of the valley of Sarria and the surrounding mountains, and a rest area.



The tour of the monumental part of Sarria does not end here, as we can still visit the undoubtedly most important building: the **Monastery of La Magdalena**, founded in the 13th century as a chapel and hospital, and where we can see, just by admiring its façade, Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque and Neoclassical architecture.

## ▶▶ LUGO

*Taking advantage of the journey, we will head north, where we will find our next destination, the city of **Lugo**.*

**Lugo** boasts **three World Heritage Sites**: its **Roman Wall**, which is the symbol of the city, its cathedral and the **Camino Primitivo de Santiago** (Primitive Way of St. James), which gives it an extraordinary wealth of heritage, but it also has a remarkable natural wealth, being the only municipality fully integrated in the **Terras do Miño Biosphere Reserve**.

Lugo was the first urban settlement in Galicia, that is to say, it is the oldest city, on the banks of the **River Miño** and steeped in its history, which can be enjoyed by strolling through its streets. The city stands on the ancient site of a Gallaeci fortified settlement. **Lucus Augusti**, of Roman origin, was founded in 25 B.C. by Paulo Fabio Máximo.

The city of Lugo was developed as a strategic enclave in constant growth, and at the end of the 2nd century its **Roman wall** was built to defend the Roman city of Lucus.



Its perimeter has been preserved intact in its entirety and constitutes the most beautiful archetype of a late Roman fortification in all of Western Europe. It is a treasure of more than two kilometres in perimeter and 85 towers which, today, has 10 access routes - 5 are original, and the other 5 were opened later, as the city expanded.

One of these gateways is the **Puerta de Santiago**, the exit door for pilgrims, which has stone seats to allow them to rest. The city of Lugo is part of this Jacobean itinerary that starts in Oviedo and crosses impressive landscapes along the way. It is common to see pilgrims passing through the city of Lugo and marvelling at its beauty.

Opposite the Puerta de Santiago you can stop to appreciate Lugo Cathedral. The building has undergone renovations, extensions, changes in architectural style, although the prevailing style is Romanesque. An earthquake even destroyed the integrity of the main altarpiece. The Cathedral is the only one that permanently exhibits the Blessed Sacrament.



At the back of the Cathedral is the **Praza de Santa María**, one of the most beautiful squares in Lugo. In this picturesque and timeless square, we find the remains of a Roman swimming pool, dating back to the 4th century AD, visible through a glass window. Roman heritage is a constant feature of every step on the route. **Via XIX**, a Roman road from the time of Augustus, described in the Antonine Itinerary, used to run through Lugo, linking the cities of Braga and Astorga.



In the heart of the city, the **Praza Maior** is an essential stop in Lugo. This wide, tree-lined square is surrounded by some of the most attractive and elegant buildings in the old part of the town. The **Casa do Concello** (Town Hall) is the most important building, dating from 1738 and built in the Galician civil Baroque style. Later, in 1871, the clock tower was erected. On the other side of the square is the **Circulo de las Artes**. At the foot of the building, there is a statue of Paulo Fabio Máximo and the Emperor Augustus, founders of the city of Lugo.



On *Doutor Castro* Street, the remains of a Roman domus from the 3rd century can be found, a well-to-do Roman house, known as **Casa dos Mosaicos**, which can be visited free of charge. The mosaics on the floor represent geometric motifs and are truly remarkable.

Also, in the fluvial environment of the River Miño, the **Roman baths**, one of the most representative monuments of the Roman cultural legacy, are in a magnificent state of preservation, inside the Hotel Balneario.

Not far from the baths there is a Roman bridge that crosses the Miño river as it passes through the southwest of Lugo, linking the Calzada da Ponte with the old road to Santiago. Later, it links the Lugo district of San Lázaro, and with the area of O Carme, to an area of outstanding natural beauty next to the city walls, through which the Primitive Way to Santiago and the Roman Road XIX pass.



## ▶▶ MONFORTE DE LEMOS

*Our route continues heading south, towards the Ribeira Sacra, a particularly special territory, with a charm capable of winning over any visitor. The most urban aspect of the territory is the town of **Monforte de Lemos**, which is considered to be the gateway to the Ribeira Sacra and will be our next stop.*

It is an extensive esplanade crossed by the **River Cabe**, which is home to an extensive wealth of bridges, monasteries, manor houses, castles and monasteries that are a must-see. Amongst all this, the monumental complex of **San Vicente do Pino** stands out, made up of the **monastery of San Vicente do Pino**, the **Torre del Homenaje** (Homage Tower) and the **Pazo de los Condes de Lemos** (manor house of the Counts of Lemos). These buildings are the first thing that pilgrims see on the **Camino de Inverno (Winter Way)**, which also passes through this town where the fifth stage begins, almost 31 km long and which ends in **Chantada**.



In Monforte you have to cross the river over the **Puente Viejo** (Old Bridge), where you can see medieval details. On the banks of the river, marking the end of the river walk, you should stop at the **Colegio de los Escolapios**, which will certainly grab your attention. It is one of the few examples of the Herrerian style to be found in Galicia, dating from the early 17th century. It used to be a monastery, but now, in addition to the school, it houses a church and a museum containing several works by El Greco. It is popularly known as “The Galician Escorial”, due to the similarity between the two buildings. You can also visit the **Clarisas convent**, which houses one of the most important sacred art museums in Spain.



Monforte de Lemos is also home to the **Galician Railway Museum**. The most prominent feature of the museum is the nave of the roundabout, a horseshoe-shaped building with 38 radial tracks and a rotating ferry bridge that are the only ones of their kind in Spain. You can also see locomotives and carriages from different eras, as well as a theme park of small-scale manned trains.



For wine lovers, Monforte is home to the **Ribeira Sacra Wine Centre**, a space created to bring together all the activities related to wine in this region. Winemakers, experts, artists, wine tasters and enthusiasts alike gather in this space, which has exhibitions, a shop and even a tapas bar. Monforte is an essential stop for those who appreciate art and history, but also for those who enjoy gastronomy.

It has **five routes** differentiated by their themes: wine, viewpoints, architecture, mountain, and the well-being route. All of them are well worth a visit.

## ▶▶ RIBEIRA SACRA

*Now, we will fully explore the **Ribeira Sacra**; a very special territory that includes the banks of the rivers Cabe, Sil and Miño, as well as the junction of these rivers. It includes a total of 407 km<sup>2</sup> of spectacular natural scenery. Here you can find prehistoric dolmens and medorras, evidence of an early settlement in the area, followed by important traces of Roman presence.*

If we look for the origin, there is evidence of the territory's nomenclature since the 12th century, as monks and wandering people settled here to cultivate the spirit and practise an ascetic life, renouncing pleasures austere. This is the largest concentration of Romanesque-style monasteries in Europe, responsible for Galicia's artistic and cultural progress over several centuries, but that is only one of its attractions.

**Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil** is the most outstanding monastery, as the power of its abbot went far beyond religion; in those times it had the authority to impart justice, and also to appoint scribes and customs officers.



The most characteristic feature of the Ribeira Sacra is its rugged relief, the most remarkable of which is the abrupt **Sil canyon**. A canyon that can reach altitudes of up to 500 metres, and through which the river flows on the border provinces of Lugo and Ourense, formed millions of years ago and fundamental in the development of the enclave. It is a difficult terrain to access in many of its areas, as some of these can only be discovered from the water. Therefore, **cruises on catamarans**, the most important embarkation point being Ponte do Sil, or **kayak** tours, are essential activities when visiting the area, which can also be experienced on various **hiking trails**, or even by taking a **hot-air balloon ride**. How will you remember the Ribeira Sacra?



From the heights of the canyon there are plenty of viewpoints, which are perfect to take a good snapshot as a souvenir. The viewpoints at **Cabezoás, Cividade, Duque, Balcones de Madrid, Souto Chao, Pé de Home, Matacás, Columna, Vilouxe, Pena do Castelo** are all worth a visit. There are numerous routes to explore them. And if there is one thing the Ribeira Sacra offers, it is different ways of experiencing the territory; there are **routes** of all kinds and with different themes: wine, landscapes, even olive oil tourism, as this area also produces olive oil from local varieties.

Observing the landscape and its beauty, the vineyards on the steep slopes catch the eye. Ribeira Sacra is a wine-producing area with approximately 2,500 hectares of vineyards.



Its wines have their own Designation of Origin, and the difficulty of its orography means that this area is known as “Viticultura Heroica” (Heroic Viticulture). But everything has its reward, and the result is wines of excellent quality, thanks also to the area’s Mediterranean climate. Its wines are closely linked to the Pilgrims’ Routes to Santiago de Compostela, particularly the French Way and the Winter Way, and are divided into the sub-regions of **Amandi**, **Chantada**, **Quiroga-Bibei**, **Ribeiras do Miño** and **Ribeiras do Sil**, which partly runs along an ancient Roman road.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ To be classified as such, heroic viticulture must be carried out on a slope of at least 17°. This is what happens in Ribeira Sacra.

There is no shortage of legends - it is said that the Greek god Jupiter, fascinated by the beauty of Galicia, wanted to possess her and crossed it with a river. His wife, the goddess Juno, felt jealous and decided to open a wound in her, so that Jupiter would relinquish his new love. This is how, it is said, what we know today as **Cañón del Sil** (Sil Canyon) was born, which reaches, at some points, a sheer drop of 500 metres.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ Legend has it that Ribeira Sacra is the birthplace of the *xacias*, a tribe of aquatic beings, half man, half fish, and mermaids, which can be seen today in some murals located in villages in the area.

## WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



This is a huge area where gastronomy is a priority. As we proceed along our route, visitors will be able to enjoy the local products of each of the towns and villages they pass through. In **O Barco de Valdeorras**, for example, as well as tasting its Designation of Origin wines, the most noteworthy being **godello**, **mencia** and **garnacha**, you can try *androllas* (pork sausage), *botelo* (semi-cured pork), *empanada de maravallas* (savoury pastry), **flame roasted baby goat**, and why not try some sweet treats such as **roscones** (ring-shaped pastries), **bicas** (sponge-cake) and *tortas de chicharrones* (pork crackling cakes).



In **Ancares** and **O Courel** the diet will be left to one side; **wild boar with chestnuts**, **oven-roasted baby goat**, **stew**, **Galician broth**, **DO cheeses...** such as *O Cebreiro*, a cow’s milk cheese whose origin dates back to the first monks who settled in the area. The food is a highlight of the area.

Meat from local breeds and some of the area’s characteristic products will give shape to a recipe book that is worth exploring, such as the exquisite **freixós with honey** from the Courel beehives, a must. Here you can stock up on homemade products such as **jams**, **sausages**, **cheeses**, a delicious **chestnut tart** and more.



In **Sarria** you can also savour meats such as **pork**, **Galician beef** or local breeds, exceptional **empanadas** (savoury pastries), as well as **bread**, **wonderful tapas**, and **octopus**. It has it all, as well as vegetable garden produce. Shopping is also an option, and not only in the wide range of shops in the city centre, but also in the fairs (6th, 20th and 27th of each month) and, if you are a lover of antiques, you can stroll along the Porvir Street, known as Rúa dos Anticuarios (Antique Dealers' Street).



Tapas are traditional in **Lugo**; it is customary to walk around the bars in the old part of the city to sample the tapas on offer in each one. The cuisine is certainly also one of the city's strengths: **pork and beef**, **octopus** and, of course, a good bowl of **Galician broth**. In **Monforte** you can also find a sublime **homemade bread**, as well as **empanadas** in all their varieties, especially the **iscos** (chorizo and thick-cut bacon), the most typical one-, octopus -which can be enjoyed on the 6th and 24th of each month, and the cherry on the cake is **larpeira**. This very typical traditional dessert of the city is made with a sweet and juicy sponge cake or bun, accompanied by custard and bathed in syrup.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Legend has it that **Amandi** wines were already well-known in ancient Rome and were even served at the table of the Caesars.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### JANUARY

- ▶ The calendar of gastronomic festivals begins with the **Festa do Botelo do Barco**, where more than 1,000 people come together to taste this delicacy and enjoy the festive atmosphere. If you don't make it to the Festa do Botelo you can enjoy the **Xornadas Gastronomicas de Botelo e Cocido Valdeorres** held in the local restaurants from the end of January.

### FEBRUARY

- ▶ Every February, **Sarria** hosts the **Festa do Cocido do Porco Celta** (Celtic Pork Stew Festival), a culinary event that celebrates the Celtic pig's exquisite meat.

### APRIL

- ▶ **Monforte de Lemos Medieval Fair**: held on the Easter weekend, Saturday and Sunday.
- ▶ **Easter in O Barco**, on Good Friday we recommend that you go to the **Procesión de los Caracoles** (Procession of the Snails) in the village of **O Castro**.
- ▶ On the **day of Corpus Christi** we recommend visiting the streets of the old quarter of **O Barco**, which are covered with Corpus Christi plant arrangements.

### MAY

- ▶ On 1 May, the **Festivities of Maïos** is celebrated in **O Barco** and on 22 May, and the **Festivities of Santa Rita** also take place in the town of O Barco.

## JUNE

- ▶ The **Arde Lucus** is held in **Lugo** in mid-June. A festival that revives the Roman and Castro past of the walled city, and which was created to commemorate Lugo's founding.

## JULY

- ▶ **Festival do Viño da Ribeira Sacra** in **Monforte** (Ribeira Sacra Wine Festival): the first Friday, Saturday and Sunday in July.

## AUGUST

- ▶ **Patronal Festivities in Monforte**, in honour of the Virxe de Montserrat from 11th to 16th August.
- ▶ The **Festa da Pandeira in Piornedo** takes place at the end of August. They celebrate the musical tradition of the area by honouring the *pandeira*, one of the most valuable instruments in the Galician musical tradition.

## SEPTEMBER

- ▶ On 8 and 9 September, **O Cebreiro** celebrates the **great pilgrimage of Los Milagros**, commemorating the mystery of the Holy Grail.
- ▶ On 14th September, **O Barco de Valdeorras** celebrates **As Festas do Cristo**, the most popular festival, which also includes the Descenso do Sil (descent of the river Sil) in **canoe**, a sporting event with more than 50 years of history.

## OCTOBER

- ▶ At the beginning of October, **Lugo** celebrates **San Froilán**, a festival of regional and national tourist interest that attracts thousands of people to its historic centre.

02

*Estrelas*  
**Route**



# 02

## *Estrelas* **Route**

Now is the time to travel through central Galicia, because it doesn't always have to be all about the sea or the mountains.

The Estrelas Route: The Milky Way is also known as the "star road" and is commonly referred to as the Camino de Santiago in Spanish. This route is guided more by the palate, tradition and sensations, which will certainly be brilliant. A route from south to north through three of the four Galician provinces, which will surprise you with all its opportunities.

**EXCO CENTRAL**



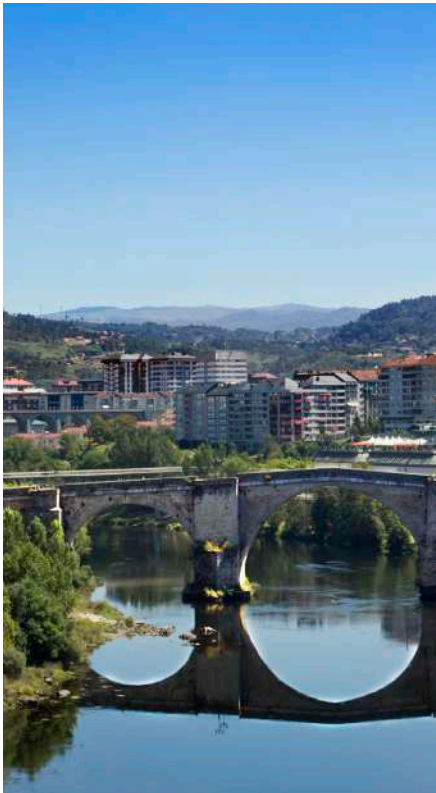
**OURENSE  
O CARBALLIÑO  
LALÍN  
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA**

# Estrelas Route

If you have just completed the Máxica Route, leaving behind the Ribeira Sacra, you will reach the city of Ourense, where you must make a stop. You can also start your route here.



# 02



## ▶▶ OURENSE

*Ourense is famous as the thermal capital of Galicia for its significant number of spa facilities that harness the properties of its mineral-medicinal waters. Get ready to immerse yourself in its treasures.*

In addition to its thermal wealth, Ourense has a magnificent architectural, historical, gastronomic, cultural and natural heritage.

The **Miño River** flows through the city, and along its banks there are nine bridges that connect both sides of the city. In fact, one of the emblems of Ourense is its **Roman Bridge**.

Its origin dates back to the 1st century, although several reconstructions were carried out up to the 17th century. Only the bases of its Roman structure remain, and its pointed arches stand out in its silhouette.

Next to the Roman Bridge, the **New Bridge** also deserves special mention, dating from the early 20th century, and above all, the **Millennium Bridge**, with an avant-garde design that has a pedestrian walkway surrounding it in the form of a ring.



Ourense is an ideal destination to visit with the family. It is a city to explore on foot, featuring a charming urban layout, and which also has numerous cultural and leisure activities, including those for the youngest members of the family.

Ourense has always maintained a close relationship with **literature**, both for the authors who were born and lived here, and for being the setting of literary works. In fact, it has a specially themed route to discover some of the key spaces of literary Ourense, the real heart of Galician culture, with figures such as Carlos Casares, Blanco Amor or the Xeración Nós.

The province of Ourense treasures one of the largest collections of **Romanesque art** in the Iberian Peninsula. It is also evident in the capital. In Ourense it is possible to travel back in time by taking a Romanesque route through the city.

It starts with its two great monuments, the **Cathedral Basilica of San Martiño** and the old **Episcopal Palace**, and spreads through the municipality to the small temples of its rural perimeter, such as the beautiful church of **Santa Baia de Beiro**.

The **Cathedral Basilica of San Martiño** is a late Romanesque temple, with Gothic elements and a fortress-like appearance due to its crenellated towers. It is one of the oldest in Galicia, and its history is a journey of constructions and alterations, as more than eight centuries of transformations have shaped its structure and current appearance. Inside, the chapel of **Santo Cristo**, the fantastic **Pórtico del Paraíso** (Portico of Paradise) and the main chapel stand out, as well as the pieces in its museum and the **Cristo de los Desamparados** (Christ of the Forsaken).



The **Plaza Mayor**, the nerve centre of the historical area, is very close to the cathedral. It is noteworthy for its porticoed structures and for being one of the few main squares in Europe with a sloping floor. It is home to such emblematic buildings as the **Casa Consistorial**, the old Episcopal Palace and the **Casa** (house) **Fermín**, as well as the staircase of **Santa María Nai**.

Another essential stop is a visit to the thermal springs of **As Burgas**, one of the most iconic areas in the city. A Roman settlement was based there, built around these medicinal mineral springs that today continue to flow at more than 60°C in the heart of the city.

By visiting them and visiting its **Visitor Centre**, it is possible to understand Ourense's relationship with water. During the Roman occupation, in As Burgas there was a religious sanctuary and a bathhouse to take advantage of these waters. Its remains can be seen in the gardens above the current thermal pool, where today you can take a bath as it was done two thousand years ago.



If you are looking for a relaxing and healthy plan, Ourense is your place, as you can also approach the **Paseo Termal do Miño** (Miño Thermal Promenade), a green 4 km stretch along the banks of the Miño River dotted with different thermal facilities. The furthest from the city centre are **Outariz and Burga de Canedo**, which is the largest thermal space in Ourense.



In the Paseo you can also find **Muíño da Veiga** (watermill) where you can enjoy the bathing waters at the foot of a mill, and the mineral-medicinal waters of **A Chavasqueira** and **O Tinteiro**.

In this city of waters, the river walks do not end with the Miño. All the rivers in the city have pedestrian paths to walk through nature.



Following the River **Barbaña** you will reach the unique village of **Seixalbo**, while the course of the River **Lonía** will take you to the archaeological-natural site of **Santomé**, a forest that houses an archaeological site with remains from the 1st to 5th centuries, and which has a beautiful viewpoint. Although perhaps the best panoramic view is offered by the largest green area in the city, the **Montealegre** botanical park.

## ▶▶ O CARBALLIÑO

*Continuing along the thermal line, we will reach the Carballiño Thermal Spa on our route. The municipality of **O Carballiño**, which developed in the Modern Age, has lived through its history based on trade and also on the mineral and nutritional wealth of its surroundings.*

This municipality, located 26 km from the city of Ourense, has numerous rivers, among which is the **Arenteiro river**, which runs through the town, and where, at the foot of its banks, the thermal waters that gave rise to the opening, in 1816, of the **Gran Balneario de O Carballiño** (Great Spa of O Carballiño). It is a magnificent stone building on a single floor over 50 metres long, which is a sample of the period's architecture. It was the work of the Ourense architect Vázquez Gulías, although it underwent a major refurbishment in 1993.



In O Carballiño we will go beyond the thermal baths, as it is certainly worth visiting the remains of the **Castro Cavadoso**, which was an ancient medieval village, one of the most important sites, which had a castle, walls and dwellings, although only a few remains can now be found.

There are also important temples in the town, such as the **Temple of Veracruz**, built by Antonio Palacios in 1943 with materials from the region, such as granite and slate. It became an expressionist icon of the time, and its style is a mixture of different religious and sculptural forms creating a stunning result.



The **Municipal Park** is the urban green lung. This is not just any park, you have to see it. It is almost 37 hectares next to the Arenteiro river, with paths, squares, avenues and more than 140 botanical species. One of the many pedestrian routes that can be followed in the town runs through here. It is a peaceful environment where you can take a leisurely stroll, since here you will find a **river beach**, the La Lavandera estate and also the **Pena de los Enamorados** (Lovers' Rock).

You can reach the Pena de los Enamorados from the pallozas del Arenteiro, which are located in the Ethnographic Park, one of the most visited areas for family leisure; it is a group of large granite rocks crowned by one of them, which is maintained by its base.

Historians relate the area to a Palaeolithic settlement, and it is thought that the Pena de los Enamorados may have been a magical or religious monument for the first inhabitants of the place. Its charm means that the site has been the subject of numerous legends related to treasure and love, so if you are looking for either... A visit may help.



We will also stop at the **Parque Etnográfico do Arenteiro** (Arenteiro Ethnographic Park), which is the result of recovering a space located on the banks of the Arenteiro river, where the mills, now recovered, were especially important - one of them is used as an ethnographic museum space.

This is the **Muiño do Anxo Museum**, which recreates what a house, the mill and the rural industry of the area were like, as well as being able to observe how it worked.

Pilgrims can also be found in O Carballiño; the main route of the **Miñoto Ribeiro Way** passes through here; one of the oldest routes linking the northern Portugal with the city of Santiago.

The visit cannot end without a stop at the **Monastery of Oseira**, in **San Cristovo de Cea**, which had a great influence on the region throughout the Middle Ages, when its monastic order had the local population under its control. It has been known to have existed since 1137, but suffered several calamities, including fires and destruction, until in 1836, with the disentanglement of Mendizábal, the monks left the convent and it was abandoned. In 1929 it was occupied again and a reconstruction began, which today allows us to visit a monastery in perfect condition.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ During the Octopus Festival in O Carballiño, the town's population increases sixfold - visitors come from all over the world.



## ▶▶ LALÍN

*As we continue our journey by road, heading north, we will reach **Lalín**, our next destination, just 30 kilometres away. A place where you will just have to let yourself be amazed which includes forests, rich heritage, charming places and excellent cuisine. What more could you ask for?*

We are in the centre of the Galician Autonomous Community, in what is considered to be ground zero. A humid and wooded territory framed in the **region of Deza**. It is the Galician region with the most castros (forts) per square metre, with 107. The **Castro de Doade**, in Codeseda, also offers the possibility of visiting the **Casa del Patrón Ethnographic Museum**, which houses a collection of more than 4,500 pieces that were collected from all over Galicia. If you are interested in understanding a little more about military culture, a visit to **Castrodeza** is also highly recommended. This modern exhibition space is located in the town of Lalín itself, next to the Town Hall, and admission is free.



It is worth visiting the **Pazo de Liñares**, a 17th century manor house founded by Álvaro Núñez Taboada, where Emilia Pardo Bazán spent long days in the company of the Taboadas, a well-known family in the area, as its members held important positions of responsibility in society such as priests, judges, members of parliament, etc. The building is L-shaped and has a balcony, and on the outside there is a chapel, the service houses, two kilns, an outbuilding, a granary and a dovecote.



It is currently public, was declared an **Asset of Cultural Interest**, and underwent a refurbishment that restored it to its full splendour. It is currently a socio-cultural space, for multidisciplinary use, which houses the **Centre for Archaeological Management and Knowledge of the Castros culture** (CXCA by its Spanish initials).

## DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ In 1895 Joaquín Loriga, a hero of Spanish aviation, was born in the Pazo de Liñares in Lalín.

The **Camino de Inverno** (Winter Way), the natural entrance to Galicia from the plateau which was used by the Romans, passes through Lalín. In Lalín, it meets the **Vía de la Plata** (Silver Way), to continue together to Compostela.



Do you want a good photo? Lalín has charming spots that you will want to capture. Places where nature merges with heritage, creating some of the most distinctive images, such as the **Puente de Taboada** (Taboadas's Bridge), which dates from 912, or the Romanesque **Ponte dos Cabalos** (Horse's Bridge), which dates from 970 and was an important stage during the Carlist wars.

The **forests** are one of the town's highlights. If you need a break, you are in the right place. The **Rodo Oak grove**, the **Mouriscade Recreational Area**, and the unmissable **Catasós Forest**, listed as a Natural Landmark, is home to hundred-year-old chestnut trees that reach heights of more than 30 metres.



The possibilities in Lalín are really wide-ranging if you want to enjoy one of its 15 signposted **routes**, with all kinds of itineraries and different levels of difficulty. There are options that can be done in just one hour and others that can take up to five hours. Routes such as the **Muíño do Rego de Lamas**, the **Dos Pazos** and **Ponte Taboada** route, the **Castro de Sestelo** route and the circular **Camino de Zobra**. There is something for everyone!

If you visit the area in good weather and feel like a dip, look no further than Lalín's **river beach**. **Pozo do Boi**, also known as **Vilatuxe** beach, is set in a natural environment shaped by the course of the Deza river. It has two leisure areas on each bank of the river, connected by an old bridge. It has a grassy area for sunbathing, and in the other area there is an oak grove with a recreational area, with all the facilities, toilets, bar, grills, tables and stone benches, and a children's playground



We cannot leave this area without stopping at the **Candán mountain range**, a natural spot that is well worth a visit. The **rivers Lérez** and **Umia** and several tributaries of the Deza originate here, which irrigate the riverside forests; its main peak is the Alto de San Bieito, also known as **Monte de San Bento**, at an altitude of 1,017 metres.



The Candán mountain range is included in the Natura 2000 Network because of its wealth of different ecosystems, ranging from gallery forests to riparian forests in the lowlands. It is also considered a **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** and here we can find endangered animal species such as the eagle owl, the golden eagle and other more common species such as wild cats, weasels, wolves, foxes, owls and goshawks. The best way to discover it is to follow the **Ruta da Serra do Candán** - you will even see a picturesque abandoned village.

## ▶▶ SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

*The route will take us from the centre of the Galician community to its capital, **Santiago de Compostela**. Yes, we all think we are already familiar with Santiago, but we will go a little further than the typical photo in the Praza do Obradoiro and the visit to the Cathedral.*

We are talking about a city that has been declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1985, and a few years later, in 1993, the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James) was also recognised as a World Heritage Site.

Of course, we can start with the Cathedral, but before it, there were two temples on its site. Let's go back to the beginning... The origin of the city of Santiago de Compostela can be traced back to the discovery of the mortal remains of the apostle **St. James the Greater**, back in 820. A sanctuary was then established and the first medieval city grew out of it; meanwhile, the remains of the Apostle became a reason for pilgrimage. Such was the number of the faithful who came from all over Europe that the monarch Alfonso III ordered the construction of a larger temple, built with masonry walls and prior to the current cathedral, as the work did not begin until 1075, and it was enshrined as the most outstanding example of Romanesque art in Spain.

It is said that the best view of the Cathedral is when lying down in the **Obradoiro Square**. Pilgrims arrive there after the long journey, and even if it is as a spectator, it is worth contemplating the sight; walkers who after many kilometres enjoy completing their goal with emotions running high. It is breathtaking.



From there you can also see the Plate-resque façade of the **Hostal de los Reyes Católicos**, which today is a Parador de Turismo chain hotel. It is a former pilgrims' hospital, which the Catholic Monarchs ordered to be built at the beginning of the 16th century to care for pilgrims after the pilgrimage route. The other **squares** surrounding the Cathedral, those of **Quintana, Inmaculada and Platerías**, as well as the streets that make up the historic quarter of the city, are a must if this is your first visit to the city. One of the most characteristic alleys is the 'sal si puedes' (get out if you can); the ironic part is that it is a dead-end street.



On your tour of the Cathedral, don't forget to visit its rooftops and the **Torre de la Carraca**, from where you can get a bird's eye view of the whole city. Ricardo Fandiño Lage, the Cathedral's last bell ringer, had this view until 1962. He lived on the roof of the church with his family and animals, and to supplement his salary of 180 pesetas, just over 1 euro in today's currency, he worked as a tailor for the priests.

And let's mention the **Berenguela**. It is Santiago Cathedral's famous clock tower, with a light at the top, which is considered a beacon for pilgrims and remains lit in the holy years of Santiago de Compostela. Its faint whitish glow is the most visible external sign of the celebration of the Jubilee.

It is also the site of the Cathedral's largest bell, which weighs 6,433 kilos. Legend has it that at midnight it rings 13 times instead of 12, and when it does, it is said that the devil enjoys a magic hour to roam the city.



Let us also clarify what is a **Holy Year** or **Jubilee Year**. It is celebrated every time the feast of St. James the Apostle, on 25 July, falls on a Sunday. When this happens, the Puerta Santa (Holy Door) of the Cathedral is opened. It is said that pilgrims who cross it obtain full absolution for their sins.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ From the Platerías square we can see the **largest scallop shell in Santiago** right on the corner of the Cathedral, which is said to be able to support the entire weight of the building.

The most amazing steps can also be found in Santiago. Inside the former Dominican convent of San Domingos is not only the **Museo do Pobo Galego** (Museum of the Galician People), an anthropological museum that also houses rooms of painting, sculpture and sacred art, but also a marvel of architecture of all times: the amazing **Baroque spiral staircase** designed by Domingo de Andrade. You have to visit it to understand this stone spiral staircase, whose three fully independent flights of stairs lead to different floors of the museum, without ever crossing each other. Next to the museum you can visit a fine example of avant-garde architecture from the late 20th century, the **Galician Centre of Art and Culture**, designed by the Portuguese Álvaro Siza Vieira.

#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The narrowest street in Galicia and the second narrowest in Spain is in Santiago de Compostela, **Rúa Oliveira**, with just 70 centimetres from one side to the other. **Ruela de Entrerrúas**, which is considered by many to be the narrowest in the city, is 90 centimetres wide.

You'll notice something special in the ambience, which is filled with cultural diversity, something that doesn't just happen because of passing pilgrims. Santiago is a university city. Its academic scene dates back to 1495 when Lope Gómez de Marzoa founded the University of Santiago, one of the oldest in the world. You can enjoy the life of the city from early in the morning until late at night, as the passing of the hours combines environments, activities, and endless impressions.

So many students have left numerous legends, stories and challenges in the city; ask the locals, they will be happy to share them with you.

#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ A stroll through the Alameda Park is a must on our tour of Santiago. There you will see the two **Marías**; they represent two women who used to walk together, at 2 pm every day, through the streets of the city centre. It is said that they did so dressed in flashy clothes and trying to flirt with the university students. However, behind this somewhat extravagant appearance lies a tragic history of repression that took place during the harshest years of the Spanish post-war period.

Another stop is necessary at Santiago's most recent and ambitious architectural project, the **Cidade da Cultura** (City of Culture), the work of New Yorker Peter Eisenman, whose most striking feature is the façade of the **Gaiás Centre Museum**, which is almost 43 metres high and covers an area of more than 16,000 metres. There are free guided tours to discover and get to know the place thoroughly, which hosts exhibitions, cultural initiatives, concerts and more.



As we have already mentioned, the main festival of Santiago takes place every **25 July**, when the saints' calendar celebrates the Apostle, a date on which **Galicia Day** is also commemorated. Crowds of people flock to Obradoiro Square on the night of 24 July to watch a light show projected onto the façade of the Cathedral and the fireworks display.

During the second half of the month, the city dresses up to celebrate the event, with concerts, entertainment and theatre in the streets, leisure activities for children, comedy and dance shows, etc. After the main event, the fireworks display, which can be seen from all parts of the city, comes 25 July, the day on which the mass is held in the Cathedral. This is the day when the solemn mass is celebrated in the Cathedral and the *botafumeiro* (thurible) can be seen in operation.



### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ The **jet gemstone** that can be seen in jewellers and souvenir shops in Santiago de Compostela is a semi-precious stone, black in colour, often in the shape of a fig sign (*la figa*) linked to the Camino, as it was considered a protective amulet. *La figa* itself was believed to protect against the evil eye, envy and evil in general. In addition, next to the Cathedral were the *azabacheros*, the guild of craftsmen who carved jet.

### WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



One of the highlights of this route is certainly culinary in nature. In **Ourense**, we recommend walking the streets surrounding the Cathedral savouring the tapas of the locals in this area, known as '**Os Viños**', since wine is an essential pairing. It is also a must to try **chestnuts** in autumn. The **empanadas** (savoury pastries), **mushrooms**, **meats** and **octopus** are not to be missed either.

However, if we talk about **octopus**, **O Carballiño** is the place to try it, where it is the star of the show, a sign of identity, and even has its own festival. It can also be accompanied by the **appellation Ribeiro wines**, the oldest Designation of Origin in Galicia, and any meal in this destination should always end with a typical "cañitas de crema" as an after-dinner drink.



### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ O Carballiño holds the **Guinness world record** for preparing the world's largest octopus tapa. 500 kilos of chopped octopus prepared in just 11 minutes and 7 seconds. During the O Carballiño Octopus Festival, approximately 50,000 kilos of Galician-style octopus are consumed.

A visit to **Lalín** is not complete without tasting the food; here, **meats** in general, and **pork** in particular, stand out. Yes, the famous **Fiesta del Cocido de Lalín** (Lalín Stew Festival) is an event worth attending. Lalín turned the cocido (the complete stew, with everything; pork shoulder, ear, ribs, sausages, pork, accompanied by cachelos, turnip greens or cabbage...) into a delicacy, and the signature dish of the Galician winter.



In **Santiago** we'll fill our stomachs in the city's other cathedral, the **Mercado de Abastos**, the temple of good food. Its stone aisles, similar to Romanesque chapels, exude the smell of fresh seafood from the estuaries, **Galician beef**, **Padrón peppers**, **cod**, **salted meat**, **cheese** and much more. You can taste **razor clams** or **crabs** at any of the stalls.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ There's another Paris-Dakar. It has little to do with a rally, nor with a desert. You see, it is a route of barely 200 metres, almost entirely along the Franco Street, which consists of having a glass of wine in each of the bars along the route; there are approximately 30 of them, from El París (C/ Bautizados, 11) to El Dakar (C/ Franco, 13).

A visit to Santiago always means taking home a souvenir. The magic of Compostela is in many of its **typical craft objects**; **thuribles** and **silver and jet jewellery**, the **Cross of Santiago models**, **Xacobeo scallop shells**, candles, objects for worship, **popular ceramics**, decorative earthenware made by the **Sargadelos** brand, **Celtic amulets**, **witches** against evil spells, or **gaitas**, the Galician musical instrument par excellence resembling the bagpipes.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTOS



### ALL YEAR ROUND

- ▶ On the 16th and the last day of the month, except when it coincides with a Sunday or public holiday, when it moves to the previous day, **O Carballiño** celebrates its **fair in the Plaza Mayor**.
- ▶ In **Ourense**, on the 7th and 17th, except when it coincides with a Sunday or public holiday, when it is moved to the following day, the fair is held in a venue known as **Campo da Feira** (fairground). In addition, on the first Sunday of each month, Ourense holds an **antiques fair in its Plaza Mayor**.

### FEBRUARY/ MARCH

- ▶ **Lalín Stew Festival** on the Sunday before Carnival. This Festival of Tourist Interest crowns a cultural and culinary event that takes place over a month.

- ▶ Every February-March **Lalín** celebrates its **Entroido**, which is a multitudinous festival in which cuisine is very important, as it also celebrates a dish such as Cocido (stew).
- ▶ Every February-March (depending on the year), **Ourense** celebrates its Entroido. **Carnival** is a celebration of very long tradition in the province, which features up to seven carnivals listed as being of tourist interest.
- ▶ **Santiago de Compostela** and its region celebrate the **Traditional Rural Entroido of the Xenerais da Ulla**, a Festival of Tourist Interest in Galicia.

#### APRIL

- ▶ On the Sunday before Palm Sunday, **Ourense** celebrates the **festival of San Lázaro**, in which cuisine and religion are combined by a spectacle with origins in the Middle Ages including the burning of the madamitas: figures made of wire and paper filled with gunpowder that are made to explode while spinning frantically.

#### MAY

- ▶ On the first Sunday in May, **Ourense** celebrates **Os Maíos**, a Festival of Tourist Interest in Galicia.
- ▶ That same Sunday, **Santiago** celebrates the **Festa das Uñas de San Lázaro**, a culinary celebration that is considered a prelude to the subsequent Easter Week in Santiago, also declared a Festival of Tourist Interest in Galicia.

- ▶ In May, forty days after Easter Sunday, **Santiago de Compostela** celebrates its **Ascension Festival**.

#### JULY

- ▶ On **Saint Bieito's Day** in **San Cristovo de Cea**, the **Festival of the Exaltation of Cea Bread** is celebrated, a bread with PGI Denomination, made from wheat flour, water, salt and yeast, according to the traditional process and baked in granite ovens.
- ▶ 24 July, **Fogos do Apóstolo in Santiago de Compostela**.
- ▶ 25 July, **Festival of St. James the Apostle**, declared to be of International Tourist Interest, in **Santiago de Compostela**.

#### AUGUST

- ▶ Second Sunday in August. **Octopus Festival** in **O Carballiño**, declared a Festival of International Tourist Interest.

#### OCTOBER

- ▶ On 31 October, in **Ourense**, **O Samaín**. This special night is celebrated with a parade of candlelit pumpkins through the streets of the Old Town.

#### NOVEMBER

- ▶ On November 11, **Ourense** celebrates the **Magostos**; a festival in honour of St. Martin of Tours, patron saint of the city.



03

*Marusia*  
**Route**



# 03

## *Marusia* **Route**

We are still in Galicia, and now we are going to travel along the coast.

**The Marusía Route:** The Marusía refers to a rough sea, but also to the characteristic smell of seaweed and the sea, which will accompany you on your journey along this part of the Galician coast and will remain in your memories.

**RÍAS ALTAS  
COSTA DA MORTE  
MARÍÑA LUCENSE**



**CARBALLO  
A CORUÑA  
CULLEREDO  
NARÓN  
FERROL  
PROVINCIA DE LUGO**

# Marusia Route

You can start the adventure right here, on this route, or you can choose it as the ideal sequel to the previous one, because here we also have to talk about the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James).



# 03



## ▶▶ CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

*There is an ending after the end. Yes, there is. The pilgrimage of the **Camino de Santiago** can go beyond the arrival at the Cathedral. Many pilgrims also choose to complete the Epilogue to Fisterra and Muxía.*

A route that starts in **Santiago de Compostela** and reaches the cape of **Fisterra**, which since Roman times and until the end of the Middle Ages has been considered the westernmost point of the known world, and from there, to the sanctuary of the Virxe da Barca, in Muxía, where, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to the apostle James on a small stone boat.

Those who manage to complete the extra 146 kilometres do not get the Compostelana, but the **Fisterrana** or **Muxiana**, a sort of Certificate of completion of this variant.

## ▶▶ COSTA DA MORTE

*This is a good option to get to know the **Costa da Morte**. A top destination in Galicia on account of the area's authenticity, which also leaves its mark on the character of its people. In three days, the Costa da Morte can be explored in depth, alternating between car and walking tours.*

Costa da Morte refers to the northwest of the Galician coastline. It is an area of approximately 200 km that runs from the **estuary of Muros and Noia to Malpica**. A coastline as magical as it is wild, which holds many myths and legends, and is the setting for numerous shipwrecks.

It has straight stretches and **large sandy beaches**, but also **steep cliffs** and small estuaries, and even **islands**, such as the **Sisargas**. The life of the place, and the shadow of death, make up the authenticity and wild beauty of this unparalleled spot.

This area was considered the end of the world for the Roman Empire. They called it **Finisterre**, or 'Finis Terrae', and for them it was the end of the earth, where the sun sank into the Atlantic. Before, this coast was a place of veneration for the people who inhabited it. The **Celts** worshipped the sun here.

The **remains of all kinds of vessels** are said to lie on the seabed: Roman ships, galleons, fishing boats, submarines, and frigates. There is evidence of more than 700 shipwrecks in these waters since the Middle Ages, although it is estimated that there are many more that have not been documented.



In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, two wrecks occurred here that directly affected the British navy. In 1870, the 'Captain' sank and only 20 years later, in 1890, the 'Serpent'; in these events 662 crew members lost their lives. The bodies that could be recovered were buried in a makeshift site in **Camariñas**, which today is known as the *Cementerio de los Ingleses* (Englishmen's Cemetery).



## DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The **Prestige** disaster, the oil spill caused by the sinking of the tanker, took place in Costa da Morte; it was on November 13, 2002.

## ▶▶ CAMINO DOS FAROS

*There are countless options for exploring the area, but one of the most popular is undoubtedly the **Camino dos Faros** (Lighthouse Way). This is a recent alternative, since a group of friends who decided to join Malpica and Fisterra through a hiking route created it in 2012.*

The route splits into **8 stages**, in which the sea, cliffs, villages in the area and, of course, the lighthouses, are the main attractions. It is a total of 200 kilometres, from north to south:

- Malpica - Niñóns
- Niñóns - Ponteceso
- Ponteceso - Laxe
- Laxe - Arou
- Arou - Camariñas
- Camariñas - Muxía
- Muxía - Nemiña
- Nemiña - Cabo Fisterra

The first great lighthouse to be seen is **Punta Nariga**. Some sections feature breathtaking views, such as the passage through the village of Roncudo, where you can see the rocks where goose barnacle pickers risk their lives to get the best goose barnacles in the world.

There is also the opportunity to stop at archaeological treasures, such as the **Castro de la Cibda** and the **Dolmen de Dombate**. Another option is to visit museums, such as the **Man Museum in Camelle**. Man, known as “The German of Camelle” was a painter and sculptor from Germany who lived for 40 years on Camelle Beach.

One of the most highly valued stretches is the one that reaches Camariñas, where you should visit o **Encaixe de Camariñas** (Camariñas Lace), one of the most important tangible and intangible cultural assets in Galicia. In addition, most of the shipwrecks took place in this area and this is where the **Englishmen’s Cemetery** is located.

The longest stage will allow you to visit the **Sanctuary of Virxe da Barca** and the most challenging one will be a visit to the **Touriñán Lighthouse**. The route is concluded by crossing the spectacular **Cabo da Nave**, ending at the **Fisterra Lighthouse**.



And before we move on with our next route, two notes. The first, of course, is one of those stories that the Costa da Morte holds. Naturally, it is about a shipwreck, that of the **merchant ship 'Nil'**, which ran aground in the area in 1927, full of various goods such as sewing machines, fabrics, flour, carpets, car parts and more. Aside from the tense atmosphere generated by the looting, there is a funny episode related to the condensed milk transported by the 'Nil'. The lack of knowledge of this product, mistaken for paint, caused an invasion of flies and mosquitoes in some places.

The tour can be broken up for the best picnic of your life. Yes, that is also possible here. At **Merendeiro de Gures**, in Cee, you can relax in a haven of peace and marvel at the spectacular views. You'll think that all the natural beauty is right in front of you, but there's more.

It is located next to one of the most amazing places, the **Ézaro waterfall**. We are talking about the only river in Europe that flows into the sea, and it does so in the form of a waterfall, creating a magical environment around it. For those who are more inquisitive, it is worth mentioning that in its last stretch, the **Xallas** river has a 155 metre height difference and the waterfall's height is about 40 metres. The experience can be further enhanced by a visit to the picturesque village of Pindo.



The Costa da Morte is located in the Rías Altas, where all the estuaries of the northwest of the Galician community are grouped together. We will use this route to get to know the area in depth.

## ▶▶ CARBALLO

*We will leave Costa da Morte behind and head for the Mariñas, but before we get there we will first stop in the **region of Bergantiños**.*

**Carballo** is the capital of the region and you can discover all its charm in just one day. It is worth visiting the Galicia square, the Town Hall square, the parish church or the different vestiges of the early twenties such as the garden, the garden school, the casino, etc.



But if you want to get to know the area, the place for you is the **Museum of Bergantiños**. Admission is free, and there you can explore the region. It also has a room dedicated to Carballo bread, something you are sure to enjoy during your visit.



A place that has been lived in and worked for thousands of years. A territory populated in the Iron Age and beyond, between the 8th century BC and the 3rd century AD. In fact, Carballo has more than twenty **castros** (forts). All of them are unexcavated, although remains from the period have been found in them, such as an antennae sword that may have been found in the **Cotomil** fortified settlement, near the parish church of Sofán. Some of them have well preserved defensive structures, such as **Ouxas** (Entrecruces), **Ribeira** (Rus), **Guntían** (Sofán), **O Rodo** (Oza) and **Cances**.

Carballo boasts a wealth of natural heritage with numerous routes to be discovered. The **Férvedas Route**, which takes us inland around the municipality to marvel at two of the most beautiful waterfalls in the region, the **Fervenza de Rus** and the **Fervenza de Entrecruces**, are particularly noteworthy.

You can also enjoy a walk along the banks of the **Anllóns** river, as well as the coastal area. The **Razo sandy area**, which opens out onto the Atlantic, or the **Baldaio lagoon**, a treasure for ornithologists, are the best known options, but if you are looking for more privacy, you can find it in the coves between **La Piedra de la Sal** and **Caión**.



## ▶▶ A CORUÑA

*If you go ahead for the city of **A Coruña**, you must bear in mind the must-see sights. First of all, the **Tower of Hercules**, a World Heritage Site and the oldest working lighthouse in the world, which was built by the Romans in the 1st century and stands at a height of 57 metres.*

A Coruña is known as the city of Hercules, and this, since we are still in Galicia, has its origin in a legend. It is also linked to the construction of the **Tower of Hercules**. The myth, described by King Alfonso X in his work “*Estoria de Espanna*”, was so well received and so popular that it gave rise to the name of the tower.



The story goes that a giant known as Geryon, king of Brigantium (Breogan), terrorised his subjects, forcing them to hand over half of their possessions, including their children, to him. One day the subjects decided to ask Hercules for help, who challenged him to a bloody battle. Hercules defeated Geryon, buried him and erected a mound, which he crowned with a torch. Near the monument he founded a city and, as the first person to arrive was a woman called Cruña, who Hercules fell in love with, he named the city after her - A Coruña.



But back to reality, you will love the walk along the **promenade**, overlooking the city. It is one of the longest in Europe. A Coruña offers visitors an infinite number of possibilities. The city has permanent cultural events of all kinds, so we recommend that you check the agenda to make your plan complete. As far as museums are concerned, the range on offer is remarkable such as the **Casa de las Ciencias** (House of Sciences), the **Museum of Fine Arts** or the **Domus** and the **Aquarium Finisterrae** or Casa de los Peces (House of Fish), among others.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The most beautiful sound of the sea in the world can be heard on the promenade of A Coruña. This is how it was rated in the international Slupsk competition for the sound of the sea and the seagulls on the Orzán beach.

Your tour of the city has pleasant surprises in store for you; from the **Old Town** to **San Antón's Castle**, or from **mount of San Pedro** to the **Romantic Garden of San Carlos**, where the ghost of Lady Hester Stanhope lives, or from the **church of Santiago** on the Camino Inglés (English Way) to the churches of **Santa María do Campo** or **San Xurxo**.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The Old Town of A Coruña has the most churches per square metre in Galicia.

The real heroine of the city of A Coruña is **María Pita**. Her statue stands in the Town Hall square, and the city is still proud of her achievements today. She was responsible for raising the people of A Coruña against the corsair Francis Drake's fleet in the Pescadería neighbourhood. As a result of her bravery, the English had to retreat and the conquest of the city failed. María Pita also played a leading role in another great feat for the city.

Her name, synonymous with bravery, was used to christen the ship that left the city's port on 30 November 1803 for all the Spanish colonies with 22 children inoculated with smallpox. The Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition, better known as the 'Balmis Expedition', was a great success.



Before leaving the city, take a detour to the **Obelisk of A Coruña**, a monument located in the Cantón Grande, which was built in 1895. At the top of the monolith, a clock with four faces tells the time and a weather vane indicates the direction of the wind. The clock has four dials and initially two of them told the time in A Coruña and the other two in Madrid. Until the unification of Spanish time in 1900, there was a time difference of 19 minutes and 20 seconds between the two cities.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ The first homosexual marriage in Spain also took place in A Coruña, between Elisa and Marcela, although in 1901, Elisa had to pass herself off as a man. They were discovered and had to emigrate to Argentina, but their marriage certificate was never annulled.

## ▶▶ CULLEREDO

*Just 10 kilometres from A Coruña, **Culleredo** is a municipality that stands out for its wide natural spaces, as well as for its valuable medieval architecture.*

The **Promenade of O Burgo** is one of the natural and open-air leisure areas that stand out in the area, with its location at the foot of the estuary and its outstanding botanical garden.



However, Culleredo has other spaces to offer, such as a rich representation of **medieval architecture** in its churches, towers and manor houses. The **Camino Inglés** (English Way) passes through here from A Coruña. In fact, it passes from the municipality of A Coruña to Culleredo through O Portazgo, and then continues along the promenade of O Burgo, where you can see the Romanesque church of Santiago and the 12th century mills of **Acea de Ama**.



It is also exceptional for birdwatching, as its **ornithological richness** is outstanding. The O Burgo estuary and its marshes are an excellent enclave for bird migration. It is home to many species that flee the cold winters of northern countries. This spectacle can be enjoyed all year round, although it is in autumn, winter and spring that the greatest diversity of species can be found.

**Monte Xalo**, which rises more than 514 metres above sea level, also stands out. It has been populated for thousands of years, as confirmed by the **numerous archaeological remains**, especially megalithic mounds, such as the Alto de Penas Negras, the Castelos de Veiga and Xalo castles and the Pedra Mazafacha, where rituals were performed to worship the gods. It is said that it was a meeting point for witches and for the celebration of covens, something that is part of popular legends.

Monte Xalo dazzles with its landscape, and it is here that the **Valiñas** river begins. It has numerous viewpoints and, along our walk through the mountain, we will find a series of curiously shaped **granite boulders** that bear the name of the figures they resemble such as the Pedra do Sombreiro or Pedra dos Corvos, the Picudas, a set of three elongated stones, the Igrexa dos Mouros, the one similar to a slide known as Pedra do Rastro, the Porta do Inferno or the one called “Darth Vader” because of its similarity to the helmet of the main character in Star Wars.

There are numerous **hiking routes** to discover the mountain, and many of them are signposted. Some of them are perfect for a mountain bike ride. The most popular is the PR-G 111, a short route called Roteiro Mariñán Arteixo - Xalo.



## ▶▶ NARÓN

*Continuing our journey through the Rías Altas, we will stop in **Ferrolterra**. Here you can explore the history, culture, and enjoy its natural and scenic wealth. Sea and mountains, all in one.*

In Narón there are several points of interest, from the **Monastery of San Martiño de Xuvia** in Couto, declared of Cultural Interest (BIC in its Spanish abbreviation) to the prehistoric cemetery of **Monte dos Niños**, in Sedes, with 17 dolmens, as well as forts, mills, medieval houses, manor houses, farmhouses, bridges, dams, riverbanks, over 300-year-old trees or beaches facing the Atlantic Ocean, such as **Hortiña** and **Casal**.

It has several pedestrian routes, among which the **Ruta dos Molinos** stands out. It borders the estuary and the **Xuvia** river and goes into the fabled parish of Doso next to historic mills, dams, bridges and old churches.

You will discover the vestiges of the important industrial network that was based on the activity of the vast network of mills that took advantage of all the energy resources in the territory, and that bore fruit with the implementation of tanneries, paper and currency, representing a real industrial revolution for the region.

The **Aceñas mill**, a tidal mill built in the 18th century, and the **Xuvia mill**, a flour mill built in 1775, were the main production capacity mill of their kind in the country in 1858. Both were part of the important French industrial milling network, being both declared Royal Factories by Charles IV in 1798.

The town of Narón is also one of the starting points for many of the pilgrims who choose the **Camino Inglés**. From Narón the minimum 100 km to Santiago to get the Compostela is fulfilled, so from here, begin to enjoy every step of the route.



## ▶▶ FERROL

*Ferrol, which has the best natural harbour in Europe, is one of the stops on our tour.*

It has the **Naval Museum**, which is housed in a beautiful 18th century building designed by Sánchez Bort, which was once a prison. The contents of the Naval Museum will take us back to some of the highlights of the Spanish Armada over the centuries. It permanently exhibits models of old ships, diving suits, ship flags, different navigation and cartography material, weapons and much more. The remains of the frigate “Magdalena”, which sank in Viveiro in 1810, are particularly interesting.



Ferrol saw the first construction works carried out throughout the old continent following the criteria of the Enlightenment such as the **Magdalena** and the **Arsenal neighbourhoods**. And if we talk about Ferrol we have to mention its history, particularly the enlightened monarchs, the Bourbons, who chose Ferrol as the capital of the maritime department of Northwest Spain with jurisdiction from the mouth of the Bidasoa to the Miño, and whose headquarters remained in the Captaincy General of the city since 1726 until the military reform carried out by Federico Trillo.

Ferrol is Enlightenment, because in that period, a decisive time for knowledge, science and freedom, the great transformation and the greatest growth of the city took place, going from being a small fishing village to become, thanks to the immense investments made by the Crown, a modern city, equipped with the most advanced industry, especially shipyards, and technology of the time, and also a cultured city.

As time passed and the various crises took their toll on the city, it had to reinvent itself. It did so through art, among other things. Eduardo Hermida decided to take art out of the museums and bring it to the streets to give colour to his drab city, painting a menina (little girl) on a façade in the **Canido neighbourhood**. Today, many international artists emulate his approach, which has led to more than **300 meninas** painted on the façades of the houses in the neighbourhood. They can be visited on a tour.



If surfing is your thing, your beach is **Pantín**, where various world surfing championships are held, including the Pantin Classic. There are also many bodyboarders in this area.

Pantín attracts all kinds of people, as it also has numerous **land routes**, suitable for anyone who wants to do a bit of hiking or simply go for a walk, and various routes to enjoy on a bicycle. The area is also popular for boat trips.



The **Doniños** and **Valdoviño** lagoons are particularly impressive, and a paradise for aquatic birds. There is also a more inland Ferrolterra, with the **Fragas do Eume**, a shadowy and secret forest that hides in its heart the **Monastery of Caaveiro**, and, nearby, the fascinating **Monastery of Monfero**, with an intriguing checkerboard façade.

Close to **Ortigueira**, there are two wonders which are the **Capelada mountain range**, which cuts abruptly into the sea forming the highest cliffs of the Iberian Peninsula, and the magical **sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido**. There's a saying in Galicia: "va de muerto quien no fue de vivo" (who didn't went alive, will go dead) which suggests that it's not worth waiting until you're dead to do and see things. So, just in case, it is worth a visit, because the truth is that it is more enjoyable when you are alive.



## ▶▶ MARIÑA LUCENSE AND BEYOND

*But let's keep moving north, and admire the beauty of **Mariña Lucense**. 100 kilometres of coastline dotted with authentic natural wonders in the Cantabrian Sea, where the forests merge with the open water.*

The Biosphere Reserve, **Río Eo, Oscos and Terras de Burón** deserves special mention, but if there is one thing that is especially worth stopping to enjoy the experience, it is undoubtedly your visit to the **Augas Santas beach**.

This natural attraction can only be seen at low tide, and to visit it in the summer months and at Easter you need to book in advance, so don't forget to check the tides. Yes, it is popularly referred to as **Playa de las Catedrales** (Cathedrals Beach). Here the rock formations are interspersed with sandy beaches, and there are cliffs up to 30 metres high. A stroll through the area is breathtaking.



In the **Sor estuary** you will discover a paradise of aquatic birds and fish. And inland, the mystery hidden in the **O Xistral** mountain range and the unmissable visit to Mondoñedo and, of course, its cathedral. There is no shortage of charming villages in the area, such as **Foz**, **Viveiro** and **Ribeiro**. You must be familiar with Sargadelos ceramics, well, it also has its origins in **Cervo**.

In recent times, the province of Lugo has developed pioneering initiatives in Galicia in the field of **geotourism**, a concept that promotes the territory's geodiversity to preserve its natural heritage. Through this initiative, visitors can take a complete tour of the geological history of Galicia.

Nowadays, the artisan tradition survives in Lugo thanks to those who have continued the work started by their ancestors, perpetuating the popular trades that once gave life to the villages of the province. Also by the hand of numerous emerging artisans who have renewed the concept, introducing innovations in their work that place the province of Lugo at the forefront of design. During the summer, you can take part in the **Lugo é artesanía** programme, which takes you into the workshops.



Lugo is also the Spanish Xacobean province par excellence. It has more than **800 kilometres of Pilgrims' Routes to Santiago de Compostela**, including all its variants, and the province is an almost essential stop on the way to the city.

Three routes declared World Heritage of Humanity pass through it: the **Camino del Norte** (Northern Way), the **Camino Primitivo** (Primitive Way) and the **Camino Francés** (French Way). The **Camino do Mar** (Sea Way) also passes through these parts, and another official route passes through the south of the province in the **Camino de Invierno** (Winter Way), a route chosen in the coldest months of the year by medieval pilgrims who wished to avoid the snowy peaks of O Cebreiro.

## WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



The meaning of Atlantic cuisine is clear on the **Costa da Morte**. Delicacies of all kinds with raw materials of unparalleled quality, such as **Roman omelette**, **octopus**, **spider crab salpicón**, and much more. It should be noted that this is the perfect area to dive headlong into the sea, because the products are local and the house speciality such as **goose barnacles**, **king prawns**, **razor clams**, **clams**, **red mullet**, **red pigeonfish**, etc.

Here you will discover dishes such as **skate stew** or **roasted seabass**. After the meal, you can sweeten it with **sponge cakes** and **roscones** (ring shaped pastries).



Once in **Carballo**, we will complete the experience by tasting its food, its bread, the products from its sea and land. During the summer, the town centre fills up with culinary festivals, honouring the enjoyment of good food. But if there is a must here, something you won't find anywhere else, it is **La Fina de Carballo**, a local variety of white-fleshed potato, highly appreciated in the region of Bergantiños. It has a very long production cycle, so it is only suited to its region of origin. You can taste it and, of course, buy it.



And speaking of shopping in Carballo, you can find everything from clothes to footwear and accessories at the street market in the **Milagrosa neighbourhood**, near the Forum. If you then decide to continue shopping, **Calle Hórreo** (street) and **Calle Coruña** (street) will be your destination.

In **A Coruña** and its province we will taste **octopus mugardesa style**, **chanfaina**, a typical dish made with pork, a **good fish caldeirada** (stew) with skate, monkfish, turbot, hake... All accompanied by other ingredients such as potatoes, peas and spices. A treat that no one can resist.

For dessert, **Requeixo de A Capela**; a variety of fresh Galician cheese made with raw milk and served with honey, sugar or jam.

The diversity of the territory has a direct relationship with the table; in **the coastal towns** you can taste the **hake on a skewer from Celeiro**, which has the Galicia Quality seal, the traditionally caught **white tuna from the north of Burela**, the famous **goose barnacles from Rinlo**, the coquina clams, sea urchin, **lobster, crab and octopus**, among others.



**Inland**, **Galician beef** or **Celtic pork**, the **'Lourenzá beans'**, beans with a Protected Designation of Origin, which have their own route, **turnip greens**, **chestnuts**, multi-flower **honey** and delicate **mushrooms**.

In **Mondoñedo** it is worth trying the **tart**, a prestigious delicacy in the town. Another traditional dessert, typical of several municipalities in La Mariña, is the **'colinetas'**, a kind of small sponge cake made without flour, only with eggs, sugar and ground almonds, whose recipe appears as early as 1905 in the book 'La Cocina Práctica' by Picadillo.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ A Coruña is home to the first museum dedicated to beer on the Iberian Peninsula. The **MEGA**, Estrella Galicia museum, which includes a tasting session for visitors.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### ALL YEAR ROUND

- ▶ On the second, fourth and, if there is one, the fifth Sunday of each month, a **fair is held in Carballo**, in the Town Hall Square and offers local produce for sale.

### FEBRUARY / MARCH

- ▶ **A Coruña's Entroido** (traditional festival). It begins when the God Momo is enthroned, and on Shrove Tuesday, "A Festa dos Choqueiros" is held in Monte Alto.

### APRIL

- ▶ Every April the **Carballo Interplay**, a festival of digital contents, is held.
- ▶ **Easter Week in Ferrol.**
- ▶ **Easter Week in Viveiro**, a festival classified as being of International Tourist Interest.

### JUNE / JULY

- ▶ 23 June, **the night of San Juan in A Coruña**. Although the truth is that the festivities of San Juan, declared to be of International Tourist Interest, begin almost a week earlier in the town.
- ▶ 23 June, **San Juan in Carballo.**
- ▶ During the summer, **Orballo Cultural** is also held in the municipality of Carballo, a unique experience between heritage, art, culture and nature.

- ▶ In late June-early July, **Resurrection Fest in Viveiro**, in the province of Lugo; a renowned music festival.
- ▶ At the beginning of July in O Burgo, in **Culleredo**, the **O Burgo de Faro Templar Market** is held; with musical performances, parades, exhibitions, shows, etc.
- ▶ In July, the **Ribadeo Indiano Festival** is held in the province of Lugo, a real return to the past.
- ▶ **Oenach Atlántico** in **Narón**: Declared of Tourist Interest and held on the last weekend of July.

### AUGUST

- ▶ **Gulliver Fest**: Festival of travel culture in Narón, held on the first weekend of August.
- ▶ **María Pita Festivities in A Coruña**; a month of various exhibitions, activities for the whole family and musical performances.
- ▶ End of August in **A Coruña, Pilgrimage of Santa Margarita.**
- ▶ End of August **Festa Normanda in Foz** (Lugo), which commemorates the Viking landing attempt in these lands. A festival of historical representation of the town's past.

### SEPTEMBER

- ▶ First weekend of September, in Ferrol, the **Fiesta de las Meninas.**

### OCTOBER

- ▶ First fortnight of October, in **A Coruña, Nuestra Señora del Rosario**, patron saint of the city.

04

*Luscombe*  
**Route**



# 04

## *Luscofusco* **Route**

If you've come this far after completing the previous routes, you may think you've seen it all, but the truth is that there is much more to come.

**The Luscofusco Route:** Luscofusco happens when, at dawn or dusk, the sky is tinted with orange and reddish tones, making backlit objects appear as shadows cut out of the horizon. If you want to enjoy the best sunsets, you are in the right place.

**RÍAS BAIXAS  
BAIXO MIÑO**



**RIBEIRA  
VILAGARCÍA DE AROUSA  
PONTEVEDRA  
VIGO  
PONTEAREAS**

# Luscofusco Route

The southern part of the Galician coast has a very special route for you. It is a quiet route, one of those to enjoy without rushing, perfect for a family getaway because its landscapes lend themselves to hiking and the cultural activities on offer are suitable for all ages. You'll definitely experience something magical, let's do it!



# 04



## ▶▶ MUROS Y NOIA

*If we take the area of Fisterra as our starting point, we will turn south. Starting in the estuary of **Muros y Noia**, the first surprise will appear in the form of the silhouette of Monte Louro.*

This 241 metre high mountain seems to emerge directly from the sea, making up, together with the As Xarfas lagoon, which is closed to the sea by the **Louro** beach, beaches, rocky areas, lighthouses and the horizon, a Point of Geological Interest of national importance and a Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest.



▶▶ RIBEIRA

*Ribeira opens up to the sea on the other side of the estuary, separating it from the Arousa estuary, acting as a privileged natural border, benefiting from an unparalleled coastal route. Here you can breathe in the sea.*

Ribeira stands as the capital of the **Barbanza peninsula**, and the idyllic surroundings have earned it the title of **Town of Tourist Interest**. This is a complete package: natural, archaeological, cultural, architectural and historical heritage.

Its coastline features **sandy beaches** with calm waters in the interior of the estuary and the widest and wildest Atlantic beaches, where the sand holds off the sea and the wind currents. You will find two common elements on most of its beaches: **sand dunes** and **large rocks** that act as a natural border or boundary.

Here you will find the **Corrubedo Dunes and Carregal and Vixán lagoons Nature Reserve**, a protected area of approximately 1,000 hectares where the largest mobile dune in the northwest of the peninsula stands out.

The one kilometre long and 20 metre high dune, together with the marshland area, where the lagoons of Carragal, with a mix of fresh and salt water, and Vixián, with fresh water can be found, form the perfect setting to support a particular biodiversity dominated by amphibians and reptiles.

**Corrubedo**, a town with a marked seafaring character, also has one of the most important **lighthouses** on the Atlantic coast. In the coming years, there are plans to refurbish the area and transform it into a hotel, but in the meantime, gazing at the sunset from there is a luxury that is affordable for all budgets. The charm of the place begins on the road that leads to it, so get the camera ready.



**DID YOU KNOW...**

- ▶ The Corrubedo lighthouse and the road leading to it have been the setting for numerous **films and TV shows**, including scenes from the successful TV series *Fariña* (Cocaine Coast).



Ribeira is also home to one of the most important remains of Galician megalithic culture: the **Axeitos Dolmen**. Declared an Asset of Cultural Interest, it is a large collective funerary monument dating from the third millennium BC.



You can also visit the **petroglyph at Laxe das Cabras**, and continuing along the archaeological route, the spectacular **Castro da Cidá**, which dates from the Iron Age and is located just a few metres from the **Pedra da Rá viewpoint**, is a must-see. It is located next to a rock in the shape of a frog with its mouth open, standing on **Monte Castro**, 190 metres above sea level, slightly resting on other smaller rocks and rising vertically some 15 metres.



There are **numerous trails** designed to help you discover the area inch by inch; routes to discover its fishing villages, walks such as the one from **Couso point** to the **port of Aguiño**, the **O Touro - Ameixida** maritime route, the river Arlés, the **Coroso** maritime route and various hiking routes.

It is also worth visiting the **Ribeira marina**, which is one of the places where you can experience your passion for the sea. Next to the busiest fishing port in Spain and the third busiest in Europe for inshore fishing, pleasure boats have their own space. This is the starting point for regattas that turn the wide Arousa estuary into leisure and sport.

Below we will take a closer look at the **Atlantic Islands National Maritime and Terrestrial Park**, but you should know that you can find one of its archipelagos in this area. We are talking about **Sálvora**, and since 2010 you can visit its main island, which gives its name to the whole archipelago. Sálvora was, for several centuries, in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities and the nobility, and before that it had been a refuge for pirates and corsairs until the 19th century, as only 3 kilometres separate it from the mainland.



It is an environment that is home to a wide variety of ecosystems and is protected, with **visits limited** to 200 people a day, who must obtain a permit beforehand. Since the departure of the last lighthouse keepers, only two pairs of watchmen and forest guards reside on the island, and they do so in shifts. It is small, 1 kilometre long and 200-300 metres wide, and in summer you can find a guide there to accompany you on the two routes that complete the island's trails.

**DID YOU KNOW...**



- ▶ Sálvora is home to the first Fish Drying and Salting Factory in Galicia, known as **O Almacén**, which later, in 1958, was transformed into the residential Pazo (Manor House) on the island of Sálvora.

One of the most iconic monuments on the island is the sculpture of the **Sálvora Mermaid**, 'Mariña'. Joaquín Otero Goyanes, Marquis of Revilla, who was a descendant and heir of the first owners of the island, ordered its construction in 1956 in honour of one of the most influential

legends from the area, which tells how a Roman knight made the mermaid recover her speech by endangering their son when he jumped over a bonfire on St. John's Day.

You will also want to complete your visit to the **lighthouse**, as the greatest maritime tragedy in the history of Galicia took place in front of it. It happened in 1921, when the Santa Isabel suffered an accident off the coast of Sálvora and the lighthouse keeper, hearing the screams, alerted the locals. The heroism of these people made it possible to rescue between 15 and 20 people. The film director Paula Cons decided to tell the story of this shipwreck and its three heroines in 'La isla de las mentiras': Cipriana Orujo, Josefa Parada and María Fernández.

**DID YOU KNOW...**



- ▶ In Sálvora you can visit the old village, the Chapel of Santa Catalina, and the fountain that bears the same name, on whose stone you can read engraved: 'Fuente de auga virtuosa que da salud y fuerza' (Fountain of virtuous water that gives health and strength). This is said to have been the case since the time of the Normans and Vikings.



## ▶▶ VILAGARCÍA DE AROUSA

*We will make a stop in the town of **Vilgarcía de Arousa** to enjoy its beaches and to get close to the Isla de Cortegada. We will also take a look at the magnitude of its religious heritage.*

And this is also the place to talk about the **Camino de Santiago** (Way of St. James), specifically the **river route along the Sea of Arousa and the River Ulla**. This route commemorates the arrival of the body of the Apostle St. James by sea in the year 44. According to tradition, the disciples entered through the Arousa estuary until they reached the river Ulla, to finally end up in Iria Flavia (Padrón), joining the **Camino Portugués** (Portuguese Way). This route is known as the **Translatio**, and is the only maritime *Via Crucis* in the world.



In Vilgarcía de Arousa we will begin by getting to know its past and present, passing by the **Castro de Alobre**, which was occupied between the 1st century BC and the 3rd century AD, the fishing quarter where the city was born, the 12th century **church of Fontecarmoa** and the baroque church of **Santa Eulalia de Arealonga**, built at the end of the 17th century, and the **Pazo and Convent of Vista Alegre**. These two buildings constitute an extremely valuable architectural ensemble, which has been declared a Historic-Artistic Monument. The pazo was built before the convent. The pazo was built in the 16th century, while the convent was erected in the 17th century, at the wish of Fernando de Andrade Soutomaior y Caamaño.



Vilgarcía was once an important **stately town**, and this can be seen in the large number of pazos (manor houses) that are spread throughout the municipality. **Pazo de Rubiáns** is the most important of them, as it is precisely the Lord of Rubiáns who is responsible for the creation of Vilgarcía in the middle of the 15th century. Its exquisite decoration is outstanding, which continues in the magnificent French-inspired garden that could remind us of Versailles itself, with its lawns and flower gardens, its specimens of oaks, conifers, palm trees and an extensive collection of camellias.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The Pazo de Rubiáns, in Vilgarcía de Arousa, is today a **wine estate**, which gives you the chance to do wine tastings. In addition, its garden has been declared an International Camellia Garden of Excellence.



Here you will also find the **Railway Museum**, as Vilagarcía was the end station of the first railway in Galicia (1873), which linked Santiago de Compostela to the sea.

Near the city centre you will find the **beaches** of A Concha and Compostela, its **promenade** of almost two kilometres that links Vilagarcía with the fishing village of **Carril** and, of course, the **island of Cortegada**. On this island, now deserted, you can find Roman and Norman archaeological remains, a church, a small hospital and the remains of the settlers' houses. You can visit Cortegada on your own or by taking part in guided tours.



The area is also perfect for **sports** such as sailing, rowing, canoeing and scuba diving, and there are numerous companies that supply their users with equipment. It is also a good option to explore the estuary, as there is a wide range of boat and fishing routes. But, there are also hiking routes such as Monte Xiabre, Cruz de Xiabre, Mirador de Bamio and Fontefria - Embalse del Con, and of course, the Vía Verde do Salnés. This route is a perfect alternative for sustainable leisure, both for cyclists and walkers, and it is also accessible for people with reduced mobility.



It is a walk through history and nature that follows the old railway route between Vilagarcía de Arousa and Pontevedra. So far, the path covers about 9 kilometres, although a project is underway to extend the route to a total of 24 kilometres, which will give continuity to the Vía Verde do Salnés to the provincial capital.

Our route will take us all the way to the capital. Our next stop will be in the city of Pontevedra. But first, a few kilometres before reaching the destination, you will have the opportunity to visit an important place in our recent history, the **Redwood Forest of Poio**.



Its origin dates back to 1992, when the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America was commemorated. For this event, the American government, presided at that time by George H. W. Bush, decided to give the people of Spain 500 red sequoia trees as a symbol of brotherhood between the old and the new World. The result is no other than just over 2 hectares of redwoods, which provide us with a beautiful natural spot and fantastic views of the Pontevedra estuary.



**DID YOU KNOW...**

- ▶ The Redwood Forest of Poio is also known as the **Columbus Forest**.

## ▶▶ PONTEVEDRA

*You will reach the centre of **Pontevedra** after just 8 kilometres. The first thing you'll have to do, if you're travelling by car, is find somewhere to park, as traffic is only allowed in 25% of the city.*

Its city model has been studied and serves as an example in many European cities, as its urban planning scheme works. So here, you already know, the plan is to walk. We can start with the **Peregrina**, as a whole. Its square is one of the nerve centres of Pontevedra, here we find the church, which is a symbol of the city and the most interesting because of its scallop-shell-shaped floor, a symbol of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The church was built in 1778 and is dedicated to the Pilgrim Virgin, patron saint of the province and responsible for guiding pilgrims.



Pontevedra is a key point in the **Camino Portugués**, as it is the point of arrival of the third stage, which begins in Redondela, and, in turn, the starting point of the fourth stage, which concludes in Caldas de Reis. The walking distance from Pontevedra to Compostela is 65 km.



Still on the subject of churches, a visit to the church of **San Francisco** is a must. Tradition says that it was Francis of Assisi himself who founded it. It was built during the 13th and 14th centuries and is late Gothic in style. Its interior is worth mentioning for the rose window on the main façade, as well as the sepulchres from different centuries. Another church with an interesting collection of Baroque altarpieces and images is that of **San Bartolomé**.

But Pontevedra is much more than that. You can visit the **Basilica of Santa María La Mayor**, the **Museum of Pontevedra**, which is made up of six buildings and is one of the best in its category in Galicia, and the **Isla de las Esculturas**, which will show you a city that is alive, you can feel it by seeing how much its people enjoy themselves. Pontevedra is also a **city of bridges**, with the Burgo bridge standing out for its antiquity and the Tirantes bridge for its uniqueness and modernity.



According to legend, the city of Pontevedra was founded by Teucer after his arrival on these shores following the Trojan War. As a tribute to this legend, the Plaza del Teucro, one of the most stately squares in the city, was named after him.



Today it still preserves part of the noble houses that surrounded it from the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as a wealth of heraldry, such as the house of the Gago y Montenegro family. As far as squares are concerned, the **Ferrería, Leña, Pedreira, Méndez Núñez, España** and **Cinco Calles** also stand out.



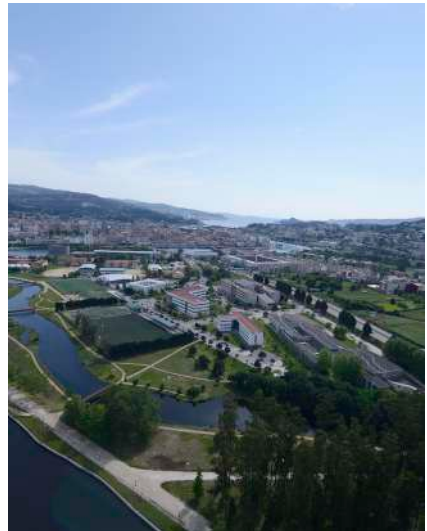
Pontevedra is the perfect city to enjoy with the whole **family**. Here you will find a wide variety of alternatives for the youngest members of the family, as well as pure entertainment for adults. There are several **interactive routes** for the whole family, such as La ruta del tesoro del pirata (The Pirate's Treasure Route) and *Descubriendo la Illa do Covo* (Discovering the Island of Covo).



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In the Plaza de la Peregrina, in Pontevedra, you can find the **Parrot Ravachol**. It used to be the mascot of the apothecary in the square and was known for uttering a few swear words and would warn Mr. Perfecto, the apothecary, when someone entered the pharmacy. Today, more than 100 years later, the parrot has a statue in the square, and during carnival he is dressed up in costume and the reenactment of his burial is one of the town's great festivities.

In recent years, Pontevedra has created a large green belt made up of three forest parks, and it is possible to take a number of hiking trails from the city itself.



## ▶▶ THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS NATIONAL MARITIME-TERRESTRIAL PARK

Barely half an hour from Pontevedra, we reach the city of **Vigo**, where its estuary is guarded by the Cíes Islands, one of the pillars of the **Parque Nacional Marítimo Terrestre das Illas Atlánticas** (Atlantic Islands National Maritime-Terrestrial Park), which also includes the archipelagos of Ons, Sálvora and Cortegada.

All of them must be visited, as they differ from each other. **Ons** and **Cíes** are the most popular. In the first one we find the typical Galician village by the sea, which is still inhabited by a population forged with an insular character; the sea is present in all facets of life and defines the landscape, but also the cuisine.



Visitors can reach **Ons** by boat in Vigo or Bueu, and there are several **hiking trails** to get to know the island in depth. The island is six kilometres long and less than 1.5 km wide, and its origins date back to the Palaeolithic period. If you are thinking of disconnecting, Ons offers you the chance to switch off from

the world from a spectacular spot, with flora and fauna that are rarely found anywhere else. It has a campsite where you can spend the night, and which was the first in Galicia to be certified as sustainable. And if you want to make your visit even more special, you can take your bike and cycle along the routes. Ons has history, beaches, leisure, viewpoints, lighthouses, local gastronomy and much more. Everyone wants to come back.



The **Cíes** archipelago, meanwhile, was recognised in 2022 by *The New York Times* as one of the 52 places in the world that should be visited, highlighting its conservation and sustainability model. *The Guardian* newspaper also rated it as **the best beach in the world, Rodas beach**, which connects the northern island, Monteagudo with the middle island, O Faro. The southern island, also known as San Martiño, however, can only be reached by private boat.



The Cíes Islands were once a refuge for pirates, but are now uninhabited and open to the public only in summer. Rodas beach boasts crystal-clear, calm waters, fine golden sand, a charming crescent shape and, protecting the beach, a pine forest that invites you to take a nap. It is also possible to follow various hiking routes to get to know the island in depth, completing them and observing it from a bird's eye view offers an incomparable panoramic view.



You can also spend the night in Cíes, as it has a campsite. If you can stay the night, don't hesitate to do so, as the place has been certified as a **Starlight Destination** due to its unbeatable location for skywatching. Activities are also organised throughout the summer on various days.

Don't let the reputation of the water temperature prevent you from **snorkelling**, since the best place to do so is at Nosa Señora beach. Cíes also has two wooden **bird watching stands**. One at the **Pedra da Campá** viewpoint and the other next to the **Monteagudo lighthouse**.

The wildlife in the Parque Nacional das Islas Atlánticas de Galicia is a unique example of a maritime-terrestrial ecosystem in the world. The Galician Atlantic Islands, thanks to their privileged geographical position at the entrance to the Rías Baixas, are an obligatory stop for numerous **colonies of migratory birds**. In addition, thanks to the ocean currents that bathe their coasts, the waters of these islands are full of animal and plant species that inhabit the rich and delicate seabed.

**DID YOU KNOW...**



- ▶ The Cíes Islands are home to Europe's largest colony of seagulls.

**▶▶ VIGO**

*If you stop to admire the estuary from Cíes, you'll see the city of **Vigo** emerge on the right bank. Are you familiar with its coat of arms?*

It reads "**Faithful, Loyal, Valiant and Always Beneficent**" and this has its origins on 28 March 1809, when the people of Vigo expelled the French soldiers, who had occupied the country, from their territory. It was the first Spanish city to defeat them and the milestone is nowadays celebrated in the city's most famous festival, the renowned **festival of the Reconquest of Vigo**.



The city of Vigo is crowned by the **O Castro Mount**, a reflection of its origins. Here there is an archaeological site with the remains of the settlements of the first settlers who inhabited it in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC. This is how the current city was born.

Its **beaches**, such as **Samil** and **Vao**, are well worth a stroll. It is also possible to leave the hustle and bustle of the city behind if you go to the **Bouzas** neighbourhood, where tradition coexists with the avant-garde in a calm space that conserves the essence of a seaside town. Its beaches, port and lighthouse are well worth your time, and if you want to find out more, you can visit the Galician Museum of the Sea.

The **Galician Museum of the Sea** is located in Punta de O Muiño, in Alcabre. It is an ambitious cultural and scientific project that was inaugurated in June 2002 and has one of the most complete permanent exhibitions in Vigo, which it combines with temporary exhibitions, always related to the world of the sea and fishing.

You can learn all about the history of fishing activity in Vigo including fishing, shellfishing, aquaculture and preservation methods, from primitive salting to modern freezing, as well as technical advances in boats and marine biology. The Italian architect Aldo Rossi envisioned, from the skeleton of the old Alcabre canning factory (later reused as a municipal slaughterhouse), the container of the beautiful museum, but he died while turning it into reality, and it was the Galician César Portela who finished the work. It is a true architectural marvel that is worth visiting if only to wander through its dizzying triangular shapes.

The city also has the **MARCO**, the Museum of Contemporary Art, located in the city centre, in a building that has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest. The building dates back to 1880 and was remodelled for its new use in 2001. It was previously used as a courthouse and prison; the rectangular section of the building, with a façade on Calle Príncipe, housed the courts and the rest of the building was used as a prison.



Another of the city's iconic museums is located in **Castrelos Park**, the **Quiñones de León Museum**, located in the old Pazo de Quiñones de León, which was built in the 17th century and renovated at the end of the 19th century. It is an exemplary building of Galician stately architecture, as it is a typical house of the Galician aristocracy. It is considered an Asset of Cultural Interest and its gardens are also worth a visit.

In Vigo you can visit a **Roman villa**. This villa, located in **Toralla**, is still called Finca Mirambell, because the land was owned by the Mirambell family, who found the first remains of this archaeological site in the 1920s. The main feature of this site, which dates back to the 4th and 5th centuries AD, is that it is the only Roman villa in Galicia that has been fully excavated and can be visited. There are two types of route, one visual outside route, with information panels about the site, and the other among the remains of the villa. You can see the different rooms of the house, the salt pans and a complex thermal system that shows the high social status of the people who lived there.



There are also numerous options for getting to know the city in depth, from **urban routes** that offer visitors the chance to explore the city's history, to **literary routes** based on the writers and books that deal with its streets, to **hiking routes** in the surrounding area that offer rivers, forests, forest parks and viewpoints with different routes and distances to be covered on foot, by bicycle, with the family or friends.

**DID YOU KNOW...**



- ▶ If you walk along the port of Vigo, you'll bump into **Jules Verne**. The reason is none other than the Bay of Vigo, to which the French writer dedicated a chapter in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, where Captain Nemo ventured into the depths of the Vigo estuary in search of the Rande treasure.

If you're more drawn to the sea, the Vigo estuary will also surprise you. You can enjoy its waters by practising all kinds of **water sports and activities**, from **boat rides** on the estuary to options such as **surfing**. There's something for everyone.



## ▶▶ PONTEAREAS

*As we continue our tour, we will say goodbye to the sea and move inland, which also has plenty to offer. In the south of Pontevedra province and close to Portugal is **Ponteareas**, a region with many attractions to visit. It is intersected by several rivers where you can find river beaches. It also has numerous architectural treasures that make it irresistible to anyone travelling to the interior of Galicia.*

The **Castro de Troña** is the most important archaeological site in Ponteareas and is only 3 km from the famous Mondariz Spa. Another essential monument to visit is **Sobroso Castle**, one of the jewels of Galician heritage, as it is one of the best preserved medieval fortresses. We know that it was already standing in 1117, when Queen Urraca was besieged in the fortification by the supporters of her son Alfonso VII and his sister Teresa de León. In the 15th century, the fortress was the scene of the Irmandiñas Revolts and various struggles that led to its partial destruction.



It was rebuilt by order of Pedro Álvarez de Soutomaior, Pedro Madruga, although it was later abandoned and lay in ruins until 1923, when it was restored by Alejo Carrera Muñoz with the help of the local residents. In 1949, Sobroso Castle was declared a National Monument and, of course, it is also a Galician Asset of Cultural Interest. Recently the building was inaugurated as a museum and visitors can enjoy an interactive tour through its history.

The **Convent of Canedo**, formerly the Pazo de los Sarmiento, is another must-see. The municipality has an extensive civil and religious heritage, including the Romanesque churches of **San Pedro de Angoares**, Padróns, Cumiár and Paredes.



As for natural spaces: **Picaraña Mount**. The surrounding area includes large crags, such as **O Penedo do Equilibrio** and **O Penedo dos Namorados**. On the **Tea trail**, which runs parallel to the course of the river, there are several bridges: Ponte dos Remedios and Ponte das Partidas, over the Tea river. There is another path along the banks of the river Uma where we find the Roman bridge of O Cabalón.

The route that takes us to the **viewpoint of San Cibrán**, in Guláns, located very close to O Alto de San Cibrán, where we will find the chapel, the remains of a castro and several gigantic “penedos”, is worthwhile. From the viewpoint, we can see a large part of O Condado and its great valley formed by the Tea river.

## WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



We start our culinary route in **Vilagarcía**, where the Atlantic diet prevails and we will find several **seafood restaurants** or restaurants such as “pulpería” (octopus restaurant), “asador” (grill restaurant) or “casa de comidas” (eatery) to choose from. Choosing the right one is not easy. **Clams** are a delicacy that must be tried. In general, it is a good idea to enjoy seafood products, all of which are characterised by the quality of the raw material.



**Local wines** should also be appreciated in this area. We are in the heart of the **Rías Baixas Designation of Origin**, and tasting **Albariño** is almost a requirement. However, it is also an excellent option to enjoy the Rías Baixas wine route, a pioneer in Spain for its organisation and signposting, which allows you to visit various wineries in the region with a wide range of different characteristics such as family-run, cooperative, urban, historic, artisan, etc. You can taste the wine in all of them, as well as their brandies, and find out directly from the producers how the golden and delicate **albariño grape** is transformed into a delicious wine.



In **Pontevedra** you have to try everything, so the best option is to go out for **tapas**. Its streets and squares are full of terraces where filling your stomach is never a formality, but a real pleasure. First-class **omelette**, crispy **squid**, **Padrón peppers**, the real kind, and even a tasty **pulpo a feira** (octopus). All accompanied by **wine**, of course. Don't be surprised if they are served in a cup, as they taste better that way. Although in reality, you'll be drinking from a **unca**. The **unca** is Galicia's most characteristic wine container and is frequently seen in *tascas*, *furanchos* and popular festivals throughout the region.



In **Vigo**, food is religion and, inevitably, we must return to the raw materials. Enjoy a meal looking at the **sea** and do so with the certainty that the product you are tasting comes directly from there. The flavour will prove it. In addition, the port of Vigo is where most **fresh fish** is unloaded in Europe and one of the most important in the world.



In **O Condado** you must try the **lamprey**. In the River Tea (a tributary of the Miño), lamprey are caught using wooden stakes between January and April. You can try this authentic delicacy in a restaurant in Ponteareas or in the nearby towns of Salvaterra de Miño, As Neves or Arbo. The lamprey has inhabited Galician rivers for more than 500 million years. It is said that it was the Romans who found it to be an authentic culinary delicacy and they used to take them alive from Galicia to Italy. In addition to the Tea, lamprey is currently fished in three Galician rivers: the Tam-bre, the Ulla and the Miño. In fact, there is a **Lamprey Route**, which allows you to taste it in different towns.



And, of course, dessert! We won't have to move, look no further than the **rosquillas** and **melindres** of Ponteareas, a very unique and special product that has been sold at festivals all over Galicia for over a century, and which also has a lot of personality, with a certificate of quality. You won't find rosquillas like these anywhere else.



## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### ALL YEAR ROUND

- ▶ Every Saturday, you can enjoy the **fair in Ponteareas**.

### MARCH

- ▶ 28th March, **Festival of the Reconquest of Vigo**.

### APRIL

- ▶ Beginning of April, **Festival of the Brincadeira** in Bouzas (**Vigo**).

### JUNE

- ▶ The Sunday after Corpus Christi, **Ponteareas** celebrates its **Corpus Christi festival**, a Festival of International Tourist Interest, in which the locals make more than twenty carpets of natural flowers that cover more than one kilometre of its streets.

### JULY

- ▶ Every July, **Pontevedra** hosts the **Feira Chalana**, a craft fair.
- ▶ On 16th July, **Ribeira** celebrates **Día del Carmen** (Carmen's Day), the patron saint of the sea.
- ▶ In mid-July, **Ribeira** celebrates the **Dorna**, its big festival. Declared a Festival of Tourist Interest in Galicia, it began as a small celebration among the locals to raise funds to

raffle a boat among the most needy. As time went by, it became a hallmark of the town's identity. Just a week later, they also celebrate '**La fiesta del verano**' (the summer festival).

### AUGUST

- ▶ Second week of August, **Fiestas de la Peregrina in Pontevedra**.
- ▶ 16th August, **Water Festival in Vilagarcía de Arousa**.
- ▶ 16th August, **Vigo** celebrates its most popular pilgrimage for **San Roque**.

### SEPTEMBER

- ▶ The first weekend in September, the **Feira Franca** takes **Pontevedra** back to the Middle Ages. The medieval festival has been declared of Tourist Interest in Galicia.
- ▶ Around 8th September, **Ponteareas** celebrates the **Traditional Fair of Los Remedios**, in which the atmosphere of the fairs of the early 20th century is recovered.

### NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

- ▶ From late November to mid-January, **Vigo** celebrates its traditional **Christmas**.

05

*Arraial*  
**Route**



# 05

## *Arraial* **Route**

Have you just finished the Lus-cofusco route and feel like discovering even more? Let's do it.

The Arraial Route: An arraial is a traditional festival, which transmits tradition and history, just what we are going to discover on this route, which is full of music, joy and colour. This route is also a fantastic option to start our journey.

**MINHO**



**VIANA DO CASTELO  
BARCELOS  
BRAGA  
GUMARÃES  
VILA NOVA DE FAMALICÃO**

# Arraial Route

We will enter Portugal from the north, and set out on a southbound route that will take us from the coast to the interior through unrivalled landscapes.



# 05



## ▶▶ VIANA DO CASTELO

*As we said, we will start in the Norte region, specifically in **Viana do Castelo**, the northernmost Atlantic city in Portugal.*

This coastal town has 24 kilometres of seafront, which, as we shall see, means there is a wide range of water sports on offer. However, let's start with its urban layout. Viana do Castelo has a **historic centre** that we should definitely visit which is the best urban centre preserved from the time of the Portuguese discoveries. The medieval wealth of the town was due, above all at that time, to its nautical and mercantile activity.

As time has passed, the mark of these times is still present, and we can find several references in the streets of its historic centre, located in its labyrinthine streets, as well as outstanding buildings with prominent architectural details.

These are buildings from the 12th to the 19th centuries, a heritage complex of distinctive character and beauty in which the **Casa Manuelina de Costa Barros** (Manueline House), the **Santa Ana Monastery Tower**, the **main church of Viana do Castelo**, the **House of João Velho**, the **República square**, and the **Roqueta Tower** in the **Santiago Fortress** - which was the forerunner of the popular Belém Tower in Lisbon - all stand out.

Viana do Castelo is much more than its historical heritage, however, as its architecture has been in constant growth and renovation, becoming a benchmark city that many Portuguese architects over the years have wanted to visit and exhibit their works in. There are buildings in all styles including manueline, baroque, art deco, historicist, and so on.



**Contemporary architecture** is also very present, as there are numerous buildings designed by renowned architects, two of them winners of the Pritzker Prize “the Nobel Prize for Architecture”: Siza Vieira, who designed the **Municipal Library**, and Eduardo Souto Moura, who designed the **Cultural Centre**. Both buildings are part of the **Viana’s Waterfront Plan**, designed by Fernando Távora.



## DID YOU KNOW...



- Viana do Castelo is also home to the **Eiffel Bridge**, designed by Gustave Eiffel and inaugurated in 1878. The bridge is a symbol of iron architecture in Portugal and is 562 metres long, with two levels, the lower one for the railway and the upper one for the road.

You can also enjoy one of the **best panoramic views in the world** according to *National Geographic*, right here. You will have to climb **Santa Luzia Mount**, and of course, visit the basilica, because the panoramic view is not the only thing the place has to offer.



The **Monte de Santa Luzia Sanctuary** is a 20th century neo-Byzantine temple, in honour of the Sagrado Coração de Jesus, and inspired by the Sacré-Coeur in Paris. If we go a little further up the Monte de Santa Luzia Sanctuary, we reach a hilltop fort, the **Cidade Velha de Santa Luzia** (old city). It was inhabited between the Iron Age and the Roman period, although only a third of its original area can now be seen.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ The architect Miguel Ventura Terra, one of the most renowned national and international architects of his time, began the project for the **Monte de Santa Luzia Sanctuary** in 1898, but did not start building it until 1904. When he died in 1919, his protégé, Miguel Nogueira, continued with the temple and completed it in 1943, although it was opened for worship earlier, in 1926.

«*Quem gosta vem, quem ama fica*» (those who love come, those who love stay), is the city's motto. Anyone who feels attracted by all this must visit Viana do Castelo, and once there, many people love what they find and decide to stay. And this is not all, because as we mentioned before, one of its strong points is its **coast**. This is how many pilgrims arrive here, as it is an enclave through which the **Caminho Português da Costa** (Coastal Portuguese Way) passes. It is a flat and pleasant route for the walker, with exceptional panoramic views and a wide range of tourist attractions.

In the port, for example, you can visit the **Navio Hospital Gil Eannes**, a museum ship. And continuing with the sea, it is worth mentioning that we are talking about Viana do Castelo, a 'cidade náutica do Atlântico' ('nautical city of the Atlantic'). It is committed to water sports, both on the **Lima river**, where you can rowing, sailing, kayaking, etc., and on the **sea**, fishing, sailing, jet-skiing, surfing, wind-surfing, kite-surfing and bodyboarding, and has excellent facilities to regularly practise all types of sports.



### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ The **Navio Hospital Gil Eannes**, which can be visited today in Viana do Castelo, was the flagship of the Portuguese *frota branca* (white fleet) cod fishing fleet in the waters of Newfoundland and Greenland between 1955 and 1973. During its years of service, the ship went beyond its duties as a hospital ship, also performing tasks as a maritime authority, mail ship, tug, icebreaker and supplying other ships in the fleet.

## ▶▶ BARCELOS

*We continue our journey south until we stop at **Barcelos**, whose history dates back to its foundation in the 12th century by Foral. Barcelos is a destination where you will, of course, recognise its cockerel, the town's symbol and icon.*

Legend has it that a Galician pilgrim on his way to Santiago de Compostela stopped in Barcelos - for the **Caminho Central Português** (Portuguese Way - Central Route) passes through here - where he was accused of theft and condemned to be hanged. Testifying before the judge, who was at the time tasting a roast rooster, he said: "I am innocent, and as proof of this that cock will rise and crow". When he was about to be executed, the cock crowed, proving the pilgrim's innocence and saving him from death.

This story is depicted in the **Galo Calvary**, engraved on stone, which can be visited in the Archaeological Museum, located in the **Palace of the Counts of Barcelos**. This is the most characteristic building in the city, and is classified as a National Monument, a Gothic palace-fortress dating from the 15th century. A few of its exterior walls are still standing, as well as a peculiar chimney, the only survivor of the four original ones.



The churches of **Terço**, **Senhor da Cruz**, **Vilar de Frades** in Areias de Vilar, **Abade de Neiva**, **Manhente** and its tower, **Nossa Senhora da Aparecida** in Balugães, and the chapel of **Nossa Senhora da Franqueira** also stand out in Barcelos.



We will stroll through its historic centre, which represents its own cultural and historical heritage. We can appreciate its **Medieval Bridge**, listed as a National Monument since 1910, which is a Gothic stone construction from the early 14th century, between 1325 and 1330, commissioned by Count D. Pedro, to connect Barcelos and Barcelinhos. Its five-arched structure, of which the central arch is the highest, a structural characteristic of the period, is worth mentioning.



## DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ Barcelos, a **UNESCO Creative City**, is a reference point for craftsmanship, in all its variants; wood, wickerwork, embroidery, ceramics and more.

A lively city, full of joy and colour. It is worth stopping to take a look at the **green spaces** and the colourful gardens designed with flowers and shrubs. While strolling through the streets it is worth looking up, as even the balconies are full of decorative elements. A perfect combination of natural spaces and a remarkable artistic heritage, as well as an outstanding monumental and religious heritage with manor houses, water mills, granaries and vineyards.

## ▶▶ BRAGA

*Our next stop on our tour of the Arraijal Route is **Braga**. Also known as the city of the archbishops, it is a historical and millenary city.*

'**Bracara Augusta**', was founded more than 2000 years ago in the time of Emperor Augustus, and was one of the main Roman roads in the Iberian Peninsula, as it was the administrative seat of the Empire.

On the outskirts of the city, on the top of a hill, you can see one of the most visited sanctuaries in Portugal, **Bom Jesus do Monte**, which welcomes many pilgrims and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A sanctuary dating from the end of the 18th century. It is preceded by the impressive Baroque staircase known as the *Escadório do Bom Jesus*, with 573 steps and 17 landings, decorated with symbolic fountains, allegorical statues and Baroque details dedicated to various subjects: the Sacred Way, the Five Senses, the Virtues, the Terreiro de Moisés and, at the top, the eight biblical figures who took part in the Condemnation of Jesus.

The gardens and the **Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora do Sameiro** on the same hill deserve special mention. Alternatively, you can use the lift, which was the first **funicular** railway to be built on the Iberian Peninsula and is currently the oldest in the world to use the water counterweight system.



The cathedral is the most significant building in the city. Located in the historic centre, the **Sé of Braga** represents a little of the secular evolution of the city. The Sé, as we know it today, was designed at the end of the 11th century by the Bishop D. Pedro. After several alterations and additions, today, it brings together a mixture of styles ranging from Romanesque to Gothic to Baroque.

The **Arco da Porta Nova** was one of the ancient entrances to the city of Braga and still welcomes visitors to the historic centre today. From here a pedestrian street leads to the **República square**. From there, behind the *Arcada*, the arched building, you can see the **Mengem Tower**, which is all that remains of Braga's ancient castle from medieval times.

The historic city of Braga is full of culture, with several museums that explain its history, culture and traditions in a fascinating way. **Nossa Senhora da Torre** is located in a building that was part of the old college and Seminary of Santiago, to which it is attached. It was an old chapel, built in the 18th century. The most outstanding feature is its high medieval tower, where temporary exhibitions are held on its five floors, a visit to which is part of the Pius XII Museum.



Other highlights are the **Image Museum**, a photography museum, the **D. Diogo de Sousa Archaeological Museum**, the **House Museum of Biscaínhos**, and the **Sacristy of the Church of São Fructuoso**, and the **Centro de Interpretação das Memórias da Misericórdia** (Misericórdia Memory Interpretation Centre) in the Raio Palace.



Just 8 km from Braga we find the **Benedictine Monastery of Tibães**. The primitive monastery was founded between 1070 and 1077, and dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours who was born in Pannonia (Hungary), perhaps in 317, and a prolific founder of monasteries and bishop of Tours. In the 17th and 18th centuries, a new edifice replaced the Romanesque-Gothic building,

transforming the **Monastery of São Martinho de Tibães** into one of the most beautiful Portuguese baroque monastic complexes, representing an important centre for the production and dissemination of culture and aesthetics and an exceptional place for Portuguese thought and art. Highlights include the gilded carvings, the altarpieces and baroque decoration, the baroque organ dating from 1784, and the tiles. The grandeur of the monastery is completed by a surrounding forest in which we find an 18th century chapel dedicated to São Bento.



Braga has a network of **pedestrian routes** that includes 280 km of routes dedicated to exploring the city in all its aspects, from the urban to the more natural; mountains, valleys, rivers and so on. There are options for all types of visitors, some of which can be enjoyed by bicycle, with different distances and levels of difficulty. They are divided into four categories: 'the city and nature', 'paths with history', 'rivers' and 'mountains and valleys'.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Despite being one of the oldest cities in Portugal, Braga has a very high percentage of young people, and has even been named "European Youth Capital" in 2012, and "Ibero-American Youth Capital" in 2016.

## ▶▶ GERÊS - XURÉS TRANSBOUNDARY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

At just 35 kilometres from Braga, we reach the **Gerês - Xurés Transboundary Biosphere Reserve**, which is made up of the **Peneda-Gerês National Park** in Portugal and the **Baixa Limia - Serra do Xurés Natural Park** in Galicia, Spain.

Covering 330,000 hectares and more than 100 kilometres of border, this natural area is located in the Galician municipalities of Bande, Calvos de Randín, Entrimo, Lobeira, Lóbios and Muiños; and in the Portuguese municipalities of Arcos de Valdevez, Melgaço, Montalegre, Ponte da Barca and Terras de Bouro.

Its geographical location is influenced by the Atlantic, Mediterranean and continental climates, which is especially relevant for its enormous **botanical diversity**, with species of high value for nature conservation and other endemic species such as the Xurés Lily (*Iris boissieri*), the timelea (*Tymelea broterana*) and the armeria (*Armeria humillis* Subs. *Humillis*).

This botanical diversity creates favourable conditions to support a **great variety of wildlife** such as the Iberian wolf, roe deer, bats, martens, vipers, etc.; more than 147 species of birds, many of which are migratory, and some that have a reduced presence in the Iberian Peninsula such as the golden eagle, the red-billed chough, the eagle owl and the bee-eating falcon.



The Gerês-Xurés Reserve is a very special place, which was first inhabited more than 4,000 years ago, with many historic witnesses. On the Galician side, you can discover the **dolmens of Maus de Salas** on the **Megalithic Route** and **Castro de Os Castelos** from the first inhabitants. The Romans also left their marks as **milestones**, the **Roman road XVIII or Via Nova**, the **Thermal Baths or Baths of Bande** and you can visit the **Interpretation Centre of the Roman site of Aquis Querquennis**, which has an archaeological site composed of a military camp and a road mansion. In addition to these, you can visit the **Church of Santa Comba**, one of the most important buildings of Visigothic art from the 7th century.



The Portuguese side also has everything including **petroglyphs** at Chã da Rapada and **Penedo do Encanto**, a **megalithic necropolis** on the Castro Laboreiro hill and **dolmens** in the Soajo mountain range. The **Roman road XVIII** or **Via Nova** also used to run through here, as can be seen in the **milestones**. You may be surprised by the **medieval castles** of Castro Laboreiro, Montalegre and Lindoso, which defended the Portuguese border, or by the **Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Peneda** and the **monastery of Pitões das Júnias**. You should also not miss the **24 granite granaries in Soajo** that are concentrated in a small space.

In the Gerês-Xurés Reserve you have an endless number of activities to do such as walks along trails of different lengths, horse riding, mountain biking, canoeing, wildlife spotting, or adventure sports in this unbeatable setting. You can also enjoy **waterfalls** such as **Arado** in Portugal or **A Corga da Fecha**, the largest in Galicia, as well as swimming pools, viewpoints - there's a bit of everything.

You can find all the information at the **Interpretation and Information Centre of the Baixa Límia-Serra do Xurés Natural Park** in Lólbios or at one of the five **Portas do Parque Nacional Peneda-Gerês** (information centres) in Lamas do Mouro, Mezio, Lindoso, Campo do Gerês and Montalegre.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ **Foxos do lobo**, are stone constructions, usually located in the mountains, which were used as wolf traps to protect the herds.

## ▶▶ GUIMARÃES

*We leave Gerês-Xurés and Braga behind us and head south again, stopping at **Guimarães**, the city where Portugal was born, or at least that's what it says on one of the entrances to its walls.*

The reason is that it was here that the battle of S. Mamede took place, in which the Prince Afonso Henriques fought against his mother, Dona Teresa; years later, Afonso Henriques would become the first king of Portugal.

The town's more than a thousand years of history can be seen in its buildings and streets. **Guimarães Castle** was built in the mid-11th century to defend against invasions and to reassert the power of Countess Mumadona. Opposite the castle is the Church of São Miguel, where King Afonso Henriques was baptised.



The **Palace of the Dukes of Bragança**, luxurious and majestic, dates from the 15th century. Today it is one of the most visited museums. The **Convent of Santo António dos Capuchos**, which was a hospital in the 19th century, and the **Convent of Santa Clara**, which since 1975 has been the town hall of Guimarães and has a magnificent cloister, also stand out. The Santa Maria street, in the centre, still preserves its medieval air; at the end of the street, vestiges of the city wall can be seen.

Today, Guimarães still has a harmonious and well-kept **heritage collection** that can be seen in the iron railings, granite balconies and porticoes, stately houses, arches linking narrow streets, floor slabs polished by the passage of time, towers and cloisters. The UNESCO listed the intramural area of the historic centre of Guimarães as a World Heritage Site, thanks to the values of originality and authenticity used for its recovery.



The church of **Nossa Senhora da Oliveira**, which is as old as the castle, was a collegiate church, a must for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The church of **Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos**, better known as the church of **S. Gualter**, is also worth a visit, as it is here that the Gualterian Festivities are held in honour of the city's patron saint.



A city that breathes culture, and where the main catalyst for the vibrant cultural scene is the **Vila Flor Cultural Centre**, which opened its doors to the public in 2005. This beautiful 18th century palace, surrounded by gardens, is a public complex with two auditoriums, exhibition halls, café-concert hall, meeting spaces, artists' studios and a modern restaurant where you can enjoy modern Portuguese cuisine.

The cultural schedule is also in keeping with the modern facilities, with a special highlight being the **International Jazz Festival** in November.



## DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ In the **Basilica of São Torcato**, Guimarães, the uncorrupted body of Saint Torcato, the first martyr of Iberian Christianity, is worshipped, attracting many of the faithful and making it one of the largest pilgrimage centres in the north of the country.

Just outside Guimarães is the **Termas das Taipas**. This thermal spa was discovered in 1867, although it is known, due to the discovery of a stone with inscriptions, that it was already used by the Romans for therapeutic purposes. The water comes out at about 32°C, and is indicated for treating skin, rheumatic, stomach and arthrosis diseases. The Thermal Spa is the best option to relax and recharge your batteries. Highlights include the thermal water treatments, the new dynamic circle (sauna, Turkish bath and dynamic pool), and the new massage techniques applied by a team of experienced and qualified spa technicians.

Also on the outskirts of Guimarães, the **Citânia de Briteiros** is worth a visit. Perched on the top of the **São Romão mountain**, overlooking the Ave river valley, it is striking for its scenic beauty and for being one of the most expressive protohistoric settlements in the Iberian Peninsula, due to the size and monumentality of its walls, its urban planning and its architecture.


**VILA NOVA DE FAMALICÃO**

*The route continues to **Vila Nova de Famalicão**, a town that was the centre of the industrial revolution at the time of industrialisation and which is bathed by the waters of the river Ave and its tributaries.*

**Vila Nova de Famalicão** has a wide range of attractions for visitors, with various **routes** and multidisciplinary **experiences** that you cannot miss out on. As a member of the **Portuguese Industrial Tourism Network**, the town's industrial activity stands out, as it is part of its heritage, as well as its R&D technological centre.



Industrial tourism is therefore a constant feature of Vila Nova de Famalicão. From the raw material to the final product, visitors are invited to get to know the production cycle of the city's industries and take part in their dynamics; from discovering how clothes are produced, to products such as chocolate or wine.



However, the cultural experience goes beyond that. Museums in Vila Nova de Famalicão date back to the early 1920s, with the opening to the public of the first

house-museum in Portugal, the **Camiliano Museum**, where you can see the house in which Camilo Castelo Branco lived, and learn about the domestic life of one of the greatest Portuguese literary writers. The following decades witnessed the inauguration of several museums steeped in history, memory and identity, where culture is understood as crucial to citizenship. There are also, of course, museums that disseminate heritage and industrial heritage: **Museu da Indústria Têxtil da Baía do Ave** (textile industry museum), **Museu do Automóvel** (automobile museum) and **Museu Nacional Ferroviário - Núcleo de Lousado** (railway museum).



In Vila Nova de Famalicão we can also find one of the largest fortified settlements in the northern Portugal, the **Castro do Alto das Eiras**, which is a huge architectural compound dating back to the 1st century, and which has an inestimable and unique heritage value, as it also has the famous **Pedra Formosa**.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ In Famalicão, the **Centro Português do Surrealismo** (Surrealism Portuguese Centre) was created at the **Fundação Cupertino de Miranda**, which has an important collection of surrealist art, with a special focus on the artist Mário Cesariny, considered the main representative of Portuguese surrealism.

### WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



Travelling through the heart of **Minho** will whet our appetite, and luckily we find ourselves in a region offering a very high level culinary experience. The choice is wide and diverse, but we will review the must-try dishes in **Minho cuisine**; the most characteristic of its dishes and, of course, its wines.

**Sarrabulho rice or papas** (gruel) are one of the typical dishes of the area that you must try. Sarrabulho gruel, for example, is made with pig's blood, which is the origin of the name sarrabulho, chicken meat, pork, ham, chorizo, cumin, lemon and bread or millet flour, which gives rise to the name *papas*, among other ingredients. It is one of those dishes that you can't miss if you visit the area in winter.



Eating in the Minho region will also offer the possibility of tasting, of course, **rojões Minho style**; one of the most popular dishes in the northern Portugal, made up of pieces of shoulder and belly pork. Another option is a wonderful **roast rooster, cod, lamprey, mourisca chicken**... Numerous local dishes that not only allow us to savour their quality, but also, as they are dishes with history, transport us to the way of life of the region.

No meal should be complete without sweets such as **doces de romaria**, **queijadas de Barcelos** and **brisas do Cávado**. Unmissable.



While in **Braga**, another delicacy from the Minho region is the **Abade de Priscos pudding**. A typical Portuguese dessert that has its origins here, which is a rich caramel cream pudding created by priest Manuel Joaquim Machado Rebelo, the abbot of Priscos, in the 19th century. The pudding is distinctive because it contains bacon and a large number of egg yolks, fifteen in total.

When it comes to sweets, we will have to taste them at each of our stops; in **Guimarães**, the **Toucinho do Céu** and the **Tortas de Guimarães**. Arriving in **Vila Nova de Famalicão**, try the **Pão de Ló**, the **Bolo de Famalicão**, **Famalicenses** and **Miniaturas**, which are just some of its sweets, abundant in all its bakeries and cafés.



Wine tasting in Minho is also an excellent way of getting to know the region, as the beverage they develop there is a living manifestation of its people. Wine tourism attracts many visitors to this area.

Portuguese **vinho verde** production is very important in the Minho region, and there are several routes for visitors to get to know the process from within. Vinho verde's curious characteristics make it unmistakable; regardless of whether it is white, red or rosé, it is always light, fresh, low-calorie and delicately fruity. As such, it is perfect for any occasion, as an aperitif or as an accompaniment to any main meal. So, if you can, buy several bottles, because once you try it, you will want it to be part of your wine cellar.



On the subject of shopping, remember that we cannot leave the Minho region without buying some of the handcrafted items made in Barcelos, some of the characteristic **embroidery from Guimarães**, and of course, some wonderful **filigree from Viana**.

#### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ In Braga, Christmas is celebrated with bananas and muscatel. The "Bananeiro", as this tradition was nicknamed, started with a small group of friends before the Christmas Eve dinner, and the custom soon spread throughout the city. According to tradition, one eats a banana and drinks a glass of muscatel while wishing friends and acquaintances a merry Christmas.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### ALL YEAR ROUND

- ▶ Every Thursday, **Barcelos Fair**. A large space dedicated to selling clothes, shoes, food, furniture, ceramics, plants, embroidery... Everything!
- ▶ The **Municipal Market of Vila Nova de Famalicão**, where fresh products are always the centre of attention, such as fruit, vegetables, fish and meat.
- ▶ **Dias à Mesa**, an initiative in **Vila Nova de Famalicão** that promotes traditional cuisine, associated with the big events that take place throughout the year.

### FEBRUARY

- ▶ **Carnival in Famalicão**, a party with a difference, lots of entertainment in the city streets all night long.

### APRIL / MAY

- ▶ From 25 April to 3 May, **Festa das Cruzes in Barcelos**.
- ▶ May is a month of strong traditions in **Vila Nova de Famalicão**, with the celebration of two of the most popular festivals in the municipality: the **Flower Festival** and the **Trade Fair**.

### JUNE

- ▶ In June, **Vila Nova de Famalicão** celebrates its biggest pilgrimage with the **Festas Antoninas**.
- ▶ From 14 to 25 June, the city of **Braga** is transformed into a full-fledged Minoan village to celebrate the **São João Batista festival**.
- ▶ From 23 to 26 June, the **Feira Medieval Afonsina** (medieval fair) takes place in the historic centre of **Guimarães**.

### AUGUST

- ▶ First week of August, **Festas Gualterianas de Guimarães**, the most important of the city. Historical reenactments, fashion shows, horse races, floral carpet making, concerts and open-air dances, bullruns, a fair and much more.
- ▶ In the middle of August, in **Viana do Castelo**, the **Festas d'Agonia**. The Virgin of the Agony, worshipped by the fishermen so that the sea will be favourable, is celebrated. An outstanding procession in Portugal filled with music, processions, parades, floral carpets, and the famous *Ca-beçudos* (processional giants). It's all there.
- ▶ At the end of summer, the **White Night of Braga**. The cultural celebration in Braga is the biggest in Europe, and to honour its name, the city is decorated with white elements and people take to the streets dressed in the same colour.

## SEPTEMBER

- ▶ At the beginning of September, **Barcelos** hosts the **Crafts and Ceramics Fair**. The biggest annual event of popular art, where practically all the local craftsmen and artists come together. This is one of the oldest handicraft fairs in Portugal, which best reflects the authenticity and wealth of popular art in Portugal.
- ▶ The **Feira de Artesanato** and the **Feira de São Miguel**, in **Vila Nova de Famalicão** are two events (fairs) that promote the popular traditions of the local people, together with good aperitifs and fine wines.

## NOVEMBER

- ▶ In November, **Fado Festival** and **Amateur Fado Competition** in **Vila Nova de Famalicão**.
- ▶ In the second week of November, **Guimarães** hosts the **International Jazz Festival**.

## DECEMBER

- ▶ Christmas is synonymous with light and cheerfulness in **Vila Nova de Famalicão**, the town transforms itself into a "**Vila Natal**" (Christmas village), with entertainment, sweets and a great variety for Christmas presents shopping.

06

*Bravura*  
**Route**



# 06

## *Bravura* **Route**

Let's start this coastal route, shall we?

The **Bravura Route**: Bravura is a word that is synonymous with courage and daring, on this route we will find proof of historical battles and its people's tenacity.

**GRANDE PORTO  
DOURO LITORAL**



**PÓVOA DE VARZIM  
MATOSINHOS  
MAIA  
PORTO  
VILA NOVA DE GAIA  
SANTA MARIA DA FEIRA  
GONDOMAR  
VALONGO  
AMARANTE**

# Bravura Route

During our tour we will get to know Grande Porto and the whole of the Douro Litoral. This area has a great variety of attractions, which is why we will make plenty of stops.



# 06



## ▶▶ PÓVOA DE VARZIM

*Our journey begins in the town of **Póvoa de Varzim**, the most northerly town in the district of Porto.*

It is a land of brave fishermen, and also one of the favourite **summer holiday** options in the northern Portugal, especially since the railway line connecting it directly to Porto was established in 1875.

It is now a busy summer resort. The Póvoa de Varzim **beach** is wide, well supported and easily accessible to all types of people. The sea that serves it is constantly bustling with traditional fishing boats, sports and leisure boats and numerous surfers and body-boarders. Avenida dos Banhos runs alongside the beach and is an area specially designed to relax and enjoy your spare time.

It also has excellent facilities, with Olympic swimming pool, tennis and squash academies, and various sports grounds. Póvoa de Varzim also has an extensive network of **cycle paths**, which cover more than 27 km of the city and local area, with plenty of areas to park your bike too.



On the subject of leisure, we must mention its **Casino**, one of the most beautiful and prestigious in Portugal. Across the road, we can enjoy the **Azulejo Panels**, which is a mural made entirely of azulejo (tiles) painted in the traditional blue that tells the stories and traditions of Póvoa. Although if you want to see them all, it would be better to visit the **Museu Municipal de Etnografia e História** (Municipal Museum of Ethnography and History).

**Almada Square** represents the nerve centre of Póvoa de Varzim. On one side, the old town, on the other, the shopping area and the beaches. It is an interesting place to start and is a monument in itself.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ At the Museu Municipal de Etnografia e História de Póvoa de Varzim (Ethnography and History Municipal Museum) you can visit one of the last examples of a **poveira speedboat** in existence today.

Here you can see the **town hall** and its tiles - from the early 19th century. Nearby is the monument to Eça de Queirós, born in Póvoa de Varzim. You will also come across the **pedestrian area**, a small cluster of streets with traditional shops and small cafés, where you can enjoy a quiet stroll towards the sea. The Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James), the **Caminho Português da Costa** (Coastal Portuguese Way), also passes through these streets and continues along charming promenades to the end of the municipality.

It is worth stopping in the 18th century Fortress area and enjoying the views, and we cannot leave the town without going to São Pedro de Rates, where the first hostel along the Camino Português (Portuguese Way) is situated. In this village you can visit the **Romanesque church of S. Pedro de Rates**, one of the oldest unaltered Romanesque churches in Portugal, a National Monument treasure.



It also has an eco-museum and an 8 kilometre route through the water and windmills and the cultures of flax, bread and wine, or the art of slate. In addition, very close by, in the Rates mountain range, are the **Mills of Monte S. Felix** with impressive views.

## ▶▶ MATOSINHOS

*We leave Póvoa de Varzim behind but continue our journey towards the coast, as our next destination is **Matosinhos**.*

This is another town where we can meet pilgrims, since the **Caminho Português da Costa** also passes through it.

Matosinhos draws in many visitors with its **Piscina das Marés** (Tidal Pools). This National Monument, inaugurated in 1966 and designed by the architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, is a set of saltwater pools located in **Praia de Leça da Palmeira**. The pools fit harmoniously into the rocky landscape, where the waves of the sea break against it.



This development runs parallel to the promenade and the sea, built in such a way that it does not obstruct visibility towards the land or the sea, and is at the same level as the promenade. The **beaches** in Matosinhos are for strolling, exploring and enjoying. All of them offer the visitor various services, and activities such as surfing, diving, bodyboarding, sailing or kitesurfing, which are renowned in these parts.

## DID YOU KNOW...

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- ▶ Matosinhos has a total of 13 beaches with the Blue Flag status and 9 classified as 'Praia com Qualidade de Ouro' (Gold Quality Beach).

At **Angeiras beach** it is also worth visiting its archaeological remains, as around four dozens rectangular tanks excavated in the rocks testify to the industrial production of fish preserves during the Roman 3rd-4th centuries. The **canning industry** is also a characteristic feature of Matosinhos today. As a matter of fact, you can go on a 'fish tour of Matosinhos' and visit an active canning factory, as well as attend an auction at the Angeiras market.

Also, the traditional Matosinhos market, which has maintained its original function as a fresh produce market since 1952, is also known as a fish market. It is very close to the restaurant area, Matosinhos is recognised as the region's table, renowned for its fresh fish and seafood dishes.

Also well worth a visit is the **Leixões Cruise Terminal**, a true architectural marvel. It is located on the southern jetty in Matosinhos and was designed by architect Luís Pedro Silva with a two-fold objective: to improve commercial efficiency and better urban integration. The project therefore integrates new buildings, berthing works and outdoor spaces for public use.

The main building houses the cruise terminal, marina facilities, the Centro Interdisciplinar de Investigação Marinha e Ambiental (Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research) of the University of Porto, event spaces and a pleasure harbour for 170 boats.

Driving through Matosinhos you will come across the **Anemone Roundabout**, one of the most beautiful roundabouts in the country, with a sculpture by the American Janet Echelman. It is dedicated to the fishermen of Matosinhos and is supported by three metal poles. This gigantic fishing net, 42 metres in diameter, moves to the rhythm of the wind, imitating anemone movements.



We will also stop to visit the **Monastery of Leça do Balio**, dating back to the 10th century and renovated following the lead of Friar Estêvão Vasques Pimentel in 1371. It is an excellent example of transitional architecture between Romanesque and Gothic. It was originally used by the Order of the Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, later known as the Order of Malta, and became one of the Order's headquarters in Portugal. In 1372, the temple also hosted the controversial and romantic wedding between King Fernando and Leonor Teles, which was immortalised by a sculpture by Irene Vilar in front of the monastery.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The 1st of December 1947 was marked as one of the most tragic dates in Matosinhos because of the shipwreck of four trawlers that killed 152 fishermen. In 2005 a sculpture by José João Brito was unveiled to pay homage to the families and victims of this shipwreck.

### ▶▶ MAIA

*We continue our route to **Maia**, the second greenest town in Portugal.*

The **Terras da Maia** has traces of Celtic occupation with evidence in the **Santo Ovídio Mount** which has the remains of a fortified settlement. It played an important role in the birth of the Kingdom of Portugal and later in the Liberal Wars. The liberal army of King Pedro IV camped in the current Praça do Exército Libertador, where the liberal flag was first flown for in Portugal. In this square you can enjoy a magnificent group of 19th century houses, a monument to Pedro IV and the Chapels of Cristo Rei and Nossa Senhora Mãe dos Homens.

On the religious side, it is worth a visit to the **Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora do Bom Despacho**, a refined Baroque church dating from 1738 and covered with tiles.

You can also visit the **Church of Nossa Senhora do Ó**, a Romanesque church from the 12th century, juxtaposing naves and styles in works from the 14th, 17th and 19th centuries and which stands out for its Visigothic remains. Finally, there is the **Monastery of São Salvador de Moreira**, founded in the 11th century and rebuilt in 1591 by Philip II of Portugal (III in Spain). Special mention should be made of the pipe organ built in 1701 in the German city of Hamburg by Arp Schnitger.



Maia has many parks and gardens, including the **Gruta Environmental Education Complex Farm**, housed in a Romanesque mansion from the early 20th century, which brings together recreational, research and leisure areas.



It is also worth knowing the history of the **Casa do Alto**, a house from the end of the 19th century that has been restored and enlarged, where a Youth Centre and a Day Centre are currently in operation; indigenous trees populate the surroundings of the house, which has a

green area complete with a children's playground where you can come and enjoy a break.

The **Cónegos Farm** is a property that boasts an 18th century house in pure baroque style influenced by the Nasoni school, and a Chapel in honour of the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family) from the 17th century. Its name comes from the fact that the property was frequented by members of the clergy. The estate, restored by the Ricardo Espírito Santo Foundation in the 1990s, is now owned by the municipality of Maia. A visit to this house is like a journey back in time, and you will learn about the original way of life.



Also not to be missed is a visit to the **History and Ethnology of Terra da Maia Museum**, housed in an 18th century mansion that was the seat of the local government until 1902 where a permanent exhibition on Maia's rural past can be visited.



Leisure experiences are completed by a range of activities including skydiving, paintball, indoor skydiving, all the activities at the Equestrian Centre and, of course, the Zoo.

The **Maia Zoo** is one of the town's main attractions and has 600 animals covering 200 different species with a pedagogical approach aimed at nature conservation.

Maia is easily recognisable by the **Lidador Tower** silhouette. This 92-metre skyscraper, built in 2001, is the tallest building in Portugal outside Lisbon and can be seen from all of Maia's parishes. It is home to the municipal services and is a symbol of the city's dynamism, and the beginning of a new cycle of development and progress.



### DID YOU KNOW...

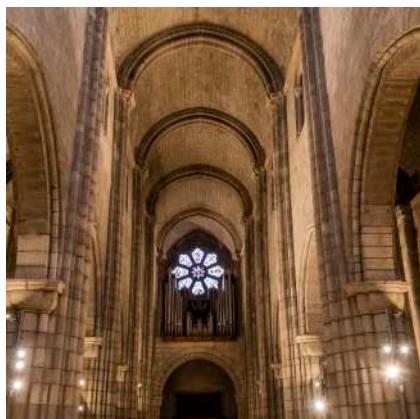


- ▶ The knight **Gonçalo Mendes da Maia** was a glorious military man who fought alongside Afonso Henriques for the independence and extension of Portuguese territory and is known as “**O Lidador**” due to the many victories he achieved in battles against the Moors.

## ▶▶ PORTO

*Next, let's take a look at the delightful city of **Porto**. Located on the banks of the Douro River, it has a historic centre that has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.*

During our visit we must not forget to visit places such as the **Sé Catedral do Porto**, which is the most important and one of the oldest in the city. Construction began in the early 12th century and over the following centuries it has undergone several modifications in terms of extensions and changes of style, but in general it remains austere and simple, although impressive in size. The high altar, the cloister and the museum are not to be missed on a visit to this cathedral.



### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ Porto is known as ‘**cidade Invicta**’ (the undefeated city) for its tenacious opposition to Napoleon's troops.

We will also stop at the **São Bento Train Station**, by architect Marques da Silva. The station's entrance hall is a highlight, with its walls decorated with delicate blue-painted tiles depicting the evolution of transport and scenes from Portuguese history and life. There are an estimated 20,000 tiles.



The tour will take us along the **Aliados Avenue** and stroll through the **Liberdade square**. From there we will head to the **Clérigos Tower**, which is located in the upper part of the old town of Porto and can therefore be seen from many points or viewpoints in the city.



Porto offers a wide range of cultural activities, including **Serralves Foundation**, whose mission is to stimulate the interest and knowledge of audiences of different origins and ages in contemporary art, architecture, landscape and critical issues for society and its future, in an integrated manner. It is based on an exceptional heritage complex, in which the Contemporary Art Museum, the House and the Park are the highlights.



Porto and Gaia are the cities that probably gave Portugal its name. Formerly known as *Cale* or *Calem*, it was a small primitive settlement of unknown origin, which was located at the mouth of the Douro - it is not known exactly whether it was in the city of Porto or Gaia. Later, the Romans added a port, 'Portus Cale', the origin of the place name Portugal.

We stop precisely at this "port", in the **Ribeira square**, where you can see the beautiful **Luis I Bridge**, over the Douro River, which you can cross up or down towards Vila Nova de Gaia.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The citizens of Porto or portuenses are known as **tripeiros**.

## ▶▶ VILA NOVA DE GAIA

*This is where we make our next stop, in Vila Nova de Gaia.*

As we look at the panoramic view of the city, there are several features that catch our eye. One of them is the wine cellars of **Vinho do Porto** or **Vinho Fino**, as it is particularly known.

There are various wine experiences to be had in the old town, such as wine tastings or exhibitions, where the cellars tell charming stories about wine and the people of the Douro and Gaia, about other customs and eras that demonstrate the praiseworthy harmony that exists between the tradition of the product and new technologies and, moreover, invite you to embark on an engaging journey through time and the magic of wine.

The **World of Wine**, a centre that holds various experiences in the “Quarteirão do Vinho”, 7 museums, 12 restaurants, bars and cafés, a “wine school” and a space for events, is also located in the old town.



If we look again at the old town we can see a monument that towers above the rest. The **Monastery of Serra do Pilar** was built around 1537 and declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. It is considered one of the most remarkable buildings of European Mannerist architecture due to its exceptional architectural value and the uniqueness of its church and cloister, both of which are circular in layout. It is also one of the main highlights of Vila Nova de Gaia since, due to its location, it offers a breathtaking view over the Douro riverbed and the towns on both banks of the river, a landscape whose beauty has been praised by Portuguese and foreigners from all over the world.



**Vila Nova de Gaia's religious buildings** lead to a route that includes the Monastery of Serra do Pilar, the Church of Santa Marinha, the Convent of Corpus Christi, the Chapels of Bom Jesus and Senhor da Pedra, and the Monasteries of Grijó and Pedroso.



A tour of the city requires a visit to the **House Museum António Teixeira Lopes**, an illustrious Portuguese sculptor.

This architectural site reveals the life and work of two sculptors from Vila Nova de Gaia, Teixeira Lopes and Diogo de Macedo, whose works marked the aesthetic transition from the 19th to the 20th century. Many works by other national and foreign artists are also exhibited in this space.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In Vila Nova de Gaia, in the village of Avintes, you can find the **Pedra da Audiência** (audience stone), a unique monument of civil architecture made up of a table and three granite benches whose purpose was to administer justice.

A **cable car ride** is another point of interest in Vila Nova de Gaia. Along the way you can admire the course of the Douro towards the sea and the orange roofs of the wine cellars. In the past, the wine was transported in **Rabelos**, typical boats on the Douro river, with a flat bottom, lashed hull and square sail, which transported the barrels of **Vinho de Porto** and other products such as cork, oil and fruit from the Douro region to Vila Nova de Gaia.

However, in the 1980s, due to the development of tourism, the Rabelo began to play another role, becoming a boat for sightseeing tours and an icon of the Douro River and the Porto Wine Cellars.



Along the river bank, in the **old town area of Gaia**, you can go for a walk to look at the view over the city of Porto and over the Luís I bridge or alternatively go shopping at the market or in the traditional shops on the street. Besides that, the city offers numerous outdoor activities such as surfing, sailing and golf. In this city you can also go to the beach, the most famous of which is the **Senhor da Pedra beach** or **Miramar beach**. There you can visit the hexagonal **Chapel of Senhor da Pedra**, built on rocks.



Gaia is also distinguished for having the largest Zoo in the Northern Portugal, the **Santo Inácio Zoo**, where more than 1200 animals of 300 different species can be seen, among them: penguins, panthers, zebras, hippopotamuses, cobras, tarantulas, monkeys, and many more. Moreover, all of them live in a space that respects their conditions of origin, in environments that favour their development in a calm and healthy way. Species protection and conservation is one of the zoo's main priorities.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In the area of the old town of Gaia you can take a picture with the famous "Half Rabbit", by the well-known artist **Bordalo II**. A colourful rabbit that became very famous on Instagram. It is a work of art made with materials and waste of various ornaments and colours, which the artist searched for in the city's rubbish.

## ▶▶ SANTA MARIA DA FEIRA

*As we continue to discover the charm of this part of Portugal, we will move southwards to reach the municipality of **Santa Maria da Feira**.*

Strolling through its streets will be a pleasure, because it is worth looking up to enjoy the urban art that colours its walls and façades. In fact, you can follow an **urban art route** that allows you to find out about the main works of art. Classified according to their theme, there are various routes in the town: urban, landscape, etc. But if you're looking for something more relaxing, the thermal baths are the place for you.



The **Termas de São Jorge** are surrounded by beautiful gardens. Visitors will discover a historical and a modern building, and sulphurous waters that are recommended to treat respiratory, skin, rheumatic and musculoskeletal ailments. The mineral waters spring from a single source, at a depth of 90 metres, and have an ambient temperature of 23 degrees.



The most significant building in the municipality is the **Santa Maria da Feira Castle**, which has been declared a National Monument and has undergone numerous transformations throughout its history. It is considered one of the most complete examples of Portuguese architecture, as it represents a wide range of defensive elements used at the time. Its trajectory is remarkable, as it was used for various purposes, from the Roman occupation of the settlement to the homes of the royal and noble families of the area. It was also used as a military headquarters and fort during the Reconquista period, and was the great political centre that led to Portugal's independence.



A visit also includes a tour of the **Quinta do Castelo**, a natural space with more than 300 years of history, located on the slopes of the castle. It has centenary trees, an artificial lake, crossed by a bridge and an artificial grotto.

**DID YOU KNOW...**

- ▶ “Saint Sebastian, protect us from war, famine and plague”. This is the plea that is made every 20th January to the martyr saint in the region of Santa Maria da Feira, during the **Festa das Fogaceiras**. It has its origins in 1505, when the plague epidemic ravaged the region. The citizens went out in procession to ask Saint Sebastian to free them from the plague, promising to hold a procession in his honour every year where a sweet bread, the fogaça, would be offered to him.

Full of history, the museum spaces of Santa Maria da Feira invite you to experience it. The **Terras de Santa Maria Paper Museum**, the Convent of Lóios Museum and the **Santa Maria de Lamas Museum**, popularly known as the ‘Museu da Cortiça’ (Cork Museum), have beautiful gardens with statues and sculptures. It was founded in 1950 and renovated in 2005. It has rooms dedicated to sacred art, industrial cork, furniture, statues, ethnography, natural sciences, ceramics and interesting objects.

**DID YOU KNOW...**

- ▶ Santa Maria da Feira is home to the **Europarque**, a space of more than 500,000m<sup>2</sup> designed to host various multidisciplinary events.

Finally, a real living museum, the **Lourosa Zoo - Ornithological Park** takes you on a spectacular journey through the wild world of birds. It is the only park dedicated exclusively to birds in Portugal.

**DID YOU KNOW...**

- ▶ The artist Vhils, presented the cork sculpture ‘Diorama Cork Factory’ at the 2013 Imaginarius Festival, exhibited next to the Santa Maria da Feira town hall. The work represents the link to the municipality, which is home to the world’s largest cork processing centre. It is a tribute to the cork industry and depicts a worker.

## ▶▶ GONDOMAR

*Let's get back on the road to continue our route towards the northeast of Porto, where we will reach **Gondomar**.*

Its **Igreja Matriz** (main church) was inaugurated at the beginning of the 17th century, and has a granite and whitewashed façade. Although if we're talking about religious heritage, there is a large number of churches and chapels scattered throughout the territory, demonstrating great popular devotion. A visit to the main **churches of Rio Tinto**, 18th century, **S. Cosme**, 17th century and **São João da Foz do Sousa** for their majestic altars in gilded wood is a must.



Gondomar was a very important town in the 20th century, as it was a crucial industrial centre for Portugal. Today you can visit the **Mining Museum in São Pedro da Cova**. It exhibits mine carriages, a reconstructed mine tunnel and all the paraphernalia such as lamps, helmets and tools.

The town also has a **multi-purpose pavilion**, designed by architect Álvaro Siza Vieira, which occupies a five-hectare site. Are practiced futsal, volleyball, gymnastics and basketball here, and are realized concerts and exhibitions as well.

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## DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In 1847, Gondomar was the site of the signing of the **Gramido Convention**, a document that put an end to the wars between liberals and absolutists and to the popular uprisings known as the "Patuleia". It took place in the **Casa Branca de Gramido** (Gramido White House), nowadays classified as an Asset of Public Interest.

But Gondomar also has a wide range of outdoor activities, with river beaches where all kinds of nautical activities can be enjoyed, as well as numerous green spaces that offer a variety of hiking routes to explore. As far as beaches are concerned, the river beaches of **Lomba**, **Melres** and **Zebreiros** are particularly worth mentioning.



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## DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ **Lomba** is a neighbourhood in Gondomar that has a beautiful river beach. To get there from Gondomar, the only option is by boat, as it is located on the other side of the river. Otherwise, you have to leave the municipality for a few kilometres before returning to it.

Gondomar is recognised as the ‘**Capital of Goldsmithing**’, the origin of the art of Portuguese goldsmithing known as filigree. **Filigree** holds a prominent place among the creations of the local goldsmiths. It is handmade and is conceived in small-scale, family-run workshops, using techniques handed down from generation to generation. It is possible to follow the **Filigree Route** to learn about the entire production process, as this will undoubtedly be the best souvenir you can buy during your visit.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Gondomar is a town closely linked to the famous Spanish series “**Money Heist**”. Úrsula Corberó, who plays the character Tokyo, received a filigree heart made in Gondomar as a souvenir of the recordings made in Portugal for the series. In addition, the Spanish Cecilia Krull, who gives voice to the series’ theme song, was named Ambassador of Filigree of the municipality of Gondomar.

When it comes to routes, the **Midões - Moinhos de Jancido** route is the highlight of the wide range on offer. It runs along the old tracks, which used to carry the wagons that transported coal from the Midões mine to the river Sousa, where it was loaded onto boats and then, followed a river route to Porto.

There are almost five and a half kilometres to breathe life and fresh air, as you will be able to see: various fields, mountain ranges, rivers and mills, including a round one located next to a waterfall. The diversity of wildlife and vegetation adds to the beauty of the scenery.



### ▶▶ VALONGO

*We continue our route towards **Valongo**.*

A municipality full of churches, where we can visit the main ones in **Alfena, Campo, Ermesinde, Sobrado and Valongo**.

There is also a religious route available for the visitor to see them all and the **Via do Peregrino**, which leads pilgrims safely to the **Sanctuary of Santa Rita**, in Ermesinde, one of the most visited places of pilgrimage in the Northern Portugal.

Valongo is known for the centuries-old tradition of the **Biscoito and Regueifa** (Biscuit and Sweet Bread) and for its “Black Gold”, Slate. Valongo also presents routes on these themes, such as the “**Do Grão ao Pão**” (From Grain to Bread), which starts at the Biscoito and Regueifa workshop in Valongo and crosses the historical axis of the city, and the “**Slate Route**”, which passes by the Slate Museum, by slate mining companies that are still operating, among other points of interest. We must not forget the Traditional Portuguese Toys, with roots in the Ermesinde and Alfena parishes.



Recognised in the academic world as one of the richest territories of Portugal in terms of geological heritage and geodiversity, Valongo also features two **Geological Routes**: “Trilho Rasgando a Cidade” and “Trilho da Aldeia”.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ In Valongo there used to be slate mines, and although they are no longer in operation, the industry has left a small legacy in the village. The **Slate Museum** has three slate houses, built using traditional techniques.

Every year, coinciding with the day of Saint John, in the village of Sobrado, a traditional and unique celebration is held. The **Bugiadas and Mouriscadas** are based on a legend that refers to the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. During the festival, the disputes between Mourisqueiros (Moors) and Bugios (Christians).



Hundreds of figurants dress up for the occasion and the recreations are completed with dances and rituals. The festival is in the process of being included in the **Inventário Nacional do Património Cultural Imaterial** (National Inventory of Intangible Heritage), as it is an event of great dimension and cultural importance for the community and for Portugal. Although the performances take place on 24 June, on the nights before, there are many leisure activities, always with firework shows.

Also in Valongo, the Santa Justa mountain range stands out, which is part of the **Serras do Porto Park**, made up of areas in the municipalities of Gondomar, Valongo and Paredes. It is one of the main lungs of the Metropolitan Area of Porto.

The Santa Justa, in Valongo, deserves special mention because it brings together **adventure sports** enthusiasts, such as mountain biking, trail, running, caving, orienteering and paragliding.

In this mountain range, nature lovers can also enjoy the swings and seats distributed along the “**Circuito de Contemplação**”; a climb to the “**Escadaria de Cuca Macuca**”; a walk along the “**Corredor Ecológico**”; a trip back in time in the “**Aldeia de Couce**”, classified as “**Aldeia de Portugal**” (Village of Portugal); among other delights that the beauty of the landscape has to offer.



## ▶▶ AMARANTE

*Our tour ends in **Amarante**, which stretches along the banks of the River Tâmega.*

The town is a beautiful place with balconied houses, winding roads, and the surrounding vineyards that form an incredible landscape. Its historic centre is charming and offers an interesting atmosphere behind every building. It is an ideal location to get to know Portugal's historical value.

In the 13th century, St. Gonçalo, a Benedictine monk with a reputation as a saint who settled here after a pilgrimage through Italy and Jerusalem, was named its patron saint. He is credited with the construction of a sturdy bridge over the Tâmega River on the same site as the present bridge.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Amarante is the hometown of **São Gonçalo**, the Saint Valentine of Portugal, which is why so many single people visit the destination in search of true love.

Moreover, if there is one monument that defines and identifies the city of Amarante, it is the **Ponte (Bridge) de São Gonçalo**. Standing over the **River Tâmega**, it is listed as a National Monument, although its name derives from the construction or reconstruction carried out by the Blessed Gonçalo de Amarante in the mid-13th century, there are indications that its history dates back to the Stone Age.



Next to it, we will discover the **Church and Convent of São Gonçalo**. The imposing church stands on the site of the chapel where St. Gonçalo is believed to be buried. Both the church and the monastery were completed during the year 1620.

The convent space is spread over three cloisters that can also be visited, and inside you will find an impressive gilded baroque altar, and an organ supported by fish-tailed giants. This monumental piece of architecture is notable for its photogenic, stepped Italian Renaissance side portico. Outside, there is a large public square.



As for green spaces, we can visit the **Forest Park** in Amarante. It is in the heart of the city, surrounded by the river Tâmega, and is very popular, especially in summer, for recreation, hiking and sports. You can go cycling around the city, kayaking or rafting on the river Tâmega or discover other routes around the city.

However, if we are talking about summer, the **Amarante Aquatic Park** is one of the first options. There are many activities on offer in the town, which also has a golf course with an 18-hole course, designed by the Portuguese architect Jorge Santana da Silva.

Moving on to the green spaces, we recommend taking the opportunity to walk to the **Marão mountain range** to admire its impressive scenery. Or take the *Linha do Tâmega* trail, a hiking and cycling track to discover the rich natural heritage of Amarante on foot or by bike through a simple and nice route.



We can also visit the **Alvão Natural Park**. Or the village of Travanca da Serra, reached by the road leading to Peso da Régua, is an extremely picturesque place offering a magnificent panoramic view of the whole region. On good days, you can see the mountains of Marão, Gerês and Cabreira. Nearby, in Baião, we will be able to discover the well-preserved dolmen of Chão de Parada.

## WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



A visit to **Póvoa de Varzim** should include time to taste its typical dishes, such as the **Pescada (hake) à Poveira**, although any **fish** option will do, as this is a town that has top-quality produce. And of course, the local dessert, **rabanadas poveiras**, made with a type of a small wheat bun, and which, once fried, are coated in cinnamon and sugar.



Póvoa de Varzim's municipal market is a traditional market. At one end, the  **freshest fish** arriving from the port of Póvoa almost every day, at the other, the colourful **fruit and vegetable** stalls.

Handicrafts are also one of the signs of identity of Póvoa de Varzim, which has institutional support and is promoted significantly. The '**camisola poveira**' (jumper), an element that forms part of the pilgrimage costume of the poveiro fisherman, as well as the **Tapetes de Beiriz** (carpet), are a great souvenir to take with you during your visit.

**Matosinhos** is famous for its seafood cuisine. Many people come to Matosinhos on a regular basis to taste its dishes, where **fish and seafood**, in all their varieties, are key, in restaurants and seafood restaurants in the vicinity of the fishing port and the fish market... You must try them all.

In **Maia** we can taste its typical '**Bacalhau à Lidador**' (codfish), its characteristic '**Bola de Cebola**' (onion pie) and as in Portugal you can never miss a sweet, for dessert Maia offers us its spectacular '**Toucinho do Céu Maiato**'.



And while we're in **Porto**, of course, we'll have a '**francesinha**'. It is one of the most famous dishes in Portuguese cuisine, and consists of a very tasty sandwich composed mainly of a beefsteak and a range of charcuterie such as ham and a variety of traditional portuguese sausages. All covered with cheese and a sauce made with beer and tomato. The most daring also add an egg. Its inventor was the chef Daniel David Silva, who returned to Portugal from his time in France in the 1960s, hence its name. **Tripas à moda do Porto** (tripe Porto style) is another typical dish.



Also in Porto you can visit the famous **Mercado do Bolhão**. The market is housed in a beautiful two-storey building, with large interior courtyards where stalls sell fish, fruit, sausages, flowers, etc. It is located in the heart of Porto and visiting it is a whole experience, especially after the requalification works that ended in 2022.

Eating in **Vila Nova de Gaia** is a fantastic opportunity to taste the **broa de Avintes** (cornbread), **sável no espeto** (shad), a **fish caldeirada**, **grilled sardines**, **roasted baby goat**, and **Gaia-style feijoada**.



The *Encruzilhada de Sabores* brand name illustrates and sums up the **Santa Maria da Feira** municipality's global strategy of preserving, enhancing and promoting the gastronomic heritage of the territory, which is based on the wealth and diversity of the endogenous products that the municipality intends to promote and reinvent, through the art and creativity of chefs and the community. There is no shortage of **cheese** and **caladinhos**, but the **Fogaça da Feira** is undoubtedly its flagship cuisine. And for a drink, the **Chamoá**.



Inspired by the filigree and the municipality itself, in **Gondomar** you can taste the sweets 'coração de Gondomar' and 'Mimo D'Ouro'. The town also has outstanding culinary festivals such as the **shad** and the **lamprey**.



**Valongo** owes its identity to its gastronomy; the bakery industry, ancestral and deeply rooted in the territory. Here we will delight ourselves with its delicious **biscoitos** (biscuit), a tradition that goes back centuries. For after-dinner snacks, the **pudding de pão** (bread pudding), **sopas secas** (dry soups) and the **doces brancos de Sobrado** (Sobrado white sweets) should be highlighted. We cannot leave the municipality without doing some shopping, as Valongo stands out for its range of **blackboard and toys**.

We will close the route with a toast, as **Amarante** is one of the sub-regions of the **Vinho Verde Controlled Designation of Origin**, so don't forget to buy a few bottles. And to satisfy the hunger, the most common dishes are hearty, such as **goat**, **veal**, **feijoadas**, **tripe** and **Portuguese stew**, as well as **cod** and **trout** from the Tâmega River.



In winter, **green broth** or **rice with chicken** are among the most popular options. And of course, the sweets, which here are based on egg yolk, almonds and honey.

The **foguetes**, elongated sweets with almonds, the **lérias** and the **brisas do Tâmega** or **papos de anjo**, covered with sugar glaze, and sweet yolk inside. And yes, the **São Gonçalos**, its popular phallic sweets, which according to the people it helps to find a partner.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### JANUARY

- ▶ Every 20 January, **Santa Maria da Feira** celebrates its **Festa das Fogaceiras**.

### FEBRUARY / MARCH / APRIL

- ▶ On 3 February, in **Gondomar**, the festival in honour of **São Brás** is held.
- ▶ On the fourth Sunday of Lent, in **Valongo**, the traditional and impressive **Solemnities of the Santos Passos da Paixão de Cristo** take place.

### MAY / JUNE

- ▶ In the month of May, for three days, **Santa Maria da Feira** celebrates the **Imaginarius**, a street theatre festival that has established itself as one of the main artistic events in Portugal.

- ▶ Between the end of May and mid-June, the **Festivities and Pilgrimage of Senhor de Matosinhos** are held. The highlight of the festivities are the traditional fireworks, the traditional crockery fair, but the event lasts for three weeks and merges with the **City Festivities**. During the festivities the Solemn Eucharist of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos takes place.

- ▶ On the first Saturday of June, the feast in honour of **São Gonçalo** is celebrated in **Amarante**, where single people go to look for a partner.

- ▶ Every June, **Vila Nova de Gaia** celebrates a pilgrimage in honour of **Senhor da Pedra** on the beach of the same name.

- ▶ The night of 23 June marks the beginning of **Porto's** biggest celebration, the feast of **São João**.

- ▶ On the 24th of June, in honour of São João, **Valongo** celebrates its **Bugiada and Mouriscada** festivities.

- ▶ 29th June, Festa de **São Pedro** in **Póvoa de Varzim**. On the eve, sardines are grilled in the street and each neighbourhood prepares its own show of traditional dances.

- ▶ **São Pedro** is also celebrated in **Vila Nova de Gaia**, in Afurada. A week-long festival in honour of the patron saint.

### JULY

- ▶ At the beginning of July, the **Feira de Artesanato Nacional** (National Crafts Fair) in **Maia**. It lasts ten days and brings together more than 200 artisans from all over the country. A wide range of music complements it.

- ▶ In mid-July, **Vila Nova de Gaia** hosts the **MEO Marés Vivas**, the largest music festival in the northern Portugal.

### AUGUST

- ▶ During the first week of August, **Santa Maria da Feira** celebrates the **Viajem Medieval**. The biggest medieval event in Europe, a real return to the past with numerous activities. It is also a culinary festival.

### SEPTEMBER

- ▶ At the end of summer, **Vila Nova de Gaia** celebrates its **Festa da Broa de Avintes**, a major culinary event in the area.
- ▶ In the second week of September - **Hospitalários no Caminho de Santiago**, the Medieval Fair and the **recreation of the royal wedding** between King Fernando and Leonor Teles in the surroundings of the Monastery of Leça do Balio, **Matosinhos**.

### OCTOBER

- ▶ At the beginning of October, **Gondomar** hosts the **Nossa Senhora do Rosário Pilgrimage**, also known as "Festa das Nozes" (Nut Fest).

### DECEMBER

- ▶ During Christmas, **Santa Maria da Feira** features **Perlim**, a theme park full of attractions and ideal to go with the family.

07

*Socalco*  
**Route**



# 07

## *Socalco* **Route**

We continue the experience by moving to the northeast Portugal.

The **Socalco Route**: Socalco refers to human intervention in shaping the steep landscapes to grow vines, almond and olive trees that are so characteristic of these areas and that define their attractive scenery. Let's get to it!

**ALTO DOURO  
TRÁS-OS-MONTES**



**PESO DA RÉGUA  
VILA REAL  
MIRANDELA  
MACEDO DE CAVALEIROS  
BRAGANÇA**

# Socalco Route

We have a 170-kilometre route ahead of us with five stops, starting in the town of Peso da Régua.



# 07



## ▶▶ PESO DA RÉGUA

*The railway station, which opened in 1879, is well worth a visit, and from there you can take a trip back in time.*

The **Comboio Histórico do Douro** (Douro Historic Train) is a delightful three-hour journey on a steam locomotive train dating back to 1925. The journey is rounded off by a group of regional singers, as well as the opportunity to eat typical sweets, which is pure pleasure at its best when you can enjoy the spectacular scenery. Once you've fallen in love with the place, you'll need to continue touring it, which is why you can also take a cruise along the Douro River.

Alternatively, you can admire it all from its different viewpoints, where you will certainly be amazed by the landscape in front of you. We suggest you to visit the viewpoints of São Leonardo de Galafura, at 640 metres above sea level and São Domingos with 758 metres.

The **Caminho Interior** (Interior Way) to Santiago de Compostela also attracts many pilgrims to Peso da Régua, but it is not the only one, the **Caminho de Torres** (Torres Way) also passes through here. Be careful when looking at the signs, the good thing about getting lost and having to go back to Peso da Régua is to return to the town, because it has a lot to discover.

For example, the **Alto da Fonte do Milho Archaeological Station**, listed as a National Monument, is located on a spur overlooking the Douro river valley. Traces of occupation date back to the period between the 1st century AD and the 4th / 5th centuries AD. It has a defensive system made up of two rows of slate walls, with the access located to the SW, a characteristic which, as a whole, has given it the general name of *castellum* or fortified village.



The **Caldas do Moledo** thermal complex is also a good option for relaxing during your trip. A site steeped in history, and with a strong connection to the development of the town of Régua. After being closed for years, they will soon be refurbished.

And we cannot leave Peso da Régua without visiting, of course, the **Douro Museum**. The museum is home to the memory, culture and identity of the **Região Vinhateira do Alto Douro** (Alto Douro Wine Region), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was built following the refurbishment of the **Casa da Companhia Velha**, an iconic building.



It has an exhibition area, the nerve centre of the building itself, a restaurant, the Library Archive, the Reading Room and the Wine Bar overlooking the Douro River. A few metres away you can also visit the 'Memória da Terra do Vinho' (Wine Land Memory), the permanent exhibition displayed in the former Warehouse 43. It showcases vine and wine culture, an essential element of the Region's identity, and the main areas that define it: **wine-making activities**, landscape construction, excellent wine production, relief, fauna and flora, typical boats (rabelos), age-old estates, historical heritage, the tradition of the grape harvest, tools, and images of the major brands of **Vinho do Porto**.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In 1998, Peso da Régua was recognised as **International City of Vine and Wine**.



## ▶▶ VILA REAL

*The next destination is the Estrada Nacional 2, the national road, which crosses the country from one end to the other, running through exceptional scenery and taking us to the wonderful **Vila Real**.*

This region has been inhabited since Palaeolithic times, although it was founded in 1289 by King Dinis. The Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão, who discovered the mouth of the Zaire River in the 15th century, was born here.

Vila Real is a city with several religious examples that you should visit, such as the **Church of S. Dinis** from the end of the 13th century, the **Church of S. Domingos or Sé de Vila Real**, built in 1424, the **Chapel of Misericórdia** (16th century), the 16th century **Church of S. Pedro**, which underwent major works in the 18th century, becoming one of the best examples of Baroque religious architecture in the city, the **Nova Chapel or Church of S. Paulo**, from the 17th century, attributed to the architect Nicolau Nasoni, and the **Church of Sr. do Calvário** (17th century).



To learn more about the town, you can visit the **Museum of Archaeology and Numismatics**, which is housed in an 18th century building, and the **Vila Velha Museum**.

Outside the city, you can find the **Torre de Quintela** in Vila Marim, a civil and military tower built in the 13th/14th centuries and which belonged to the Order of the Hospitallers until the 19th century. This tower was one of the settings for Camilo Castelo Branco's romance entitled "O Anátema".



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In Vila Real, the Portuguese writer, translator, novelist, chronicler, critic, playwright, historian and poet of romanticism, **Camilo Castelo Branco**, has a square in his memory. He is one of the most influential authors of Portuguese literature of all time, as well as one of the most widely read. He lived in Vila Real, where he is said to have abducted a young orphan with whom he had a daughter, and later abandoned her.



Speaking of romance, we will stop at one of the most visited places in Vila Real, the **Palace or Casa de Mateus**, a beautiful baroque palace ordered to be built in the 18th century by the third Majorat of Mateus.

A magical place that has seen much of Portugal's history pass within its walls and has been a reference point for art, music and culture for more than 500 years. It also has guided tours where you can visit the inside of the church and its gardens.



The **Sanctuary of Panóias**, also known as Fragas de Panóias, is a Gallaic-Roman sanctuary dating from the late 2nd or early 3rd century. It contains inscriptions in Latin, and one in Greek, which explain the procedures for performing the rituals of the time in detail, as well as who carried them out. Many international scholars have come here to observe them.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ It is well worth walking around the gate of the Vila Real cemetery. If you do so from the right, you will enjoy the magnificent views over the Corgo and Cabril gorges from the Trás-do-Cemitério viewpoint.

Vila Real offers exceptional green spaces, such as the **Corgo Park**, which is situated on the banks of the Corgo river. It covers an area of about 33 hectares and is connected to the Forest Park, which dates back to the 1960s and covers about 38,000 square metres, and is a real lung of the city, incorporating several facilities: sports blocks, pedestrian itineraries, picnic areas, children's playgrounds, municipal swimming pools, etc. A space that the inhabitants of Vila Real enjoy every day, as well as the Ecopista do Corgo, a route along the River Corgo, which can be travelled on foot, by bicycle or on horseback and which starts in the city centre and ends in the town of Vila Pouca de Aguiar.



There is also the possibility of visiting the **Alvão Natural Park** which lies in the Alvão and Marão mountain ranges, and includes part of the municipalities of Vila Real and Mondim de Basto. It covers an area of 7,220 hectares and its most interesting features are the houses with thatched roofs, the Alvão reservoir area, the granite landscape of Arnal, the panoramic view from the road between Agarez and Arnal and the Galegos da Serra waterfall mill.

Nearby, in the municipality of Mondim de Basto, there is a **waterfall**, one of the largest in Europe, known as the **Figsas do Ermelo**, where the river Olo falls through it from a height of approximately 250 metres. It is an impressive sight, and one of the most remarkable landscapes in the whole region. The waterfalls, in fact, are the symbol of the park.



There are also **several routes** along which you can discover the exciting flora and fauna of the area ideal for cycling. In addition, rafting is also available as a tourist attraction. The tour is completed by visiting the villages of Lamas de Olo, Anta and Ermelo, located in Lamego and Mondim municipalities, where daily life seems to take place in bygone times. There you can also visit the Ecomuseological Centre of Arnal, in the municipality of Mesão Frio, which recreates the feel of a traditional Alvão village.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ The Vila Real International Circuit is a 4600-metre urban circuit that hosts various motor racing competitions.

## ▶▶ MIRANDELA

*Our next stop will be the town of **Mirandela**, maybe its water jet projected towards the sky from the river Tua, which looks splendid, will catch your eye.*

But if we start talking about the Tua, it will be good to make the first visit to the **Vale do Tua Regional Natural Park** that covers an area of 25,000 hectares, and Mirandela is where it has its headquarters. The canyons provide the most unforgettable views, as the river has cut through the quartzite rock, forming high stony walls.



This place is known as the 'destination of love', because, it is said, love is the great identifying feature of this territory and, essentially, of those who inhabit it. It is the love of the land, of its origins, of history and tradition, of its natural and architectural heritage, of local products, a feeling that manifests itself in every interaction with this park, a contagious feeling that is quickly transmitted to visitors.

In addition to nature tourism, the area provides visitors with experience tourism. The idea is to make visitors enjoy the park as a whole, which is also possible thanks to the numerous routes that are planned to take them through the park and allow them to admire the beauty of the landscape and the wealth of flora and fauna at close quarters.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ From the Mirandela aerodrome, you can take introductory flights and take scenic flights over the Tua Valley.

Mirandela also has **four pedestrian itineraries** to enjoy the municipality. They are suitable for everyone, with different levels of difficulty. Trilho Entre Rios, at 7.3km, is the shortest. The longest is the Trilho do Tua, which is more than 13km long. From the centre of Mirandela you can also start the route along a cycle path, so there is something for everyone.



If you're more into water sports, you can go kayaking, paddle surfing, canoeing or even pedal boating.

### DID YOU KNOW...



- ▶ An artificial dam makes it possible for the river Tua, in Mirandela, to enjoy the most important canoeing events in Portugal.

Mirandela also has six river beaches nearby for swimming or just relaxing in the shade. One of the closest is the **Praia Fluvial do Parque Dr. José Gama** on the right bank of the Tua. **Praia Fluvial da Maravilha** is the most natural setting, close to where the rivers Tuela and Raçaçal merge with the Tua.

But we will not leave Mirandela behind without exploring its urban layout. You will be surprised by the little details and the sculptures of the city. It extends along both banks of the river, so you can also stroll along the riverbank and stop at a café or terrace.



As for its historic centre, most of this neighbourhood was once within the walls of Mirandela Castle, which was built by King Dinis at the end of the 13th century. Once the border was consolidated and peacetime with Spain was extended, rearguard fortifications of medieval origin such as Mirandela lost their strategic importance and purpose during the Modern Age, which contributed to their degradation and the re-use of stone in the construction of new houses in the 19th century.

There is also an elegant mansion in the old town, the **Casa de Santiago da Praça**, which dates back to the 17th century and bears the local Pinto Cardoso family's coat of arms on its pediment.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ Mirandela has the largest concentration of **petroglyphs** in the Santa Comba mountain range.

You can also visit the **Paço dos Távoras**, an 18th century palace with three sections, a central three-storey building and two-storey side buildings. The design of the main *façade* is totally innovative, although it was inspired by some of the projects of the famous Italian architect and theorist Sebastiano Serlio.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In Mirandela you can visit the **Museu da Oliveira e do Azeite** (Olive Tree and Olive Oil Museum), located in an old industrial mill. There you will discover the origins and biological aspects of the olive tree, as well as everything about the production of olive oil and its possible uses.

## ▶▶ MACEDO DE CAVALEIROS

*Our route will now take us to **Macedo de Cavaleiros**, a really special place that will surprise you not only for its spectacular landscapes and their conservation, but also because of what it does to favour the coexistence of its residents and its visitors' time here.*

It is worth visiting the **Main Church of São Pedro**, exploring the sculptures, relaxing in the gardens of the Town Hall, and of course, taking a photo in front of the luminous sign of Macedo de Cavaleiros.

It is mandatory a visit to one of its most outstanding natural spaces, the **Geopark Terras de Cavaleiros**. It covers a well-defined geographical area, as it coincides with the administrative limits of the municipality and it covers an area of approximately 70,000 hectares.

It has a particularly remarkable geological heritage, as more than 500 million years of Earth's history can be traced through it. This attracts geologists from all over the world to the area. Although geotourism is the main attraction of the area, its natural heritage is dazzling.



This UNESCO World Geopark offers different landscapes, preserved by the importance of its **biodiversity**. Mediterranean and Atlantic flora of great botanical value live side by side here; oak and chestnut trees in the marshy areas, olive trees, vines, cork oaks, various species of orchids, medicinal and aromatic plants, and even macrofungi, among others, make up this unique natural heritage.

As for the wildlife, there are **rare and protected species** such as the wolf and the wild cat, and other more common species such as the genet and the squirrel. As far as aquatic animals are concerned, the recovery possibilities for white-clawed crayfish in this area are exceptional. The Geopark also features an outstanding ornithological heritage, with rarities such as the red kite and the golden eagle. It is also inhabited by titmice, spotted woodpeckers and agile nuthatches, among others.

The pedestrian routes are one of the best ways to observe and enjoy the landscape of the Geopark. There are up to **24 signposted walking trails** over almost 180 kilometres of terrain. There are excellent conditions for bird watching, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking and catamaran trips.

In Macedo de Cavaleiros there are many other natural areas of interest, and a visit to the **Protected Landscape of Albufeira do Azibo** is also a must. It is a Protected Landscape integrated in the Natura 2000 Network, covering a total area of 3,281.7 hectares.

It is one of the most visited places in Trás-os-Montes, where you can relax by a huge **lake**. It stands out for having a water park that is ideal for activities such as rowing, wind-surfing, canoeing and sailing. In addition, this Protected Landscape has two river beaches with Blue Flag status: **Ribeira beach**, which is one of the 7 Wonders of Portugal and one of the most prestigious river beaches in Europe, and **Fraga da Pegada beach**.



Macedo de Cavaleiros also has a **Museum of Sacred Art**, where various religious artefacts are exhibited. The museum is located next to the tourist office and the Geopark visitor reception, all housed in the Casa Falcão, an old 18th century house in the centre of the town.



It is also worth visiting the **Municipal Archaeological Museum 'Coronel Albino Pereira Lopo'**, located in an old school, which brings together materials and information about the history of the area. The **Salselas Rural Museum**, located very close to Albufeira do Azibo, is also worth a visit for lovers of traditional culture.

The **Entrudo Chocalheiro de Podence**, in Macedo de Cavaleiros, is listed as Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. During Carnival, the 'diabolical' figures of the **Caretos**, young people with colourful tasselled costumes, pointed-nosed masks made of tin cans or leather and rattles around their waists, roam the streets of Podence, making noise and disturbing the peace and quiet of the village. They were originally associated with the figure of the "devil on the loose" and represented the excesses, euphoria and merriment that are permitted at this time of year.



## ▶▶ BRAGANÇA

*Our route continues by road and will come to an end by exploring **Bragança's** extensive options, with something for everyone's taste.*

In Bragança, the paths to the future are based on traditions of millenary origin, preserving a unique heritage in a compact and easy to walk through historic centre.

The citadel, with its ancient history, surrounds all the houses around one of the **best preserved castles in the country**, the Menagem Tower, the Princesa Tower, the **Domus Municipalis**, or Pelourinho (stone pillory) and the ramparts in their unmistakable heart shape. Also inside the citadel are the **Military Museum** and the **Museum of the Mask and Costume**.



There are many **churches and convents** worth visiting, both in the city, with the Church of Santa Maria, the Sé Velha/Igreja da Sé and the Church of S. Vicente, and in the villages, such as the Monastery of Castro de Avelãs and the Basilica of Santo Cristo de Outeiro.

Contemporary architecture coexists with centuries-old traditions in Bragança, with its eclectic cultural scene. Discover the **Abade de Baçal Museum**, the **George Dussaud Photography Centre**, the **Centro de Interpretação da Cultura Sefardita** (Sephardi Culture Interpretation Centre) and the **Centro de Arte Contemporânea Graça Morais** (Contemporary Art Centre), all located on the famous Rua dos Museus.



Few areas are as rich in biodiversity as the **Montesinho Natural Park**, located at the gates of Bragança. It covers an area of about 75,000 hectares and is rich in morphological and geological diversity. This is the only place where you can come across a group of deer by the roadside, spot a roe deer feeding in an oak grove, spot signs of wild boar in a meadow or hear the howl of a wolf on a clear night. In the skies, golden eagles, black storks and red-backed shrikes are joined by 160 bird species, many of them equally rare, making the region a paradise for birdwatchers.

The cultural heritage preserved in the villages of the municipality, where ancestral traditions endure, is equally important.

This is the case in **Montesinho**, a pleasant village of stone houses nestled in a leafy valley, and in **Rio de Onor**, an unusual village, with a strong community spirit, which was elected the 7th Wonder of Portugal, and which is dissected by Spanish border. Rio de Onor sits on one side and Rihonor de Castilla on the other.

There are paths linking villages, nestled in dense forests or following watercourses, which have been travelled for many centuries, such as the **Roman Antonine itinerary** and the Routes to Santiago de Compostela, where one of the sections of the **Via da Prata** (Silver Way) passes, on a route that continues to Ourense.



#### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ In the Trás-os-Montes area, and especially well preserved in Rio de Onor, you will find **cravelhos**. This is a kind of ancient lock, common in the area, used to close shops and yards. It was and is only used in safe and trustworthy places, as it is very easy to open them.



## WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, BUY



The highlight of this route will be the wine. Of course, yes, eating too, but let's start with the wine. At the beginning of the route we will be in **Peso da Régua**, and the city is known for being the wine capital of Portugal, offering several routes to get to know it and enjoy it. The origin of the wine industry dates back to the foundation of the **Real Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro** created by the Marquis of Pombal in 1756. From there, ships loaded with barrels sailed down the Douro River to Vila Nova de Gaia, where wines underwent the final ageing process in their cellars. The arrival of the railway, which helped to distribute the wine, was vitally important for this town. The beauty of its landscapes, with the endless rows of vineyards in the **Douro Valley**, has been classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.



We are in the territory of the **Douro Controlled Designation of Origin**. This extends, following the course of the Douro River, from the Spanish border to practically the metropolitan area of Porto and was the first region in the world to be demarcated in 1756.

Before we get to the food, let's stick to the wines. The **DOC Trás-os-Montes** is located in the extreme northeast Portugal, to the north of the Douro region, to the east of the Vinho Verde region, and extending to the Spanish border. You have to go over the mountains to get there. To be more precise, it is located between the towns of **Bragança, Macedo de Cavaleiros and Miranda**. It is a shale and granite region, with varying altitudes between 350 and 700 metres above sea level. During the visit, it is also worth a tasting in one of the many wineries that offer visitors a complete experience.

When it comes to filling your stomach, the food may come to you in **Peso da Régua**. Yes, women dressed with baskets will come to offer you **rebuçados da Régua**; sweets wrapped in vegetable paper with a bow, which they prepare themselves during the night and then go out to sell the next morning.



In **Vila Real** you can enjoy, above all, its sweets and meats. We will taste dishes made with **cured meat** and outstanding **cold cuts**, and we will try the **feijoada à transmontana** (bean stew), **transmontana stew** and **roast baby goat** with baked rice. If you're more of a fish lover, you'll also be able to try some excellent cod.

The dessert here is also a must: the ‘**cristas de galo**’, a kind of sweet pastry filled with egg yolk that originated in the Convent of Santa Clara, which has now disappeared. In the past they were known as **pasteis de toucinho** or **Pastéis de Vila Real**.



The town is also famous for its handicrafts, so it is worth discovering how **Agarez linen** is used, how tinplate is made, the various techniques used in textiles and, above all, the process of the famous **black clay of Bisalhães**, listed by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage to be safeguarded and protected. This will be your chance to get your hands on one of these authentic pieces!

In **Mirandela** we won't stop only at the wines either, as its **alheira** is considered one of the Seven Gastronomic Wonders of Portugal. This typical sausage, shaped like a horseshoe, is made with bread, garlic, paprika, salt and minced meat. It must be roasted or fried beforehand, although it is sometimes grilled. So if you decide to take it home... remember to cook it.



### DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ The origin of the famous **Mirandela alheira** dates back to the 17th century. It is said that in the communities of the new Christians, they ostensibly ate this dish, implying that they did not follow Jewish kosher law, and that they were integrated Christians, although they prepared it with poultry meat.

Another good thing is that **Mirandela** oil, which has been awarded the “**Azeite de Trás-os-Montes**” designation of origin, is also a very good souvenir, as the quality of production in the region is remarkable.

In **Macedo de Cavaleiros** there are several gastronomic festivals, a sign of the importance of food for its people. Here you can enjoy a rich and varied cuisine; game dishes, fumeiro, turnip greens, baby goat, cod, *casulas secas* com butelo, *arroz doce*, chestnut pudding, *rosquilhas* and honey, so it's going to be difficult to try them all. But we have the solution, you just have to come back.



As a souvenir, you can get one of local artisan José Carvalho's works; miniature reproductions of traditional houses in the municipality, as well as other popular cultural elements of the area.

**Bragança's** cuisine stands out for the quality of its products, with flavours and aromas that seem to exude from the landscapes they come from. Ingredients come from well known origins, often brought directly from the vegetable garden to the kitchen. Thus, you can taste the succulent and delicious **posta de vitela mirandesa** (veal), **Bragança lamb**, **Montesinho baby goat**, **Bísaro pork** and **hunting dishes**, traditionally cooked over an open fire in iron pots.



The local products are also present in the traditional sweets, such as **súplicas**, **económicos**, **chestnut pudding** or the **Pastel Brigantino**, which is made with honey, chestnuts, almonds and olive oil.

## FESTIVALS, EVENTS



### JANUARY

- ▶ On 6 January, in **Mirandela**, the **Festa dos Rapazes** is celebrated in honour of Santo Estevão. It is also known as the Singles' Festival.
- ▶ At the end of January, **Macedo de Cavaleiros** celebrates its **Feira da Caça e Turismo** (Hunt and Tourism Fair).
- ▶ On the last weekend of January, the **Rota Gastronómica do Javali** (wild boar gastronomy route) takes place in **Macedo de Cavaleiros**.

### FEBRUARY / MARCH

- ▶ On February, **Bragança** celebrates its **Festival do Butelo e das Casulas** and the **Carnival of caretos e mascaretos**, which closes with the 'Queima do Diabo'.
- ▶ During Carnival, there is the **Festival Gastronómico do Grelo** (turnip green gastronomy festival) in **Macedo de Cavaleiros**.
- ▶ **Entrudo Chocalheiro de Podence** in **Macedo de Cavaleiros**, one of the most genuine traditional events in the Northern Portugal. The most important moments in the Podence Carnival include the sham weddings on Carnival Sunday, a moment of humour and without the possibility of protest on the part of the chosen ones, and on Carnival Tuesday, with the parade through the village and the ceremony of the Queima do Entrudo, which marks the end of the festival.

### APRIL / MAY

- ▶ Forty days after Easter Sunday, **Peso da Régua** celebrates the feast in honour of **Nossa Senhora da Ascensão**.
- ▶ On the first weekend in May, **Bragança** celebrates the **Cantarinhas and Crafts Fair**.
- ▶ On the last Sunday in May, **Bragança** celebrates **Nossa Senhora da Ribeira** - in **Quintanilha**.

### JUNE

- ▶ From 8 to 13 June, **Vila Real** celebrates the **Santo António festival and fair**.
- ▶ In mid-June, **Vila Real** hosts the **Rock Nordeste festival**.

- ▶ On 24 June, the **São João festival** takes place in the historic centre of **Vila Real**.
- ▶ At the end of June, the **SM'ARTE urban art festival** fills the streets of **Bragança** with colour.
- ▶ On 28 and 29 June, the **São Pedro fair** brings the festivities of the whole month of June to a close in **Vila Real**.
- ▶ In the last week of June, **Macedo de Cavaleiros** also celebrates **São Pedro**.

#### JULY / AUGUST

- ▶ From 25 July to the first Sunday in August, **Mirandela** celebrates the **Town and Nossa Senhora do Amparo Festivities**, which are both religious and traditional in character.
- ▶ At the beginning of August, **Bragança** travels back in time with the **History Festival**.
- ▶ During August, there is the **International Festival of Traditional Music** in **Macedo de Cavaleiros**.
- ▶ In mid-August, **Peso da Régua** celebrates the **Festivities in honour of Nossa Senhora do Socorro - Festa do Douro**. For several days there are Fado performances and evening pop, folk and classic music concerts.
- ▶ From 11 to 22 August, there is the festival of **Nossa Senhora da Graça**, **Bragança's** patron saint.
- ▶ On the fourth Sunday in August, **Macedo de Cavaleiros** celebrates the **festival in honour of Santo Ambrósio**.

#### SEPTEMBER

- ▶ In September, **Feira das Cebolas** (Onion Fair) in **Macedo de Cavaleiros**.
- ▶ On the second Sunday in September, **Vila Real** celebrates the **pilgrimage of Nossa Senhora da Pena**.

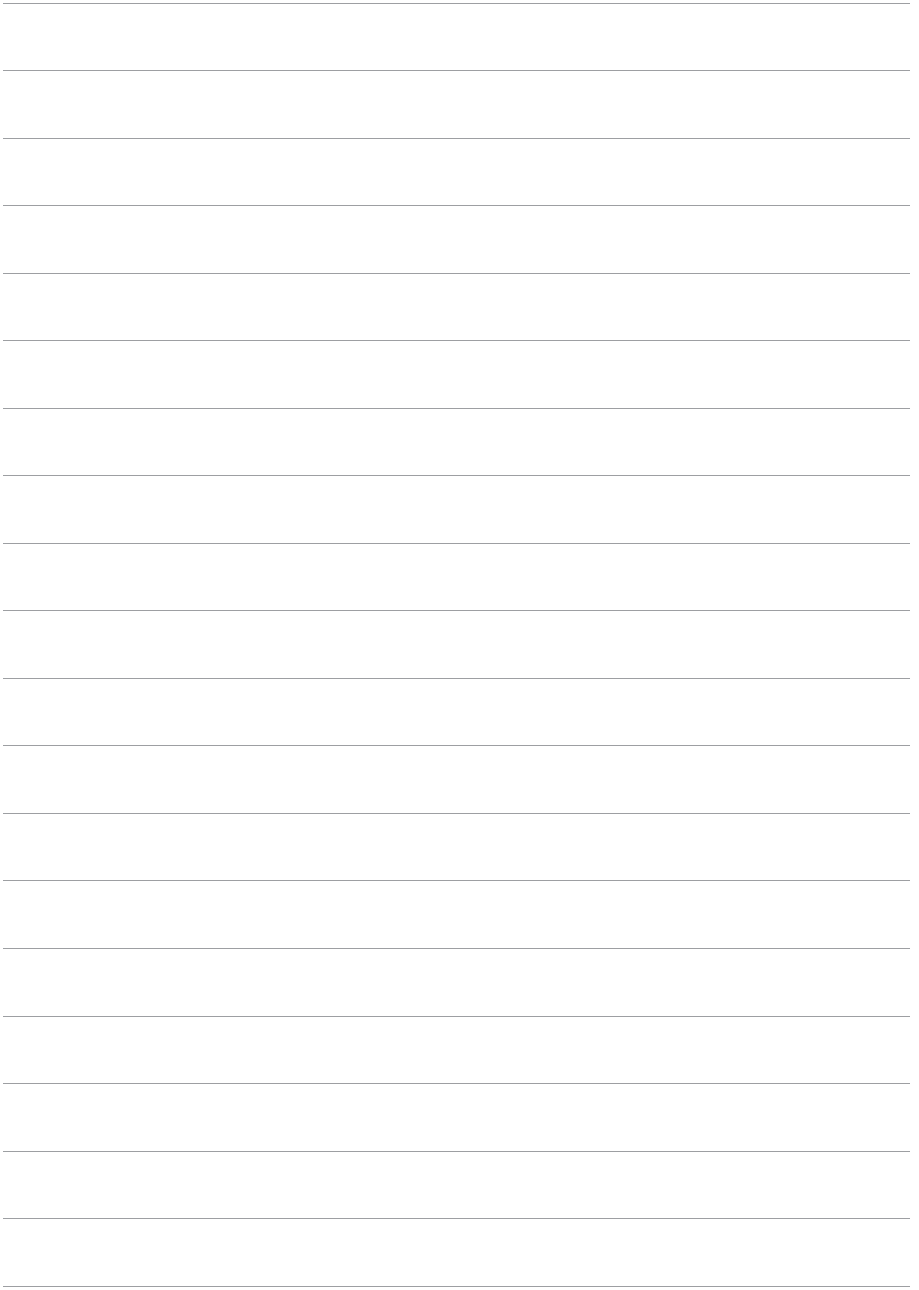
#### NOVEMBER

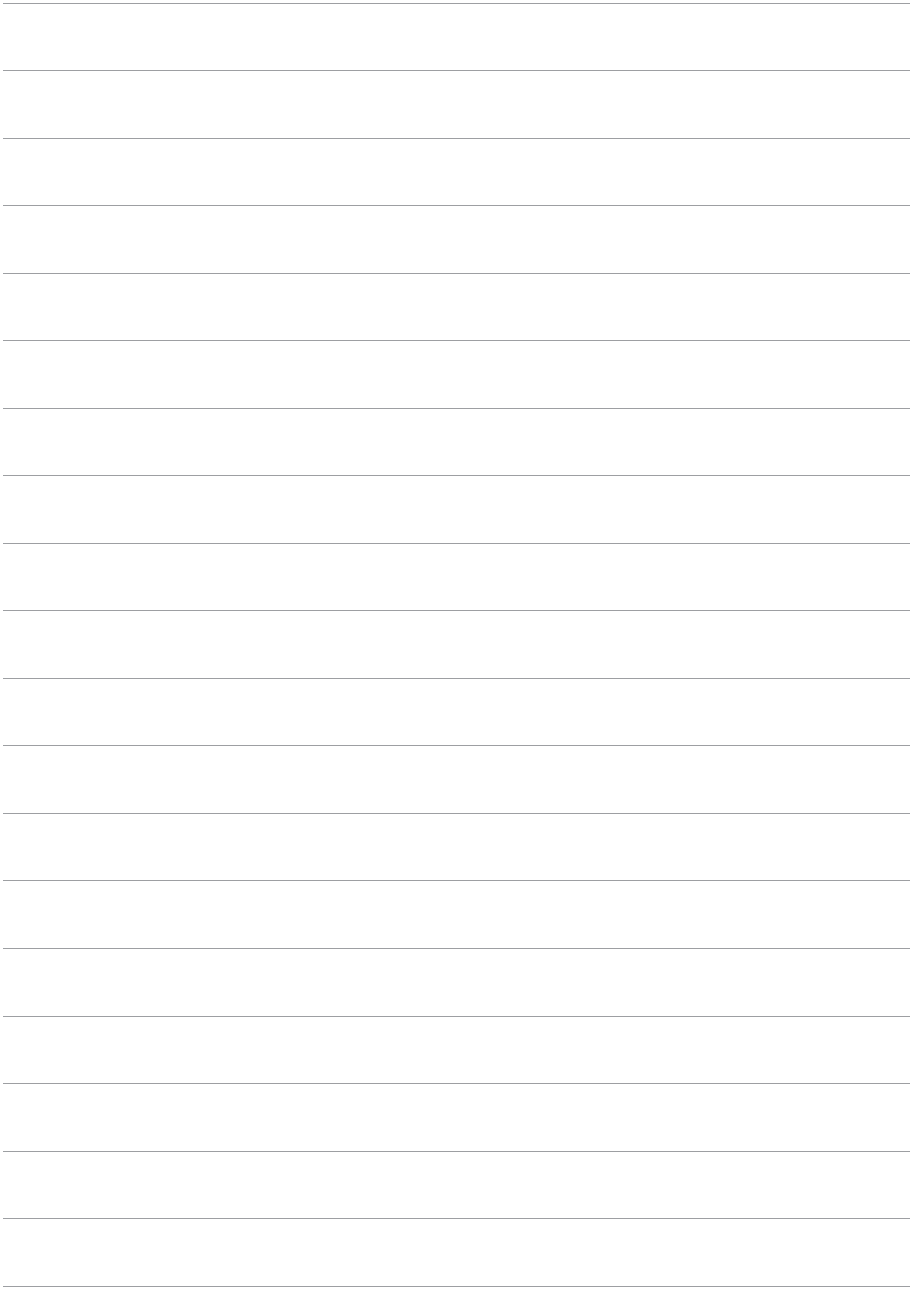
- ▶ **Outono à Mesa**, where you can taste gourmet delicacies in **Vila Real**.

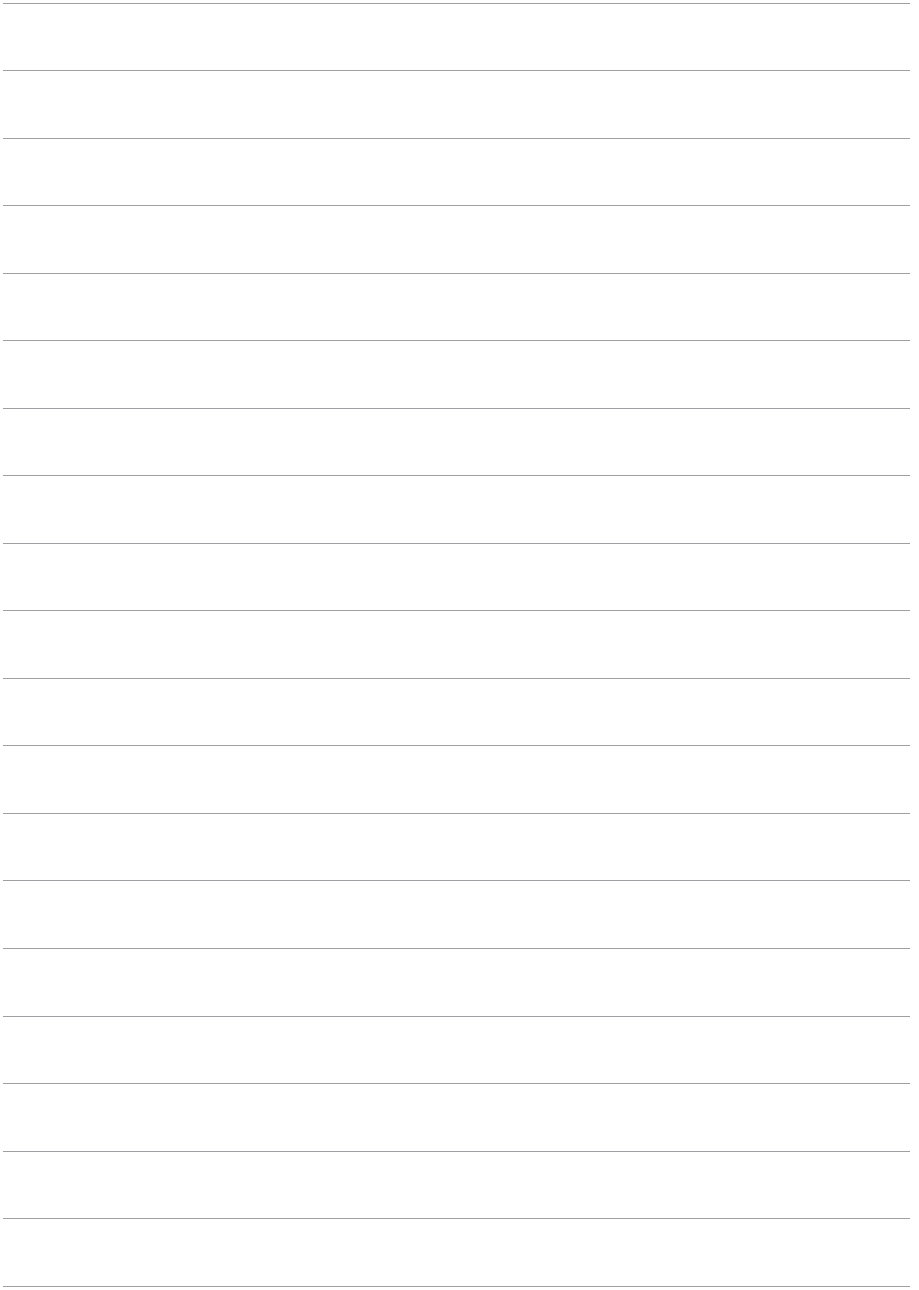
#### DECEMBER

- ▶ 25 and 26 December are celebrated in the municipality of **Bragança**, the **Festas de Rapazes** in Varge and Avelada, and **Festas de Santo Estevão** in Parada de Infanções, and Rebordãos (first Saturday after 26 December).











What to do  
in  
Eixo Atlántico!

