



Natural  
Heritage,  
Terrestrial  
Paradise

Natural Areas  
of the Euroregion

2 COUNTRIES

1 DESTINATION



# Natural Heritage, Terrestrial Paradise

Natural Areas  
of the Euroregion

2 countries, 1 destination

EDITION: Eixo Atlántico do Noroeste Peninsular

DIRECTION: Xoán Vázquez Mao

TEXTS: Guada Guerra

COORDINATION: Programs and Cooperation Dept. of Eixo Atlántico

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**ALFREDO  
GARCÍA**

President of Eixo Atlántico



**LUÍSA  
SALGUEIRO**

Vice president of Eixo Atlántico

Aware of the natural and heritage richness of our European region, every two years we issue a guide in which we claim and disseminate our abundant and varied offer with the goal of promoting and boosting proximity tourism. This tourism has great potential taking into account the 7 million inhabitants of Galicia and North of Portugal during the 52 weekends included in one year.

Tourism equals fun and knowledge but also economic wealth and development, which also means the creation of jobs aiming at keeping the population in low density territories. These territories are also wealthy enough to allow people to live without having to leave, but this is many times unknown to them. Or at least unknown to their potential visitors.

Previous issues have brought neighbour populations to the Way of Santiago, historical, ethnographic and gastronomic itineraries, among others. This year, we are focusing on natural resources and all they have to offer: trekking, adventure tourism, wildlife watching tourism and countless possibilities.

We are also rich in nature. From islands to mountains, natural and national parks, mountain ridges and geoparks, biosphere reserves and world heritage sites, our natural heritage is huge and is fairly unknown to us.

You will surely be fascinated by this guide. And we are hoping that is enough reason for you to explore and be proud of the region where you live and that many are visiting due to the wealth that we will now present to you.

Find out more!



## INTRODUCTION

The **Euroregion Galicia - North of Portugal** is located in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. The established territory exceeds an area of 50,000 km<sup>2</sup>. This Euroregion represents a large space for social, economic and cultural interaction, gathering 6.4 million inhabitants. Thus, it is an environment with great potential, in full growth, and filled with opportunities for development in various fields.

The following pages present the **natural spaces** that provide the Euroregion Galicia - North of Portugal with a magic capable of capturing and conquering any visitor. The area surprises by its beautiful landscapes, paradisiacal beaches, mountains, plateaus, valleys and the richness of its flora and fauna. Throughout this cross-border junction we can locate numerous natural areas in the main cities of this Euroregion, that is, areas of nature with low or none human action.

They are areas that depend on the original natural environment with spontaneous evolution over the years. They must be representative of different landscapes, ecosystems or geological formations, currently keeping a considerable high level of conservation regarding their initial natural values. Thus being places that award richness to this peninsular northwest region, as the fusion of the landscape catches the visitor's contemplation, enjoying the healthy experience of relating to nature in idyllic surroundings.

Due to their great value, many of these areas are protected by some regulations in order to preserve their natural value. Therefore, the Euroregion lists two National Parks, six Biosphere Reserves, 10 Natural Parks, and more than a hundred protected places to preserve its landscape, fauna, flora, and its exceptionality.

Be surprised by the charm of the natural spaces of this area; use this guide to know the Euroregion in depth, from the northeast to the south, ending the journey in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Get ready to enjoy the experience of an environment with an incomparable setting. There are places where you stay, and places that stay embedded in you; without any doubts, the Euroregion is the latter. It will catch you forever.

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## BEFORE STARTING... WHAT ARE?



### THE NATIONAL PARKS

A National Park is a natural space of high value; its conservation deserves preferential attention and is declared of general interest to the nation to which it belongs, as it is representative of its natural heritage. It must represent the natural system to which it belongs and have a suitable dimension to allow its natural evolution. In addition and apart from exceptions, they should not include urban inhabited sites and they cannot be fragmented, that is, the territory must be continuous.



### THE BIOSPHERE RESERVES

These are areas of terrestrial or marine ecosystems, or a combination thereof, recognized as such by the UNESCO at international level. They are models of how man should coexist with nature, with the purpose of preserving the natural or cultural heritage of a certain space, allowing the socio-economic development of the local population.



### THE NATURAL PARKS

Natural Parks are a symbol of protection. In this case, to classify a space as a Natural Park, it is taken into account the beauty of its landscapes and the representativeness of its ecosystems, among other considerations such as scarce human occupation and the existence of educational and scientific values deserving protection.



### THE PROTECTED LANDSCAPES/NATURAL AREAS

Spaces in which it is intended to guarantee the conservation of biodiversity as well as the upkeep of the ecological processes necessary for its preservation.



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2000

## NETWORK NATURA 2000

Natura 2000 is a European ecological network of biodiversity conservation areas. It is the main instrument for the conservation of nature in the European Union and its purpose is to ensure the long-term survival of species and different types of habitat, contributing to ending loss of biodiversity.

- **THE SAC AREAS:** Special Areas of Conservation
- **THE SPAB AREAS:** Special Protection Areas for Birds



GP

## GEPARKS

A European Geopark is a territory that includes a specific geological heritage and a sustainable territorial development strategy supported by a European program for the promotion of development. It must contain relevant geological places in terms of its scientific value, rarity, and aesthetic or educational value.



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## THE NATURAL MONUMENTS

Natural areas are characterized by one or more aspects that need special conservation and maintenance measures, due to the singularity, rarity, natural conditions and the representativeness entailed thereof in ecological, aesthetic, scientific terms.

# MAP OF THE NATURAL AREAS OF THE EUROREGION



NATIONAL PARK



BIOSPHERE RESERVE



NETWORK NATURA 2000



NATURAL MONUMENT



NATIONAL PARK



PROTECTED LANDSCAPES/  
NATURAL AREAS



GEOPARKS



OTHER NATURAL AREAS  
OF INTEREST



An aerial photograph of a river valley in the Province of Lugo. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom left, curving around a green peninsula. The surrounding landscape is a mix of dense green forests and open green fields. The text "PROVINCE OF LUGO" is overlaid in the center of the image.

**PROVINCE OF  
LUGO**

PROVINCE OF LUGO

## LAND OF CONTRASTS



The province of Lugo is located in the northeast of Galicia, with an area of 9856 km<sup>2</sup>. It is one of the provinces with the largest number of Biosphere Reserves in Spain, since more than 55% of its extension is included in this classification.

It is difficult to find in Lugo a single corner that is not a natural space. It comprises an area ranging from a coastline of prodigious beaches to a large mountainous area, framing the 'A Terra Chá', the most extensive plain of Galicia.

The province also has several locations classified as Natural Monuments and houses the largest Galician area integrated in the Natura 2000 Network. There are nineteen Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in Lugo, as well as four SPAB areas (Special Protection Area for Birds), being there areas included in the aforementioned protection measure, thus attesting the landscape richness of this environment. In addition to those presented in the following pages, we can highlight other Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) such as Monte Maior, Pena Veidosa, the River Landro, Monte Faro, etc.

Each corner makes you fall in love with it. Therefore, it is essential to draw a plan in order to be acquainted with its details. In the city of Lugo, for example, you can find the *Parque do Miño*: a nature walk near the city, integrated in the Biosphere Reserve of *Terras do Miño*.

The landscape interest grows when talking about the flora and fauna. In the bed of the river Miño, as it strolls throughout the province, there are 134 protected species, of which eleven are flora. Among them, a particular type of water lily stands out, the *Nymphoides peltata*, considered in danger of extinction.

Numerous options are offered to complete the visitor's experience. For example, the Scenic Viewpoint of *O Duque*, near the municipality of Monforte de Lemos and in the heart of the *Ribeira Sacra*, specifically, in one of the most spectacular sections of the Sil River where the valley reaches an almost vertical drop of approximately 400 meters.

There is no better way to know a place than merging into it, that is why many of these natural spaces offer their visitors the possibility of 'living' them from within. As the example of *Sarria*, where there is a hiking circuit with a route of around 6 kilometres on both banks of a river that gives its name to the municipality.

Throughout the next pages, we will discover the charm of these contrasts and you will understand why you should come as soon as possible to admire its beauty.



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF LOS ANCARES LUCENSES Y LOS MONTES DE NAVIA, CERVANTES Y BECERREÁ

The Biosphere Reserve of *Los Ancares Lucenses y los Montes de Navia, Cervantes y Becerreá* (*Reserva de la Biosfera de Los Ancares Lucenses y los Montes de Navia, Cervantes y Becerreá*) are located in the eastern side of the province of Lugo. Regarding its environmental aspect, this territory is a mixture of mountains and forests with great interest due to its more than 1600 meters of difference in altitude, as well as the amazing lithological diversity it covers, with a subsoil comprising shale, sandstone, quartzite, limestone and phyllite. Human presence is scarce in this territory, just a bit over 3000 inhabitants for an area of 53.664 hectares.

- This location represents a valuable mosaic of natural habitats since it is an Atlantic area in which middle-height and high mountains predominate. The variety of habitats in the reserve is the reason of its abundant flora and fauna diversity, including **endangered species** of the planet. Here, we can find, for example, the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the rare crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), and even a few brown bears (*Ursus arctos*). As far as flora is concerned, you can find unique species such as the '*Festuca elegans*' or a variety of the narcissus, the lent lily (*Pseudonarcissus*).
- As for the historical and cultural heritage of the reserve, its most recognizable feature is the **palloza**, a type of dwelling that materializes the survival of one of the oldest forms of housing in the European continent. We must not forget also the importance of the immaterial heritage, also notable in this area, highlighting the toponymical features, the festivities and the legends passed by oral tradition.
- This territory of natural magic is an ideal destination for nature tourism, since it houses a wide variety of activities, ranging from contemplative activities to sports. In this sector, they have **more than 30 hiking routes**, being perhaps the '*Ruta de Tres Bispos*' the favourite of visitors in spite of its 24 kilometres, because in it they can enjoy the different ecosystems of the area; from lush forests to scarp mountain routes. Also highlighting the '*Subida ao Pico Mustallar*' (Climb to Pico Mustallar), which is the highest point in the province of Lugo, with 1924 meters. To reach it, the most accessible route is the one that starts at *Puerto de Ancares*, since it is the one with the smallest slope.
- This Biosphere Reserve is also an exemplary territory in terms of quality traditional and artisanal productions; highlighting its **cheeses, meat products, honey ...** It is therefore the perfect destination to disconnect from routine, enjoy nature, and connect with a good life quality.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://osancareslucenses.deputacionlugo.org/>



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF THE RIVER EO, OSCOS Y TERRAS DE BURÓN

The **Biosphere Reserve of the River Eo, Oscos y Terras de Burón** (*Reserva de la Biosfera del Río Eo, Oscos y Terras de Burón*) extends throughout the regions of *Oscos-Eo* (in the Principality of Asturias) and *Terras de Burón* (in the province of Lugo). They are settled on both sides of the River Eo and incorporate seven municipalities of each region. It occupies 11% of the Lugo province, a total of 108.007 hectares.

- The reserve can be divided into four areas or landscape units; the coast or the so-called *Rasa Cantábrica*, of coastal nature; the hill ranges and mountains, which gain altitude as the terrain approaches the Cantabrian mountain range; the valleys and beds of the rivers; and the estuary and mouth of the River Eo. The reserve has a **huge environmental and landscape value** due to the complementarity of its continental ecosystems, with an extensive representation of marine and coastal forms.
- The aquatic birds make up most of the fauna of the *Ría del Eo* (or *Ría de Ribadeo*). Here predominate the anatidae, laridae and waders, we can also see the colourful common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). It is also worth noting the presence of species such as the salmon (*Salmo salar*), the sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) and the allis shad (*Alosa alosa*); a countless diversity of amphibians and mammals, with special mention to the European otter (*Lutra lutra*). The *Ría del Eo* is also the only

**Wetland of the province Protected by the Ramsar Convention**, which implies a commitment to its conservation and care.

- As for the vegetation, there are extensive oak forests surrounding the river, standing out the enormous **underwater plains** at the mouth of the River Eo, the largest of the entire Cantabrian area. When descending the course of the river, there are riverside forests formed by common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*), common ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*), grey and white willows (*Salix atrocinerea* and *Salix alba*) and common hazel trees (*Coryllus avellana*).
- The best way to discover the landscape diversity of the area is by walking the '*Vía Verde del Eo*' a beautiful **hiking route**, also known as the '*Ruta del ferrocarril*', as it takes advantage of the old layout of a mining train to display the charms of all this region.
- This Biosphere Reserve also includes the Natural Monument *Playa de las Catedrales*, also included in the Natura 2000 Network.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.deputacionlugo.org](http://www.deputacionlugo.org)

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## BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF *TERRAS DO MIÑO*

The **Biosphere reserve of Terras do Miño** (*Reserva de la Biosfera Terras do Miño*) was the first biosphere reserve declared in Galicia being also one of the largest reserves of the Iberian Peninsula, covering an area of 363.668 hectares. It occupies 39% of the extension of the province of Lugo, comprising 26 locations of the upper bed of the River Miño.

- Here, we highlight the landscapes, the mountainous areas of the *Sierra do Xistral* and, above all, the aquatic settings, framed by the *Parga - Ladra - Tâmega* river complex, with a multitude of streams, water-courses and rivers that converge in the River Miño, the real pillar of the territory. The area stands out for the **richness of its ecosystem** and environmental quality. Here, lagoons, woodlands, forests and rivers coexist in perfect harmony with man, an exemplary sustainable coexistence in such a natural space.
- Aquatic plants, riverbank forests, and other protected species make up the diversity of the flora of the area. The landscape is mostly marked by chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*), oaks (*Quercus*) and European white birches (*Betula pendula*). As for fauna, the quality of the waters of the river Miño and its tributary streams favours a wide variety of species among which is the otter (*Lutrinae*). In certain areas, specimens of the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*) have also been spotted.
- The area has an **abundant Cultural Heritage**, both material and immaterial, around water; mills, hydraulic devices, ‘*caneiros*’ to capture eels, or ‘*batuxos*’, which are traditional vessels used in the past as transport for people, livestock and goods. In the immaterial heritage, there are legends, proverbs, popular sayings and mythological beings, which are present in the popular imagination and, according to tradition, would live in the waters of the rivers.
- There are also **two interpretation centres** that can be very useful when visiting the area and that extend throughout the so-called ‘ *cinturón verde*’ (green belt) of the city of Lugo, in the surroundings of the rivers Miño and Rato. One of them is the so-called ‘*Insuas do Miño*’; the other is ‘*Terras do Miño*’, from which you can make several hiking routes along the riverbank.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.terrasdomino.deputaciondelugo.org](http://www.terrasdomino.deputaciondelugo.org) [www.lugo.gal](http://www.lugo.gal)



## NATURAL MONUMENT OF PLAYA DE LAS CATEDRALES

The beach of Aguas Santas, commonly known as the **Playa de Las Catedrales**, is a **Natural Monument** located in the *Mariña Lucense*. In a unique enclave, just the simple contemplation of the area relaxes the soul.

- The **impressive cliffs** have been carved by the power of water, tides and wind, and the erosion has drawn arcs and spikes in them that remind the temples and Gothic cathedrals, being the name commonly used to designate the beach due to the look of its cliffs. These arches of more than 30 meters and these **characteristic caves of the beach** are only accessible at low tide, and it is worth doing, as it is a spectacular route for any visitor.
- Moreover, this Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) included in the **Natura 2000 Network** reaches a coastal stretch of about 15 km long with sandy areas such as the Os Castros and charming places like the port of Rinlo. It is an Area of Special Protection of Natural Values (ZEPVN).
- Among its fauna, this place stands out as a destination of bird migrations; the razorbill (*Alca torda*) or the dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) can be seen here, in the spring there are also hoopoes (*Upupa epops*) and the always present gulls (*Laridae*) flying along the coast. In addition, rocks are full of barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*) and mussels (*Mytilidae*).
- The samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), the gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), or the common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) are part of the terrestrial vegetation of the area. With regard to marine flora, red algae (*Rhodophyta*) and coralline algae (*Corallinales*) stand out, which, together with lichens, modify the original appearance of the cliffs.
- Access to the beach *Playa de las Catedrales* is free, however, during Holy Week and in the months of July to September it is **necessary to request an authorization** (free) to visit it. It is a measure carried out merely to control compliance with the maximum daily quota of visitors. This authorization can be obtained online and requested one month before the visit by accessing:

<http://ascatedrais.gal/>



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://ascatedrais.gal/>

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## NATURAL MONUMENT OF PREGAMENTO XEOLÓXICO DE CAMPODOLA-LEIXAZÓS

This is a **Natural Monument** located in Quiroga.

- It is an element constituted by a geologic formation that is very peculiar, thus its scientific interest. In addition, it is preserved almost intact since the Lower Carboniferous period, having a **very important geological value**.
- The process can be perfectly seen thanks to the erosion in the fold and the fitting of the River *Ferreiriño*, what is left uncovered is its internal structure in a cross-section, creating a natural spectacle worthy of visiting.



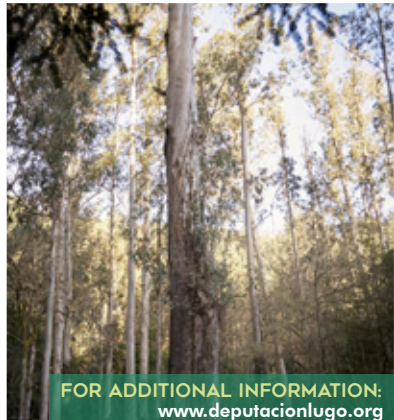
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## NATURAL MONUMENT *SOUTO DA RETORTA*

The *Souto da Retorta* is a **Natural Protected Area** and **Natural Monument** located near Viveiro.

- It is also known as the 'el eucaliptal de Chavín' (eucalyptus forest of Chavín) and it is a **forest full of eucalyptus** (*Eucalyptus*) of majestic dimensions, some of the largest and most important specimens in Europe, such as the famous 'avó', planted around 1880, with more than 67 m of height and 10.5 m of perimeter.





The hill range **Sierra de O Courel** is a steep mountain range located in the province of Lugo. This natural area, which is part of the **Natura 2000 Network** and classified as Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**), has 21.020 hectares crossed by the river Lor, encompassing the municipalities of *Pedrafita do Cebreiro*, *Quiroga* and *Folgoso do Courel*.

- It is the most important botanical reserve in the community. Here, the River Lor and its tributary streams give rise to diverse ecosystems; the altitude is also varied, since the valley does not exceed 400-500 meters and it has summits that exceed 1600 meters, as the *Pía Paxaro* (1610 meters), *Montouto* (1541 meters) and the *Formigueiros* (1643 meters).
- In order to sightsee *O Courel* and enjoy all its magic and immensity, the visitor will need more than one day; So, in addition to the landscape, you can discover the area's good offer of rural tourism. **More than 40 villages** can be visited in the area, standing out the peculiarity of *Seceda* due to the isolation to which it was subjected for being away from communication roads for a long time.
- The calm, peace and tranquility that invade the visitor are one of the reasons that always invite you to return. The diversity of the flora stands out, and it is essential to repeat the **importance** in the area **of the chestnut tree** (*Castanea sativa*). For a long time, chestnut was a key ingredient in the life of the inhabitants of *O Courel*; not only as the basis of their diet, but they also benefited from the whole chestnut tree. They used its wood, its flower ... Honey was produced and the floor of animal stalls was covered with its leaves. The fruit, the chestnut, was collected and stored for use throughout the year, which is why currently there are numerous gastronomic festivals in the area honouring the chestnut.
- Among the **abundance of vegetation**, there are evergreen oak forests (*Quercus ilex*) in the high areas, heather (*Erica*), common oaks (*Quercus robur*) and other native trees.
- In terms of fauna, there are about **160 species of vertebrates**, distributed throughout the following biotopes: the *devesas* (enclosed areas), the Pyrenean oak forests, the holm oaks, the pine forests, the mantle of heathers, the *retamas* and brooms, the *soutos* (tree and green enclosed areas) the meadows, the banks of the rivers, the rocks and the peaks.
- In *O Courel* several species have already disappeared, such as the capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*), the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). Still, although scarcely, you can see here some eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) or owls (*Bubo bubo*). You can see wolves (*Canis lupus*), red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), water snakes (*Natrix maura*), barn swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), cuckoos (*Cuculus canorus*), red-legged partridges (*Alectoris rufa*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), salamanders (*Caudata*)... *O Courel* has also **70% of the species of butterflies of Galicia**, of which the *Aricia mollonensis perigleri*, endemic to the Iberian Peninsula.

- We also highlight the **Devesa da Rogueira**, in the heart of O Courel, an Atlantic forest facing north, known as 'el último bosque gallego' (the last Galician forest). It is the ecological feature of the place. More than three square kilometres with great arboreal diversity, since there are hazel trees (*Corylus avellana*), common oak trees (*Quercus robur*), European white birches (*Betula pendula*), taxus (*Taxus*) and many more. The *Devesa da Rogueira* is also home to many species of fauna, since the streams are home to endemic species from the north of the peninsula such as the Emerald-eyed tree frog (*Hypsiboas crepitans*) or the Iberian newt (*Lissotriton boscai*). Also residing here, you can find, among others, roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), pine martens (*Martes martes*), weasels (*Mustela nivalis*), wildcats (*Felis silvestris*), the dormouse (*Gliridae*)...
- The **hiking trails** of O Courel are also a must for anyone visiting the area, as the routes are diverse and each of them unveil the incomparable charms of its natural area. Thus, the highlights are the route to the top of *Pía Páxaro*, the route of the river *Pequeno*, the route of the *Devesa da Rogueira* itself, and also those that link municipalities, such as the Route from Seceda to Castro da Torre, or from Seceda to Lousadela y Cortes, the Route from Ferramulín to Hórreos.
- The sensations felt in a visit to O Courel cannot be described in words, as well as the magnitude of its landscapes, the charm of its people, or the uniqueness of the place. The best way to get to know it is to go into the area and spend two or three days being conquered by its splendour.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[http://www.turismo.gal/que-facer/rutas-turisticas/ruta-do-courel?langId=en\\_US](http://www.turismo.gal/que-facer/rutas-turisticas/ruta-do-courel?langId=en_US)



## RIBEIRA SACRA AND CAÑÓN DEL SIL

The **Ribeira Sacra** includes territories of the provinces of Lugo and Ourense, and the **Cañón del Sil** (Sil Canyon) includes the last 25 km of the river before its mouth in the river Miño, in the Lugo location of Os Peares. In total, the area comprises almost 6000 hectares; although nobody knows where the *Ribeira Sacra* begins and ends specifically.

- The place is spectacular, and the visit is a must. It is the point where the rivers Sil and Miño meet, with canyons 500 m deep, where you can see millenary vineyards on the steep slopes. This space, known as '**Cañón del Sil**' also has the classification of Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**), thus belonging to the **Natura 2000 Network** for protection.
- As for the flora, in addition to the vines (*Vitis vinifera*), its extensive common oak forests (*Quercus robur*) stand out above all; typical Mediterranean species find shelter here, such as cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*), oaks (*Quercus ilex*), orange trees (*Citrus X sinensis*) and olive trees (*Olea europaea*), rock rose (*Cistus*) and lavender (*Lavandula*). Birds of prey also find their habitat in the canyon rocks of more difficult access. In addition, in the forests of the *Ribeira Sacra* hide in them wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), several kind of canids (*Vulpini*) and rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).
- It is one of the best natural spaces offered by the two big rivers, and one of the best ways to get to know it is by **catamaran sailing**, since from these boats you can see the bottom of the canyons. It is a unique tour of the *Ribeira Sacra* managed by the *Deputación de Lugo*. Reservations can be made in:  
<http://reservas.rutasembalses.es/>
- The waters of the rivers Miño and Sil fill the water reservoirs of Os Peares, Santo Estevo and Belesar and make navigation possible, offering the visitor a sensational viewpoint, Nevertheless this is not the only one to do so.
- There is the possibility of touring the *Ribeira Sacra* in a **tourist train** that leaves from Sober, in the Lugo municipality, but you can also cross it by car. We highlight one of the roads that runs parallel to the river Sil, offering spectacular views of the cliffs and allowing crossing several valleys.



NATURAL HERITAGE, TERRESTRIAL PARADISE  
NATURAL AREAS OF THE EUROREGION

- Moreover, this landscape has **countless scenic viewpoints**, both in the Lugo section (*Mirador de Santiorxo, Mirador de O Boqueiriño, Mirador del Duque, Mirador del Souto Chao, Mirador de Os Chancís, Mirador de Os Chelos...*) and in the Ourense section (*Mirador de As Xarriñas do Castro, Mirador Peña de Matacás, Balcones de Madrid, Mirador de Cabezoás, Mirador de A Columna, Mirador de Vilouxe...*). One of the most important is the *Mirador Cabo do Mundo*, a balcony to the river Miño that is a must-stop for everyone who visits this place.
- Without a doubt, the landscapes are overwhelming. However, the *Ribeira Sacra* area is not only known for them but also for the **quality of the wines** with this designation of origin. The millenary vineyards are a fundamental element in the snapshot of the place, and visitors can also visit the wineries in the area. Visitors will be able to know at first hand the elaboration process of the best wines with the denomination of origin: *Ribeira Sacra*.
- We would also like to emphasize the **Romanesque art** visitors can find here, as there are numerous monasteries and churches in the area, among which *San Estevo* stands out.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.deputacionlugo.org](http://www.deputacionlugo.org)

NN  
2000 THE RIVER CABE

**Monforte de Lemos** is located in a depression of the same name, and its capital - the town of Monforte - is located in the centre. It is also the capital of the *Ribeira Sacra*, an area of recognized natural and scenic wealth.

- The town is bordered by the River Sil, where you can see the vineyards on terraces and where you can enjoy **one of the best views of the area** from the scenic viewpoint of *Mirador do Duque*. The Monforte depression is characterized by its extensive plain land, being surrounded by higher areas such as the *Serra do Moncai*, the *Serra das Penas* or the *Montes de San Paio*. These mountains offer an extraordinary scenery of the interior of the valley, which you can enjoy from several high viewpoints located within the municipality such as the *Miradoiro de Distriz* or the *Monte de San Vicente*.
- The river **Cabe** is 53 kilometres long. It is one of the main tributary streams of the River Sil and crosses the city of Monforte completing the magical picture, giving rise to natural corners of great beauty, many of which can be visited using various walking trails. This river and its streams are included within the **Natura 2000 Network** as a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**). It is also an Area of Special Protection of Natural Values (**ZEPVN**) under the designation “*Río Cabe*” and covering an area of 1787 hectares.
- Regarding vegetation, it is conditioned by the Mediterranean influence. Thus, it has typical Mediterranean forest species such as cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*) or strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*). However, the typical vegetation of the Atlantic forest is still the main one, with tree species such as the common oak (*Quercus robur*), chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) or the Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*), as well as different kinds of pine trees (*Pinus*). River bank forests are also present in the area.
- As for the fauna, numerous species make up a **space of rich biodiversity**. There are large mammals such as wolves (*Canis lupus*), red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), and small ones like otters (*Lutra lutra*), or weasels (*Mustela erminea*); in addition to different species of birds such as the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) or the common kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*). In the river courses, you can find different fish species such as trout (*Salmo trutta fario*), the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) or the black bass (*Micropterus salmoides*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www.monfortedelemos.es>

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### THE RIVER SARRIA AND THE PASEO DAS ACEAS

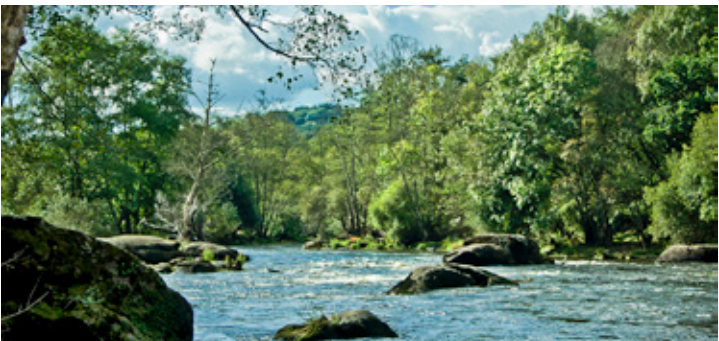
In **Sarria** we find the homonymous river that belongs to the Miño hydrographic basin. The **Paseo das Aceas** is a circular path of about 7 km, perfectly indicated, that runs along the river bank through native forests of chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) and oaks (*Quercus*); throughout roads and bridges, where water is the main element and waterfalls are the main protagonist; although you should also observe the stone mills. A simple and signposted route that is worth knowing.



### PARQUE DEL MIÑO (PARK)

Located in the city of **Lugo**, the *Parque del Miño* is a river park set in an unbeatable environment. Wide green spaces, prepared both for leisure and rest, swimming areas, paths prepared to wonder along the area, children's recreation areas, and all in a natural environment with the **river Miño** as the main attraction.

Here, there is a large number of species, such as crows (*Corvus corax*), common black birds (*Turdus merula*), common magpies (*Pica pica*)... And you can see many easy, as is the case of the great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) or the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*).







# PROVINCE OF OURENSE

Photo courtesy of Turismo de Galicia

PROVINCE OF OURENSE  
VITAL EXPERIENCE



The province of Ourense is located southeast of Galicia and has a total area of 7273 km<sup>2</sup>. It borders the provinces of Pontevedra to the west, Lugo to the north, León and Zamora to the east, and Portugal to the south. Despite not bordering the sea in any of its points, Ourense is a province closely linked to water, as the River Miño passes through here, marking the development of the area.

The province hosts three Natural Parks; therefore, most of its visitors come attracted by the mountain. Although they arrive thinking about hiking tourism, along summits and slopes, the truth is that they find much more in Ourense.

With a privileged location, a valley crossed by rivers and surrounded by mountains and hills, the city of Ourense hides natural landscapes of great beauty that are worth exploring. Moreover, its wealth is completed with its wonderful thermal waters. The province altitude is not high, although its highest peak has 2127 meters, *Peña Trevinca*, being also the highest in the Galician community.

O Barco de Valdeorras also offers the possibility to its visitors to connect with nature. One of its most beautiful enclaves is in the surroundings of the *Monasterio de Xagoaza* (Monastery of Xagoaza), which is an 18th century building converted into a winery for the elaboration of *godello* wines; the path is between centenarian chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) and there are several paths prepared for strolls.

Here, nature environments are treated with care, love and tender.

The best example is the Municipal Park of O Carballiño, which was massively repopulated until reaching the appearance it has currently.

The province offers a wide variety of options and activities for all types of public. This is accompanied by a culture and rural tradition worthy of praise. Ourense is pure life, and therefore, visiting it is a vital experience.

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## BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF THE *ÁREA DE ALLARIZ*

Located in the province of Ourense, the **Área de Allariz** (Allariz Area) has been declared a **Biosphere Reserve** by the Unesco. Located a few kilometres from the city of Ourense, this area is formed by the depression through which flows the river Limia; the area is surrounded by a mountainous rim in whose northern part lies the *Allariz* granite massif. The Arnoia, a tributary stream of the Miño, is another of the main rivers of the place. The *Área de Allariz* occupies a total of 21.482 hectares.

- Here it is worth noting that in addition to the usual composition of colours - greens and blues - due to forests and rivers, the red roofs of the houses in the area stand out, since just under ten thousand inhabitants live in the Reserve; although in their majority they are distributed by small populated locations. The human and natural composition of the area is wonderful, since traditional activities and practices are kept and respect for the environment prevails here.
- As for the flora, three different types of landscapes are located here which are of special interest, since they are also interrelated. They are the *touzas*, a mosaic of meadows and cultivated areas separated by forest stands; the *veigas*, lands located on the margins of the rivers Limia and Antela with herbaceous and shrub vegetation; and the *sebes*, mixed forests of common oaks and Pyrenean oaks. All of the above entails a great variety of fauna, among which stand out typical species of the location, or those protected or in danger of extinction; some of the most noteworthy are the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) or the ladder snake (*Elaphe scalaris*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.areadeallariz.com](http://www.areadeallariz.com)



## NATURAL PARK OF SERRA DA ENCIÑA DA LASTRA

The **Natural Park of Serra da Enciña da Lastra** (*Parque Natural Serra da Enciña da Lastra*) covers an area of 3151.67 hectares and is located in the Valdeorras region, only 10 km from the municipality of O Barco de Valdeorras. The landscape, modelled over limestone rock, which is very scarce in Galicia, offers us here an unforgettable view: **caverns, caves and valleys** to which the vegetation and fauna of the place adapt. The rivers dissolved the rocks and excavated deep canyons, creating an ecosystem with important natural resources that give the park a particular character.

- It is a surprising place enclosed in the valleys of the River Sil, the *Sierra da Lastra*, with an average altitude of 684 meters. Its charm lies in its rarity, **the limestone**, which is rare in the Galician landscape, where granite predominates. There are **abundant caverns** in the area, called palas, filled with stalactites and stalagmites. All this brings to the location numerous speleologists and numerous bats (*Chiroptera*), as here you can find some of their largest colonies in Spain. As far as fauna is concerned, it is also notable the presence of reptiles and many other species as valuable as the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), since the only breeding pairs located in Galicia live here.
- The flora is very relevant here, as it has **more than 1000 species of superior flora**; 50% of the total flora of Galicia in only 2% of its territory. In addition, since the vegetation of this area is adapted to limestone rocks, it contains certain Mediterranean characteristics practically non-existent in other parts of Galicia. We emphasize, above all, the evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*), giving their name to the Park, but also chestnut trees (*Castanea*), meadows of common thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) and dozens of species of orchids (*Oncidium luridum*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/serra-encina-lastra>



## NATURAL PARK OF BAIXA LIMIA - SERRA DO XURÉS

The **Natural Park of Baixa Limia - Serra do Xurés** (*Parque Natural Baixa Limia - Serra do Xurés*) is located south of the province of Ourense and it is the most extensive Natural Park of Galicia; it covers an area of 20.920 hectares and is also included in the **Natura 2000 Network**, declared as Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPAB**), Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and "Area of Special Protection for Natural Values".

- It is a **set of hill ranges**, all of them above 1000 meters; their nature is mostly granitic; *O Laboreiro*, *Queguas* and *Quinxo* to the north; *Santa Eufemia*, *O Xurés* and *O Pisco*, to the south; representing the natural boundary with Portugal, sharing more than 100 kilometres of border. In fact, it is a continuation of the National Park of Peneda Gerês and together they form the Cross-border Biosphere Reserve of *Gerês-Xurés*.
- A landscape occupied by shrub, rocky environments and forests. In the lower parts there are forests of oaks (*Quercus*) and cork oaks (*Quercus suber*). As the height increases, the Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*) gradually replaces the common oak, appearing the common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), the yew tree (*Taxus baccata*), the European white birch (*Betula pendula*), Scots pines (*Pinus sylvestris*), and herbaceous plants with scarce coverage.
- The landscape contrasts of the Natural Park, with its orographic diversity and varied vegetation, allowed the acclimatization and provided refuge for **varied fauna**, with the presence of rapacious species like the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) or the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), mammals such as the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), the roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), the rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), or the wolf (*Canis lupis*), and fish such as trout (*Salmo trutta*) in its river courses.
- An extensive network of trails runs throughout the *Serra do Xurés* and the visitor can choose between **eleven different routes**; Furthermore, the Park has also attractive elements such as Roman roads, hillforts or prehistoric profiles, as well as various samples of popular ancient architecture in the surrounding towns.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/baixa-limia-serra-xures>

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### RIVERBANKS OF THE RIVER MIÑO AND THERMAL WATERS

The **river Miño** is the fundamental base on which the snapshot of the city of Ourense is grounded, since this cannot be understood without its presence. To walk the banks of the Miño is to discover a whole world of small animals and riverbank forests, crossing paths that extend along its tributary streams with endless kilometres of nature.

It is a place for biological diversity, **a large green artery** on whose shores spring the thermal springs next to the riverbank forest, abundant in willows (*Salix*), common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) and European white birches (*Betula pendula*). It is home of birds like the heron (*Ardeidae*) or the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*), otters (*Enhydra lutris*), amphibians and an extensive fauna. Despite the impact of human presence on the fragile fluvial ecosystem, the Miño and its urban tributary streams still keep important populations of trout (*Salmoninae*), escalos - typical local fish (*Squalius carolitertii*) and common carps (*Cyprinus carpio*).



The riverbanks are also a space for one of the elements that best characterizes the city of Ourense, the **abundant presence of thermal springs**. Along the right bank of the river, past the *Puente del Milenio*, you can find several significant areas, thermal spaces for bathing, such as *A Chavasqueira*, the fountain of *O Tinteiro*, *Muiño da Veiga*, *Outariz* and *Burga de Canedo*. In those, **mineral-medicinal water** emerges at high temperatures between the fractures of the characteristic granitic soil, a phenomenon resulting from long cycles of accumulation of rainwater in aquifers more than one kilometre deep, where, in addition to taking temperature, they are charged with mineral properties.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<http://turismodeourense.gal/termalismo/ruta-termal-del-mino-termas-naturaleza>

## MUNICIPAL PARK OF O CARBALLIÑO

The **Municipal Park of O Carballiño** (*Parque Municipal de O Carballiño*) covers an approximate area of 32 hectares and is located precisely in the municipality of O Carballiño. The streets of the municipality delimit its area by one of the banks, whereas to the other side, the park extends until the left bank of the river Arenteiro.

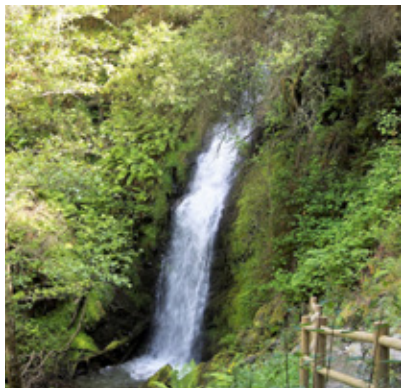
In the Park, we find a **varied flora and fauna**. In terms of vegetation, three arboreal zones are distinguished: a mixed grove (of coniferous and leafy trees), a second area mainly composed by pines (*Pinus*), and a third area that includes the rest of the species. Therefore, the area is of great interest to expert biologists. In terms of fauna, a great diversity is also found, since it the variety of environments that lead to it; thus, the Park stands out for its birds, amphibians and reptiles.

It is a place born from the need to offer society the enjoyment of a humanized natural space, since it even includes a residential area and a camping. The river Arenteiro acts as a conducting line along the route. Moreover, the Municipal Park has other resources and services that allow its visitors to enjoy this incomparable natural environment in a pleasant and healthy way.



## PINCHEIRA DA FERVENZA

The **'Pincheira da Fervenza'** is a natural enclave of special interest, as it conquers the wild beauty of the place. It is a waterfall located a few kilometres from **O Barco de Valdeorras**. The water falls with great power from almost 30 meters of height to a natural lagoon, from which it follows its course. It is only one of the many waterfalls that can be seen in the area, but it is the most impressive due to its magnitude.



## BOTANICAL PARK OF MONTEALEGRE

**Montealegre** is the forest park of Ourense. This is the Mediterranean forest located more to the northwest of Europe. It is one of the environmental references of the city, preserving biodiversity with its more than 240 floral species and about 132 fauna. It has a remarkable viewpoint that allows viewing the entire valley and one of the most beautiful panoramic scenes of the city. Next to the viewpoint, a strategically placed bank has ended up receiving the title of 'the prettiest of Ourense'.

'**El Bosque del Eixo**' is located in this park: in 2014, the 34 cities that made up Eixo Atlántico created it by planting, each one of them, a tree on the Atlantic side of Montealegre, because Ourense was then the capital of culture. Each city contributed with the species that most represented it; therefore, the forest is an atypical grove due to its very broad variety of species.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://turismodeourense.gal/recurso/montealegre>

## RIBERA DEL LOÑA AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL-NATURE SITE OF SANTOMÉ

Although smaller, the river Loña has no reason to envy the landscape and history of other Ourense rivers. From the urban centre, the river receives the visitor with its Roman bridge, the starting point of a route that runs across the **archaeological-natural site of Santomé** begins.

**Santomé** is located on a cliff above the Loña, its historical values (characteristic of a complex archaeological site) coincide with the natural ones, being a beautiful example of a traditional woodland of the Ourense valley, with a clear Mediterranean tendency. Among the vegetable formations, the oaks (*Quercus*) stand out, typical oaks of the Iberian Peninsula (*Quercus faginea*), which are rare in Galicia, mixed with other deciduous species such as cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), from which the bark is used to obtain cork; pines (*Pinus pinaster*) and countless strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*).

Its privileged location over the river Loña (which acted as a more defensive element than the *castro* - a typical fortification) provides a splendid view over the city and the "*marmitas de gigante*", enormous stones eroded by the swirling water.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://turismodeourense.gal/recurso/conjunto-arqueologico-natural-de-santome/>



**EUROCITY  
CHAVES-VERÍN**

## THE EUROCITY OF THE WATER

Located in the heart of the Euroregion, the Eurocity is a grouping of municipalities; in this case, on the Spanish side, the **Town Council of Verín**, and on the Portuguese side, the **Town Council of Chaves**. Both municipalities came together for the sake of cooperation. Here the border is just an opportunity for development based on the empowerment of the respective territories, sharing interests and goals, optimizing resources and growing together.

- Chaves and Verín are instituted as the Eurocity of the Water, and it is the **River Tâmega** that acts as a link between all of them, crossing their lands. The water that emanates from its aquifers is of high quality and gets its recognition thanks to their use and not only for bottled water. For the territorial area of this Eurocity has one of the largest concentrations of thermal and mineral springs in Europe, thus becoming a thermal destination.
- This mineral and medicinal mineral wealth has given rise to the creation of the Thermal and water Route. The springs stand out both in Galician territory (Cabreiroá, Sousas, Fontenova, Fuente do Sapo and Caldeliñas) and in Portuguese territory (Thermal springs of Chaves, Campillo, Vidago and Vilarelho da Raia).
- However, beyond the abundance and richness of its waters, the area that encompasses the municipalities of Chaves and Verín is complemented by numerous green spaces offering close contact with nature and available to all. Thus, natural assets stand out in the Eurocity, such as the parks of Cabreiroá and Vidago, the lush vegetation that can be seen in *Paseo Fonte do Sapo* and the particular geological enclave of *Pozo do Demo*.
- Here, we must also highlight the '*PR-G 150 Sendeiro de O Pozo do Demo*', a beautiful **certified hiking route** that has 11,3 kilometres of main route, although it can be added 2,5 kilometres more and circulate it, or even adapt it to each visitor with different deviations that shorten it. The route is simple in terms of difficulty, and is well signposted. It is a necessary visit, and once there, besides enjoying its nine springs with diverse properties and utilities, the Eurocity surprises the visitor with a peculiar attraction.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.visitchavesverin.com](http://www.visitchavesverin.com)



## THE RIVER TÂMEGA

The **river Tâmega** is the main resource of the Eurocity. It starts in the *Sierra de San Mamede* and crosses Ourense and Portuguese lands, finally ending at the river Douro. The majority of the tributary streams of the river Tâmega start in the main mountainous elevations of the surroundings; *San Mamede*, *Penas Libres* and the *Sierra do Larouco*.

- The natural area that encompasses the banks of the river Tâmega in Galician territory is part of the **Natura 2000 Network** and qualified as a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**), preserving its important riverbank forests and aquatic vegetation formations. The river also forms a landscape with agricultural areas in the valleys of Monterrei and Chaves. In this fluvial section, it forms a wide plain: the alluvial plain.
- This place has trees that are adapted to changes of level of the water, like the common ash (*Franxinus*) or the willows (*Salix*), being many of them able to survive even with their roots in the water. The forest and cultivation areas of the Tâmega valley also have formations of great importance for fauna, mainly for birds; however, roughly **180 species of vertebrates** can be counted.
- The best way to enjoy the surroundings is to travel along the **Ecovia of the Tâmega**, 34 kilometres of trail to get to know the bottom of the valley and to connect with the river. Another option to discover this place is bird watching; **three Ornithological Routes** have been designed. All of them are of low difficulty and their route is less, in all cases, than 3km; they are, the Route of *Tamaguelos-Mourazos*, the Route of *A Raia* and the Route of the *Lagunas de Chaves*.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.visitchavesverin.com](http://www.visitchavesverin.com)



## NATURAL PARK OF O INVERNADOIRO

The **Natural Park of O Invernadoiro** (*Parque Natural O Invernadoiro*) is located in the Central Massif, in Ourense lands. It can be accessed from the Eurocity, specifically, through Verín, which is only 60 km away. O Invernadoiro has almost 6000 hectares and there are no human settlements in the Park.

- Here you can discover majestic green landscapes, abrupt mountain systems, rocky at times, and reaching more than 1500 meters of altitude. In such surroundings, you will find species like the wolf (*Canis lupus*) and the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*).
- The mountain goats (*Apra pyrenai-ca*) and deer (*Ervus elaphus*) are also present, among many others. There are up to six different routes to travel the Park, where everything is nature.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/o-invernadoiro>



**TRÁS-OS-MONTES  
E ALTO DOURO**

TRÁS-OS-MONTES E ALTO DOURO  
**CAPTURE THE SERENITY**



In the northeast of Portugal, you can find the historical region of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. It comprises the districts of Vila Real and Bragança and some municipalities to the north of the district of Viseu and Guarda.

It borders Spain to the north and to the east (provinces of Ourense, Zamora and Salamanca), to the south with the Beira Alta and to the west with the Minho and the Douro Litoral (Coast of Douro).

The region covers approximately 11.990 km<sup>2</sup> and its name refers to the location of the hill ranges of *Serra do Marão*, *Alvão* and *Gerês*, located to the west. These mountains separate the Portuguese inland from the coast, while creating an exceptional landscape by forming a valley with the river Douro. The best balcony to see the river is in this area: the town of *Peso da Régua* and the viewpoint *Miradouro de S. Leonardo de Galafura*, which is a mandatory stop for the hundreds of cruisers that sail the Douro every year.

The municipality of *Mirandela* is located in the heart of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, having various places of scenic interest such as the viewpoint of *Cruzeiro da Serra* at an altitude of 940 meters, at the top of a quartz outcrop, from where you can contemplate a fabulous landscape. Another of these places is *A Fraga da Águia*, a natural granite platform 410 meters above sea level from which you can observe a large extension of cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) and granites included in the *Romeu Site of Community Interest (Sitio de Interesse Comunitário de Romeu)*.

In the town of *Macedo de Cavaleiros* you can also discover an exciting and inspiring territory, the *Geopark Terras de Cavaleiros*, a Protected Landscape in *Albufeira do Azibo* with about 200 km of signposted routes spread along an immense natural heritage.

For the experience to be complete, it is not enough visiting this region, you have to live it, and the best way is traveling it. Among other options, *Vila Real* has ten pedestrian routes dedicated to the biodiversity of the area, in addition to the privileged location of the photographic site of *Vale da Campeã*, with the necessary requirements to photograph nature, being the perfect place to "immortalize" diverse species of birds. These can also be found in *Bragança*, a paradise for ornithologists in which the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) or the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) join another 160 species of birds, many of them equally unusual.

The poet *Miguel Torga* described Trás-Os-Montes as "The Marvelous Kingdom". The allegory is accurate, because here, in addition to three Natural Parks and various protected areas, we find part of the Cross-border Biosphere Reserve of the Iberian Plateau, an international area recognized by the UNESCO. To capture the serenity, the visitor must be invaded by a sense of peace and tranquillity; in Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro this happens with every blink.



## NATURAL PARK OF *ALVÃO* / THE AREA OF *ALVÃO-MARÃO*

The **Natural Park of Alvão** (*Parque Natural do Alvão*) is a protected area, which together with the **Area of Alvão-Marão** (*Sítio Alvão-Marão*) is classified as a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) in the **Natura 2000 Network**. The extension of the park includes the municipalities of Mondim de Basto and Vila Real, reaching an area of 7220 hectares.

- The topography has irregular altitudes, ranging from 65 meters in areas of valleys with crystal-clear waters to 1400 meters in the *Serra do Marão*; this one and the *Serra do Alvão*, whose massif is essentially granitic, propitiate a succession of **landscapes of valleys and mountains** that deserve to be highlighted for their beauty. There is also a **waterfall** of the river Olo, one of the largest in Europe, known as the *Fisgas do Ermelo*.
- As for the vegetation, oaks (*Quercus*) are located in the higher areas, although mixed and leafy forests can also be found in the Park. The area also features stranger species such as the '*drosera rotundifolia*', commonly known as the sundew, which is a carnivorous plant that is often found in marshes or wetlands, that is, in flooded areas as these riverbanks.
- As for fauna, the emperor butterfly (*Morpho peleides*) finds in this natural space its last survival bastion in Portugal.

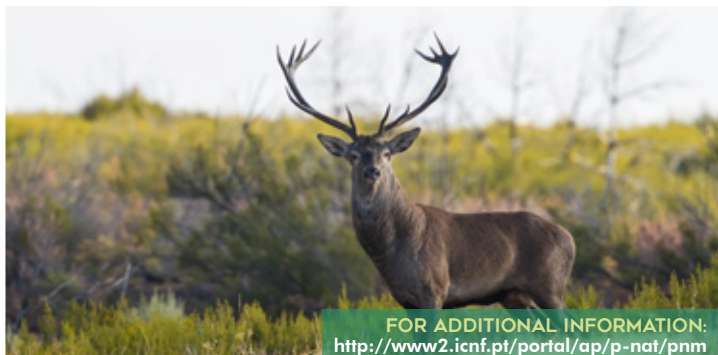




## NATURAL PARK OF MONTESINHO

The **Natural Park of Montesinho** (*Parque Natural de Montesinho*) is one of the major Natural Parks in Portugal. Located in the northeast of the country, it covers the northern part of the municipalities of Bragança and Vinhais. It has two large hill ranges, the *Serra da Coroa* to the west and the *Serra de Montesinho* to the east, which gives its name to the protected area.

- The total area amounts to 74.230 hectares, having 92 towns with a total of 9000 inhabitants; the population here coexists perfectly with the surrounding landscape. It should also be noted that many of these towns are communal, that is, the agricultural land, the pastures, the laundry place, among others, are shared amongst all the locals, who are also in charge of the administrative tasks. The best preserved town is Rio de Onor, also awarded in 2017 as “Wonder Village of Portugal”.
- The landscape is beautiful, with the mountains giving rise to abysmal valleys that combined with existing rivers allow an additional great attraction of the Park, its fauna; it covers **240 species of vertebrates**, of which 150 are birds. In addition, otters (*Lutra lutra*) can be seen in river areas, and well as wolves (*Canis lupus*), deer (*Cervus elaphus*), wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) and roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) wander along the hills.
- As for the flora, among other varieties, we highlight its extensive forests of Pyrenean oaks (*Quercus pyrenaica*), as well as black poplars (*Populus nigra*), common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*), willows (*Salix atrocinera* and *Salix salvifolia*), chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) and oaks (*Quercus rotundifolia*).
- During the visit to Montesinho, you can also choose to go through some of the itineraries proposed by the park, whether **hiking or mountain biking**, all of them very varied and provided with everything necessary for the enjoyment of the visitor.
- The importance of the **Natura 2000-SPA Network** (Special Protection Area) of the Serras de Montesinho and Nogueira is also worth mentioning. This area has the most extensive Pyrenean oak forest (*Quercus pyrenaica*) in Europe and, along the hiking route of the *Estação da Biodiversidade de Carrzedo* you can see more than half of the species of diurnal butterflies that exist in Portugal.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pnm>

## THE RIVER CORGO AND THE *PARQUE CORGO* (PARK)

The **river Corgo** is a tributary stream of the river Douro, with a length of 44 km. Its hydrographic basin, with about 469 Km<sup>2</sup>, partially covers the municipality of Peso da Régua as it crosses its northern part in a steep fitted and sinuous valley; its mouth is located nearby Peso da Régua. This sub-basin includes important areas as part of the Protected Area of the Natural Park of *Serra do Marão*, as well as the *Alvão-Marão* and *Vale do Corgo* habitats, integrated in the Natura 2000 Network.

- Half the course of the river also passes through the town of Vila Real, where the **Parque Corgo** is located, a 33-hectare natural park on the bank of river that gives it its name. The park has a well-preserved natural heritage, with a Science Centre intended to teach and display the natural heritage of the entire region. The *Parque Corgo* is also connected to the Forest Park; being both “**the lung of the city**”.
- Vila Real has been capable to integrate all these natural resources into the day-to-day lives of its citizens; thus, this space has **hiking trails**, sports facilities, swimming pools, playgrounds, etc. The Forest Park also features a maintenance circuit that invites having healthy life habits.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www.cm-vilareal.pt/index.php/natureza-e-lazer>



## THE CROSS-BORDER BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF THE MESETA IBÉRICA

The Cross-border Biosphere Reserve of the Iberian Plateau (Reserva de la Biosfera Transfronteriza de la Meseta Ibérica) is an international space recognized by the UNESCO that comprises a total of 87 Spanish and Portuguese municipalities. It encompasses the entire area of the north-eastern Trás-os-Montes, covering a total of 1.132.606 hectares. In Portuguese territory, the Biosphere Reserve includes other protected areas, among which the following stand out:

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.biosfera-mesetaiberica.com/es](http://www.biosfera-mesetaiberica.com/es)



## NATURAL PARK OF DOURO INTERNACIONAL

The **Natural Park of Douro Internacional** is located northwest of Portugal, encompassing the municipalities of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Freixo de Espada à Cinta, Miranda do Douro and Mogadouro. Specifically, it is located in the area of the river Douro that borders with Spain. In fact, the river is present in almost the whole extension of the park, approximately 122 kilometres. Just 60 kilometres separate this place from the most important nearby municipalities, such as Bragança, Mirandela and Macedo de Cavaleiros.

- The most important element of the Park is its **biodiversity**, so, the landscape with steep gorges over the Douro overwhelms the visitor. Oaks forests (*Quercus*), holm oaks (*Quercus rotundifolia*) and diverse vegetation decorate the area and make it home to numerous species of birds, such as the blue rock thrush (*Monticola solitarius*) and the golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), many of them in danger of extinction, thus of great interest.
- In the surroundings of the Park are also located agricultural and livestock farms; on the banks of the park, common **vines** (*Vitis vinifera*) are planted, providing the grapes with which Porto wine is produced.
- The place can be visited by sailing the river Douro, a viewpoint that attracts the attention of tourism by the clear differentiation of the Portuguese and Spanish landscape on both banks of the river and separated by it. The Portuguese area is much more striking, as it highlights the green colour of its meadows.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pndi>



## REGIONAL NATURAL PARK OF THE TUA VALLEY

Located in the lower part of the river Tua, between the districts of Vila Real and Bragança, it integrates the municipalities of Alijó, Murça (right bank of the river Tua), Vila Flor, Carrazeda de Ansiães (left bank of the river Tua) and Mirandela, where it starts. In the heart of Trás-Os-Montes e Alto Douro, the **Regional Natural Park of the Tua Valley** (*Parque Nacional Regional do Vale do Tua*) was established for the protection of biodiversity values and the improvement of nature tourism. The Tua River is born from the junction of the rivers Rabaçal and Tuela and it belongs to the Douro hydrographic basin with a north-south direction.

- The landscape of the Natural Park is diversified and marked by **hill ranges, plateaus and embedded valleys**, in particular those of the rivers Douro, Tua and Tinhela. This is due to the existing quantity of lithologic features and geological structures that form the basis of these topographies. There are four major groups of ecosystems; urban, agricultural, forest and fluvial.
- Among the diversity of flora found here, the Mediterranean cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) stand out in the driest and hottest areas of the valley, and the black oaks (*Quercus pirenaica*) prevail in wetter areas.
- More than 900 species make up the fauna, among which are the brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), or the *Cobitis calderoni*, an endemic species of the Iberian Peninsula.
- It is worth mentioning the **thermal activity** that starts from *Caldas de Carlão/Santa M<sup>a</sup> Madalena* and the thermal spring of *Caldas de São Lourenço*, oriented to the cultivation of the vine and with great potential for wine tourism.

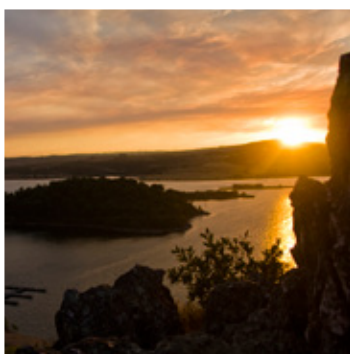
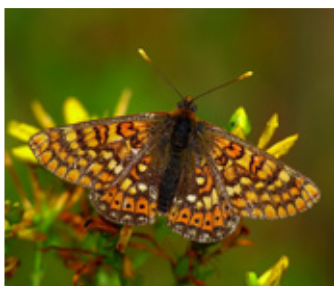


FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parque.valetua.pt>

▶ **PL** **NN**  
2000 **PROTECTED LANDSCAPE OF ALBUFEIRA DO AZIBO**

The **Albufeira do Azibo** is a **Protected Landscape** integrated in the **Natura 2000 Network**, located in Macedo de Cavaleiros, it covers a total area of 3.281,7 hectares, the perfect place to connect with nature.

- It is one of the most visited places in Trás-Os-Montes. It has an **immense lake** that fosters an ecosystem of protected species. In a visit to the *Albufeira*, you can see golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in the lake and marine crows (*Halacrocorax auritus*), among a large number of other bird species.
- In addition, it has **two river beaches** with Blue Flag classification; the beach of *Ribeira* (one of the 7 wonder-beaches of Portugal) and the beach of *Fraga da Pegada*.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.cm-macedodecavaleiros.pt/pages/337](http://www.cm-macedodecavaleiros.pt/pages/337)

▶ **GP** **NN**  
2000 **GEOPARK TERRAS DE CAVALEIROS**

The **Geopark Terras de Cavaleiros** (GTC) is integrated in the *Albufeira do Azibo*, covering all extension of the municipality of Macedo de Cavaleiros: almost 700 km<sup>2</sup>.

- In this territory, which is part of the **Natura 2000 Network**, 42 geosites of interest from the scientific point of view are documented, witnessing a history of more than 400 million years.
- To discover the Geopark, there are **24 signalled pedestrian routes**, covering almost 180 kilometres of land. The place has excellent conditions for bird watching and enjoying mountain biking, canoeing or kayaking, or for a catamaran ride.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.cm-macedodecavaleiros.pt/pages/218](http://www.cm-macedodecavaleiros.pt/pages/218)



## ROMEJU SITE OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE (SCI)

The **Romeju Site of Community Importance (SCI)** is also part of the protected areas of the **Natura 2000 Network**. It has a total of 4768 hectares, of which 76% are located in the municipality of Mirandela, and the remaining 24% in Macedo de Cavaleiros.

- The altitudes here do not exceed 630 meters and allow visualizing a **large area of Mediterranean cork oaks** in excellent conservation.
- The agriculture of the space is also notable, especially the **olive plantations**. The latter results in some products with Protected Designation of Origin, such as the olive oil Trás-Os-Montes.
- As for the fauna, it is inhabited by wolves (*Canis lupus*) and otters (*Lutrinae*), among other species.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www.biosfera-mesetaiberica.com/pt-pt>

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### THE NATURE OF PESO DA RÉGUA

Within the framework of the landscape classified as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO, **Peso da Régua** is an outstanding city in the Region, not only for being a river entrance gate to the Douro Region, but also as a dynamic and attractive destination that seeks to offer visitors a unique experience.

The topography of the municipality appears extremely irregular, characterized by **steep slopes**. Its highest point is in *Fraga da Ermida*, in the middle of the *Serra do Marão*; there lives the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). The landscape is clearly dominated by the elements of the soil formations, which are mostly of schist, and granitic in some areas.

The **river Douro** is the main water line that crosses the municipality, and the viewpoint of *Miradouro de S. Leonardo de Galafura* is one of the most beautiful of the region. It is located in the mount of *São Leonardo*, with 566 meters of altitude.

## TRÁS-OS-MONTES E ALTO DOURO

The area has a **diversity of fauna**, standing out species such as the wolf (*Canis lupus*), the wild cat (*Felis wild*), and the red squirrel (*Ciurus vulgaris*), which are characterized by the fact that their habitat always develops in areas of low human density.

As for the flora, in addition to the existing trees in the *Mirador*, the landscape presents common vines (*Vitis vinifera*) and areas invaded by Mediterranean shrub. The olive trees (*Olea europaea*) are present, especially in the straits of the properties. Chestnut trees (*Astana sativa*) and some pine forests are also visible



## BOTANICAL GARDEN OF THE UNIVERSIDADE DE TRÁS-OS-MONTES E ALTO DOURO

The **Botanical Garden of the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro** (*Jardim Botânico da Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro*) is one of the largest botanical gardens in Europe; since 1988, it treasures one of the largest fortunes of flowers in the world, really strange species that can only be found here, in the location of Vila Real.

It is also one of the most important living collections in Portugal, since it has in its 80 hectares 1000 different species that fit perfectly with the architectural heritage of the university campus. This was the intention of its creator, Professor Luis Torres de Castro, who sought the integration of the visitor with the environment.





**METROPOLITAN AREA  
OF PORTO**

METROPOLITAN AREA OF PORTO

## FEELING EVERY MOMENT



The Metropolitan Area of Porto is located to the south of the Euroregion; with headquarters in the same city, it covers an area of 2040 km<sup>2</sup> and comprises a total of 17 municipalities.

Natural Reserves, Protected Landscapes and numerous nature spaces are concentrated here, in the heart of the Northern Region of Portugal. The river Douro is the protagonist in many of them, like in Vila Nova de Gaia where the Botanical Park of the Castle (*Parque Botânico do Castelo*), located on the riverbanks, offers a really nice landscape to all those who visit it.

The picture of Vila do Conde is also noteworthy, with a harmonious mosaic combining its rural aspect with the beach and the beauty of the sea.

It is an area that cares for, respects and values its flora and fauna. In Maia it is possible to observe several bird species that are typical of the urban and rural habitat, such as: the common sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), the common pigeon (*Columba livia*), the collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), the hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), the duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*)... Recently, Double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) have also been observed on the coast, in the river Leça.

Porto Carvoeiro is located in the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira, next to the river Douro. Due to its natural beauty, it is the perfect place to enjoy outdoor leisure and for various sports activities.

The magic of this place resides in its contrasts; with 15 kilometres of beaches awarded with the Blue Flag, Matosinhos meets the ideal conditions for true lovers of water sports. Scuba diving, sailing, paddle bodyboard, windsurfing... and surf. The beaches of Matosinhos offer the best waves for the initiation and practice of surf. As for beaches, Porto also stands out with its four beach areas, three of them with blue flag classification, the Beach areas of Foz, Gondarém and Homem do Leme.

In the municipality of Valongo, the vast mountainous areas with marked forestry occupation harmoniously surround the valleys, where urban centres and agricultural fields are settled. Through its viewpoints, its beaches, its rivers and its mountains, the connection established here with the surroundings is undoubtedly magical. Do not miss the opportunity to feel it in each moment.

PL

## PROTECTED REGIONAL LANDSCAPE OF THE COAST OF VILA DO CONDE AND ORNITHOLOGICAL RESERVE OF MINDELO

The **Protected Regional Landscape of the Coast of Vila do Conde** (*Paisagem Protegida Regional do Litoral de Vila do Conde*) extends along a coastline 8.5 km long, in the municipality of Vila do Conde. It covers a total of five parishes, since it is located between the mouth of the river Ave, to the north, and the mouth of the river Onda, to the south.

- This coastline includes mainly beaches, dune lines, rocky areas and wetlands, although in this protected area there is also an extensive agricultural and forestry area; humanized landscapes can be observed, which are considered of local and regional interest as they result from the interaction between man and nature.
- Most of the protected landscape is occupied by the **Ornithological Reserve of Mindelo** (*Reserva Ornitológica de Mindelo*), an emblematic area for being a pioneer in the scientific study of birds and preservation of nature in Portugal. Created in 1957, the Ornithological Reserve of Mindelo was the first protected area established in Portugal, with 411 hectares (extended up to 183 hectares to the mouth of the river Ave, in 1959).
- The Ornithological Reserve of Mindelo is the only coastal area of the Metropolitan Area of Porto that keeps its natural characteristics and constitutes a place of refuge for more than a **hundred species of birds**, especially migratory birds.
- It is also a unique area on the north coast if one takes into account the Portuguese **biodiversity** because it shelters amphibians, birds and reptiles, such as the slowworm (*Anguis fragilis*) or the water lizard (*Lacerta schreiberi*). Mammals are also found in the area, such as the weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), the common hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) or the red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), as well as the notable presence of invertebrate and fish species.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.cm-viladoconde.pt/pages/535](http://www.cm-viladoconde.pt/pages/535)



## PROTECTED REGIONAL LANDSCAPE OF THE PARQUE DAS SERRAS DO PORTO

The **Protected Regional Landscape of the Parque das Serras do Porto** (*Paisagem Protegida Regional Parque das Serras do Porto*) is an example of metropolitan cooperation for a territory with a remarkable heritage value and a high potential for nature tourism.

- The *Parque das Serras do Porto*, integrated into the **Natura 2000 Network**, unites the hill ranges of *Serra de Santa Justa, Pias, Castiçal, Flores, Santa Iria and Banjas*. The municipalities of Gondomar, Paredes and Valongo, were aware of the importance of this territory of almost 6000 hectares for the Metropolitan Area of Porto, thus deciding to work together for its development, constituting for this the Association of Municipalities *Parque das Serras do Porto* with headquarters in Valongo.
- The *Parque das Serras do Porto* currently has an essentially forestry objective and constitutes a refuge for a **diversity of protected species**, such as the gold-stripped salamander (*Chioglossa lusitanica*), the water lizard (*Lacerta schreiberi*), the bat (*Chiroptera*), the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the Killarney fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) and other fern types (*Culcita macrocarpa*), the cyclamen-flowered daffodil (*Narcissus cyclamineus*), among many others.
- The space presents an interesting geological history with more than 500 million years, in which the formation of **Valongo Anticline** stands out as a huge modeler of the topography.
- In these hill ranges, we also find rivers flanked by mills, rural villages and their agricultural lands, gold, coal and slate mines, as well as Palaeozoic trilobite fossils, much older than dinosaurs.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://serrasdoporto.pt>

## LOCAL NATURAL RESERVE OF THE DOURO ESTUARY

The **Local Natural Reserve of the Douro Estuary** (*Reserva Natural Local do Estuário do Douro*) is integrated into the Portuguese network of Protected Areas. Placed in the Greater Metropolitan Area of Porto, it is located south of the mouth of the river Douro, in the municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia, namely, between this city and the town of Porto. It covers a total area of approximately 62 hectares.

- The reserve has a **dune zone** known as 'Cabedelo', which extends across 37,1 hectares, and an interior estuary-type area that includes a small marsh. Both ecosystems, **estuaries and contiguous wetlands** are important habitats and have high biodiversity. They are also home to numerous marine organisms, as well as a resting and feeding location for numerous birds.
- The Douro Estuary is part of the migratory route of numerous species of birds called the "East Atlantic Route", since it integrates a chain of "service stations" along the migration route, functioning as important stops and for physical recovery across the thousands of kilometres linking the north of Europe to the African continent. One of the priorities of the reserve is to ensure the conditions of tranquillity and continuity necessary for the migratory and nesting bird fauna, as well as the preservation of the dune vegetation of the area.
- It is estimated that **more than 18 thousand wild birds** of 80 different species use the reserve for at least one of the activities, either as a refuge or simply looking for food and rest. Traveling through the mentioned landscapes, the visitor can enjoy here an interpretive centre and two observatories.
- The marsh area of final part of the Douro Estuary - Cabedelo and the *Baía de S. Paio* - presents a huge landscape and natural value. It comprises rare species such as the western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) and the purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*).
- As for the flora, you can find some protected plants such as a rare Campanulaceae (*Jasione maritima*) or a European type of Centaurea (*Centaurea sphaerocephala*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/amb-reg-loc/res-natur-local-estuar-douro>

## PARK OF SERRALVES

The **Park of Serralves** (*Parque de Serralves*) is a **National Monument** located in Porto; it has 18 hectares and is composed of a great diversity of magnificent harmoniously interconnected spaces: formal gardens, woodlands and a traditional farm.

- Its history is divided into three moments: the features of the garden of the late nineteenth century, the *Quinta do Lordelo* and the *Quinta do Mata-Sete*; the garden of Jacques Gréber for the *Casa de Serralves*; and the landscape of the Museum of Contemporary Art.
- The two prizes already assigned to the Park of Serralves are of particular interest: the award for innovation in the field of environmental education of the Portuguese Association of Museology in 1996 and the “Henry Ford Prize for the Preservation of the Environment” in 1997.
- One of the qualities of the Park of Serralves is the **diversity of its arboreal heritage**. This includes more than 8000 specimens of woody plants, representing approximately 230 species and varieties, autochthonous and exotic.
- The native flora has some rare species like the yew tree (*Taxus baccata*, in danger in Portugal) and other example of the Portuguese flora like the stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), the maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*), the chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*), cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), common oaks (*Quercus robur*), the common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*, protected by law), the laurestine (*Viburnum tinus*) and the hazel tree (*Corylus avellana*).
- A visit to the Park of Serralves, in any of its circuits with different routes and durations, is a privileged opportunity to be in contact with nature and appreciate the diversity of its natural heritage. Furthermore, the gardens and the Park are also the scene of a graphic museum: in your visit to the Park, you can see **sculptures** that are permanently exposed works from the collection of the Serralves Foundation.



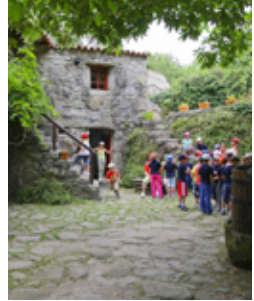
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.serralves.pt/pt](http://www.serralves.pt/pt)

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### NATURE OF VILA NOVA DE GAIA

#### ► BIOLOGICAL PARK

The **Biological Park of Vila Nova de Gaia** (*Parque Biológico de Vila Nova de Gaia*) is a permanent centre for environmental education that displays the ecosystems of the region. Its 35 hectares include a circuit for the discovery and interpretation of nature. Along a journey of about 3 km, visitors have the opportunity to observe Iberian fauna and flora as they discover the river Febros, which runs across this park. It also has a **recovery centre for wild animals**, found injured or illegally detained in captivity.



#### ► PARK OF LAVANDEIRA

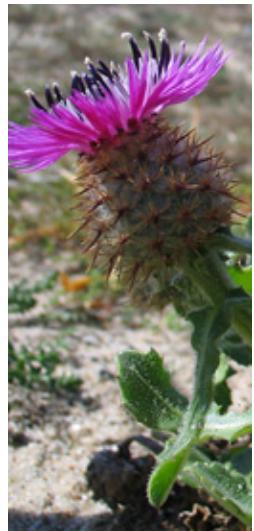
Born from the old *Quinta da Lavandeira*, the park, with the same name (*Parque da Lavandeira*), is a genuine **green oasis in Vila Nova de Gaia**. We highlight the richness of its flora, in particular its variety of trees. In this large space, it is possible to enjoy a lake and several theme-gardens.



#### ► PARK OF DUNES

To travel along the fluvial and maritime coast of Vila Nova de Gaia is to travel mostly through **dunes**. Traveling through the dunes allows knowing a space that transports us from the urban areas to the immensity of the sea. It is possible to make a self-guided tour across them for which it is only necessary to contact the Park of Dunes (*Parque das Dunas*).

It is also a botanical garden. It illustrates how nature recovers when given the opportunity by humans, as spontaneous native plants arose in an apparently sterile sandy area. There are dozens of species, but two plants of the dunes only exist in the Coast of Douro (*Douro Litoral*): the coinca (*Coincya johnstonii*) and the so-called "borla azul" (*Jasione lusitanica*). The Kentish plover, (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) discreetly makes its nests among this vegetation.



## BOTANICAL GARDEN OF PORTO

The **Botanical Garden of Porto** (*Jardim Botânico do Porto*), now integrated in the *Museu de História e da Ciência da Universidade do Porto*, was set up in the former *Quinta do Campo Alegre* in 1951. It has about 4 hectares and is organized into three levels with very different characteristics.

On the first level, the formal gardens, which are separated by tall centennial Camellias and influenced by arts and crafts. On the second level, there is a garden of xerophytes with various cactus (*Cactaceae*) and succulent plants where you can find the cactus greenhouse, the tropical greenhouse and the orchid greenhouse (*Orchidaceae*). Finally, you can find the arboretum at the lowest level, with the collections of conifers, native plants, the *fetario* and the largest lake in the Garden.



## GARDENS OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE

The **gardens of the Crystal Palace** (*Palácio de Cristal*) in Porto were projected in the 19th century by the architect Émile David and have always been a privileged setting for several events. From there you can enjoy dazzling views of the river Douro and the sea.

Its name comes from the Crystal Palace that was built there in the 60's of the 19th century. Currently, the gardens occupy an area of about 8 hectares. It has exotic plants and rare large trees, roses, fountains, a lake with ducks, swans and various animals, and a playground.



## CITY PARK

Located in the city of Porto, the **City Park** (*Parque da Cidade*) covers 80 hectares of green areas. This is the largest urban park in Portugal that extends to the Atlantic Ocean. The use that has been given to stone is of utmost importance, using stone from the demolition of buildings to create support walls.

The park has almost 11 kilometres of paths for use and enjoyment of the visitor. There, you can find species of flora such as pine (*Pinus pinea*), maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*), plane trees (*Platanus spp.*), Populus (*Populus spp.*), oaks (*Quercus spp.*), common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*), willows (*Salix alba*) or European white birches (*Betula alba*), among others. It also has large areas dedicated to leisure and rest.

The City Park was chosen by the '*Ordem dos Engenheiros*' as one of the "100 most notable works of the 20th century in Portugal". This is paramount for anyone visiting the city of Porto.



## PORTO GEOLOGICAL WALKS

The rocks of the Seashore (*Orla Marítima*) are the oldest in Portugal and a geological heritage of great scientific and educational interest, classified as Municipal Natural Heritage.

With a view to the dissemination, preservation and appreciation of this Geological Heritage, the **Geological Walk of Foz do Douro** in Porto was created in 2005. Throughout this thematic tour, visitors can observe a diversified geological record with scientific and educational value, in particular, multiple lithologic features, geological structures and geomorphological aspects.

Independent visits to the Geological Walk of Foz do Douro can be done at any time of the day, since the route is marked with nine scientific information panels for the public. However, it is advisable to consult a tide table since some outcrops are only visible during low tide, and to use comfortable clothes and shoes.



## THE RIVER LEÇA

The **river Leça** starts in Monte Córdova, in the municipality of Santo Tirso, whose basin has an area of 189,9 km<sup>2</sup> and 46.750 km length from the source to its mouth in the port of Leixões, in Matosinhos. Its hydrographic basin is limited to the north and northeast by the river Ave basin and to the south and southeast by the river Douro basin.

The River Leça and the Leça Valley are the most important natural heritage asset of **Maia**. In its banks, a great part of the history of Matosinhos and Maia was created as the mills and their miller activity brought wealth to the region and shaped the agricultural activity. Its vast hydrographic network fed agriculture and brought prosperity to the region.

Among the several species that can be found along the banks of the Leça, one of the least common is the white sage.

The bird fauna of the area stands out. Here, it is possible to observe **several species of typical birds** of different habitats, such as urban, rural and riparian. From the urban, for example, the common sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), the common pigeon (*Columba livia*), the collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*). Of rural habitats, the hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), the common black birds (*Turdus merula*), the tawny owl (*Strix aluco*), and the riparian, the common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) or the common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). The Great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) has also been spotted, present on the coast and flying over the Leça River.

Regarding the ichthyofauna, the only species with a confirmed presence are a kind of local cyprinid fish (*Achondrostoma oligolepis*) and the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.visitmaia.pt](http://www.visitmaia.pt)

## PARK OF THE RIVERBANKS OF THE RIVER *UÍMA*

The **Park of the Riverbanks of River *Uíma*** (*Parque das Ribeiras do Rio Uíma*), integrated in the parishes of Fiães and Lobão in **Santa Maria da Feira**, combines several systems of wetlands, land areas and human occupation zones. Here you can see very rich spaces regarding the diversity of habitats, housing a large number of plant and animal species.

The development and care of the margins of the river *Uíma*, in particular through interventions for the preservation of biodiversity and conservation of the ecological corridor, set the conditions to closely observe natural habitats. It is possible to **travel by bicycle**, understanding river ecosystems with protection status, and to observe the cycles of annual transformations in a harmonious balance between natural conditions and humanized systems.



## MOUNT OF *SÃO BRÁS*

The **Mount of *São Brás*** (*Monte de São Brás*) is located in **Matosinhos**, on the right bank of the river *Leça*, on a granitic outcrop that collapses abruptly to the river. In its perimeter, it houses the chapels of *São Brás*, dedicated to *N. Sr<sup>a</sup> do Livramento*, and Martyr *São Sebastião*, at an altitude of 70 m. The first is oriented towards the west and has an extensive staircase; the second is oriented to the north at a higher elevation, turning its back on the river *Leça*.

The chapel of *São Brás* (*Capela de São Brás*) is surrounded by a wide churchyard of beaten earth and by large trees, mainly cork oaks (*Quercus suber*), Platanaceae trees (*Platanaceae*), pines (*Pinus*), and cedars (*Cedrus*). The San Sebastián chapel has a viewpoint in the back from where a remarkable stretch of the *Leça* valley can be seen. At the top of the mount, there is an incomplete sculpture, popularly known as the "*Homem da Maça*"; it is probably a warrior or a mythical hero. Currently, the mountain is densely wooded, prevailing eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*) and acacias (*Acacia mill*).





**MINHO**



## MINHO AN INDELIBLE ESSENCE



Minho is a historic region of Portugal located in the northwest of the country; it covers 24 localities, approximately 4930 km<sup>2</sup>, and integrates completely the districts of Braga and Viana do Castelo. The Minho region leaves no one indifferent, as it has everything. Here is where Portugal was born; thousands of birds seek their home in each migratory period, here the beaches surprise you, but also the views from the top of the mountains. Here, rivers are also fundamental as a key element in shaping the landscape.

Guimarães has medieval origin, its roots date back to the 10th century. In addition to its history, we highlight its beauty and the green of its gardens. The UNESCO classified it a World Heritage Site.

Located in the heart of Minho, Barcelos is nature. Here the panoramic mountains and the rivers Cávado and Neiva stand out, as well as a set of small streams that create places of natural beauty and relevant value throughout the territory.

Moreover, the municipality is the only one in the Iberian Peninsula that is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the category of crafts and traditional art.

This municipality grew and developed at the crossroads between the cities of Braga, Guimarães and Porto, at the top of the mountains, on the waters of the rivers Ave and Este that cross Vila Nova de Famalicão, and thanks to the fertility of its agricultural lands.

Braga has the largest network of pedestrian routes in the country, totalling about 280 km. This network crosses the nature that surrounds the city with experiences about four main themes: 'The City and Nature', 'Paths with History', 'Rivers' and 'Mountains and Valleys'.

In Viana do Castelo, the following spaces are clearly differentiated: coastal habitats and halophytic vegetation, marine and inland dune habitats; freshwater habitats and forest habitats, which helps you get an idea of the variety it offers.

Even when the visitor knows what is going to be seen, Minho catches the heart with its diversity, leaving an indelible mark on any visitor. It has a National Park, a Natural Park and a multitude of protected areas to preserve its potential and beauty.



## NATIONAL PARK OF PENEDA-GERÊS

The **National Park of Peneda-Gerês** (*Parque Nacional de Peneda-Gerês*) is the only place with this classification in all of Portugal, and it is only 30 km from Braga. Its 69.605 hectares extend through the northwest corner of Portugal, sharing more than 100 kilometres of border with the southwest of the province of Ourense, in Galicia; in fact, it is a continuation of the Natural Park of Baixa Limia e Serra do Xurés, and together they form the Cross-border Biosphere Reserve of Gerês-Xurés.

- This National Park comprises the **Serra da Peneda** and the **Serra do Gerês** and granite rocks predominate; another important geological aspect is the presence of glacial forms such as U-shaped valleys, glacial cirques or rock shelters, proving the important climatic variations that have occurred in the past.
- In the area, human life develops in full harmony and synchronization with nature. Its inhabitants do so by living in small population centres - as there are **more than one hundred villages** - always in the plainest areas, with good solar exposure and close to water lines. Roads cross the park, but to discover and enjoy it, the best option is to know it by foot.
- Different shades of green cover the mountains, plagued by various exceptional ecosystems. The heights are over 700 meters, reaching 1545 in Nevosa, in the Serra de Gerês.
- In terms of fauna, diversity is remarkable, with endemic, rare, or very limited species in this great natural space. Large mammals can be seen, such as the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus*), the roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and the wild goat (*Capra pyrenaica*).
- The National Park also has cattle, hence, an evidence of its extension, being home to countless, diverse and numerous species, even those considered rare or whose survival is threatened, such as two species of butterflies (*Euphydryas aurinia* and *Callimorpha quadripunctata*),



## MINHO

two others of beetles (*Lucanus cervus* and *Cerambyx cerdo*) and a species of slug, the Kerry slug (*Geomalacus maculosus*).

- The mountain and plateau watercourses have several species of fish, such as the panjorca (*Chondrostoma arcasii*) and the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). The Iberian frog (*Rana iberica*), the Iberian newt (*Triturus boscai*) and the gold-stripped salamander (*Chionoglossa lusitanica*) are just some examples of other species associated with water lines, the amphibians. In addition, there are up to twenty species of reptiles, among which the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), the smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*), the snub-nosed viper (*Vipera latastei*) and the Portuguese viper (*Vipera seoanei*), which are threatened in Portugal.
- The bird fauna of *Peneda-Gerês* is one of the groups with more species,

however, this diversity depends on the time of year, since many are migratory. Due to its state of conservation, it is worth mentioning the hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), the red-billed croucher (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*), the whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*) and especially the common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), since these birds only reproduce in this place of the country.

- Regarding its flora, the National Park of *Peneda-Gerês* has an **enormous botanical diversity** with several endemic species and other of high value for the conservation of nature.
- Furthermore, it has a privileged geographical condition as this National Park receives the influence of the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Continental climates; so, its flora is adapted to these climatic conditions.



- Among its most characteristic habitats is the oak forest with some of the most important oaks (*Quercus*) of Portugal. In areas of Atlantic influence, with a more temperate and rainy climate, the oak forest is dominated by the common oak (*Quercus robur*) combined with the chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*), the sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and the common pear (*Pyrus communis*). In areas at higher altitudes, the common oak is replaced by the Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*), sometimes associated with the birch (*Betula alba*). Although less frequent, there are also cork oaks (*Quercus suber*). It is also worth mentioning the existence of riparian vegetation, common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) and common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with narrow valleys and fast watercourses. In regions above 700 meters in altitude, yew tree forests (*Taxus baccata*) are also observed, sometimes accompanied by Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*), common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) or birch (*Betula alba*).
- Peat bogs are formed in humid scarce areas, thus a priority habitat in Portugal. The wet soil and the lack of oxygen prevents the total decomposition of organic matter that accumulates and forms peat (a natural coal). In addition, semi-natural habitats such as Scots pine forests and mountain meadows also contribute to its biodiversity and landscape richness.
- This park is an idyllic paradise of pure nature. However, it is very well-adapted and prepared for the enjoyment of the visitor, who shall be seduced by the landscapes, waterfalls, villages, peaks and forests with an endless supply of activities at hand; pedestrian walks through different circuits of different lengths, horseback riding, mountain biking, canoeing, flora and fauna observation activities, or adventure sports, all in this incomparable setting.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/pnpg>



## NATURAL PARK OF THE NORTHERN COAST

The **Natural Park of the Northern Coast** (*Parque Natural do Litoral Norte*) comprises 18 kilometres of coastline with its 476 hectares covering all the beauty existing from the mouth of the river Neiva to the municipality of Viana do Castelo. Everything is here; the visitor can enjoy complex dunes, paradisiacal beaches, the sea, the rivers and their estuaries, the hill ranges, the scenic viewpoints and the pine forests... In short, a full experience. This park also offers the ideal place for water sports.

- It is an area facing the sea with a lot of remarkable aspects. As for the **beaches**, those of Ofir, Espo-sende and Apúlia are the most visited, since we are also facing one of the main tourist destinations in the country, however it is also possible to find quieter beaches, such as Bel-linho or Rio de Moinhos. As for the rivers, the main ones are the Neiva and the Cávado and their estuaries have the most biodiverse areas, in-habited by species such as the lam-prey or the eel, also the refuge of grey herons and cormorants.
- A mandatory stop is in the **muni-cipality of Apúlia**, with a beach and extensive sandy area, as well as a lake housing various species during migration.
- As for vegetation, reed plants (*Phragmites australis*) can be found in the lagoon, surrounded by several forests of willows (*Salix*) and oaks (*Quercus*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/p-nat/pnlN>

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## PROTECTED LANDSCAPE OF *CORNO DO BICO*

The **Protected Landscape of Corno do Bico** covers an area of 2181,2 hectares and is located in the municipality of **Paredes de Coura**, just 50 kilometres away from cities such as Braga or Viana do Castelo.

- It is a **mountainous area**, with rounded contours, with precisely 883 meters of altitude. *Corno do Bico* is the elevation of highest altitude. Granite, the dominant rock in the region, brings uniqueness to the landscape.
- As for vegetation, the oak forest is dominant, with 25% of thrush. It is a mixed forest, dominated by deciduous species, among which the common oak (*Quercus*) and the common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) stand out. In total, there are 439 species of flora in *Corno do Bico*, being several of them especially relevant for possessing varied degrees of endemism, such as the *Bruchia vogesiaca*, the *Narcissus cyclamineus*, the *Veronica micrantha* and the *Brioerytrophillum campylocarpum*.
- The fauna is equally diverse: **188 species of vertebrates**. The diversity of habitats favours the great variety of animals. Here you can find, among others, the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*), the gold-striped salamander (*Chioglossa lusitanica*) or the Portuguese viper (*Vipera seoanei*).
- Given the high importance of the conservation of this variety of habitats and species, *Corno do Bico* is also included in the **Natura 2000 Network**.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/pnpg>

## PROTECTED LANDSCAPE OF THE BERTIANDOS AND SÃO PEDRO D'ARCOS LAGOONS

The **Protected Landscape of the Bertiandos and São Pedro d'Arcos Lagoons** (*Lagoas de Bertiandos e São Pedro d'Arcos*), with an approximate extension of 345,48 hectares is located in the district of **Viana do Castelo**. It is also a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**).

- Here, we stand out the **diversity of biotopes** associated with a continental humid zone, including habitats and priority conservation species. To appreciate all this, it is only necessary to look at the registered flora species, which amount to 508. Iberian endemism is present, in particular of some rare and threatened species, conferring a great flower value to this area.
- Although the Protected Landscape has a small dimension, it presents a **diversity of vertebrates** that is considered valuable and significant. Up to 9 species of freshwater or migratory fish, 13 species of amphibians, 11 species of reptiles, 41 species of mammals and 144 species of birds were inventoried. It should be noted that 25 species of terrestrial and freshwater vertebrates have been identified, having high conservation priority being a vast majority associated with wetlands.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www2.icnf.pt/portal/ap/pnpg>

The **Coast Geopark of Viana do Castelo** is a project for the local development of the municipality of Viana do Castelo based on the conservation of geological sites of relevant importance and undeniable beauty, with obvious historical-cultural interest and biodiversity.

- Among the 36 geosites already inventoried in the municipality, classified and evaluated across the Geopark area (320 km<sup>2</sup>), 13 stand out by the scientific exceptionality of the preserved geological elements, allowing their classification as **Natural Monuments**. Six of them are in the coast of Viana do Castelo and estuary, being: *Pavimentos Graníticos de Gatenha*, *Alcantilado de Montedor*, *Canto Marino*, *Pedras Ruivas*, *Ínsuas do Lima* and *Ribeira de Anha*. The points of interest of all of them are the settlement and evolution of the coastal mountains, the environments of the recent past and man in the geological space.
- **ProGEO 2016 Geoconservation Award** awarded the *Geoparque Litoral* (Coast Geopark) project and the already concluded classification. It has been recognized since 2017 as a Geopark to be included the UNESCO world network.



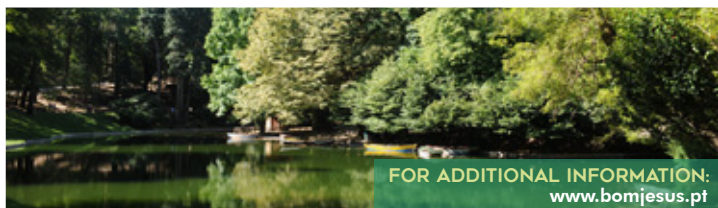
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.geoparquelitoralviana.pt](http://www.geoparquelitoralviana.pt)

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### BOM JESUS DO MONTE

Considered one of the most romantic places of Portugal, this natural park located next to the iconic **Bom Jesus do Monte**, in **Braga**, is an invitation to discover unknown tracks and mysterious caves, viewpoints, rustic bridges and refreshing green spaces.

In the Park there is a **great diversity of tree species**, some rare, and exuberant vegetation. In addition to offering a magnificent view over the city of the archbishops, the visitor can enjoy a pleasant boat ride on the artificial lake, take a ride on horseback or travel in time aboard the centennial elevator inaugurated in 1882, the oldest in the world in operation among those that use water for power. In *Bom Jesus do Monte*, art has the perfect marriage with nature. The whole set of architectural and natural heritage is a candidate for World Heritage Site.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.bomjesus.pt](http://www.bomjesus.pt)

### GARDENS OF THE BISCAINHOS PALACE AND MUSEUM

The **Gardens of the Biscainhos Museum** in **Braga** are one of the most notable examples of the Baroque Green Zone that can be enjoyed in any city. They unfold in three terraces, namely, the Formal Garden, the Fruit Trees Orchard and the Orchard. The Formal Garden is an area composed of a plant structure of secular shrub, with a defined and complex geometric design, with two monumental “greenhouses”, the “Casas de Fresco” (equally secular), moulded in circular sequences of *Camellia japonica*. This is an environmental area of great relevance, one of the lungs of the city of Braga.

We highlight a **tulip with more than 270 years** and 27,4 meters of height, classified as a tree of “public interest” by the National Forestry Authority (AFN) for its “extraordinary qualities”; the diameter of the crown reaches 19.9 meters and is of the species *Liriodendron tulipifera* L., commonly known as the “tulip tree”.



## PARK OF S. JOÃO DA PONTE

Located in the centre of the city of **Braga**, this urban park brings together two different green spaces. The oldest outer part grew around the Chapel of S. João, being a densely woody space with gardens, a lake, a Calvary, an open-air auditorium and an evocative monument of the Revolution of April 25, which celebrates freedom and democracy.

On the inner side of the park, we can observe **different tree species of native flora** and representative of different latitudes of the world: the coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), the common oak (*Quercus*), the Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Cedars (*Cedrus*), the laurel tree (*Laurus nobilis*) and the cypress (*Cupressus*).



## THE RIVER CÁVADO

The **river Cávado** starts in the Serra do Larouco at an approximate altitude of 1,520 meters, passes through **Braga** and **Barcelos** and ends in the Atlantic Ocean after a journey of 135 kilometres. As for nature tourism, it is the main resource of Barcelos, taking advantage of it through various activities.

The river Cávado divides the municipality in two and bathes 14 of its parishes, thus causing areas of great tourist interest with fluvial beaches, landscapes, leisure areas and sports activities, bird watching areas, etc. We highlight the **Lagoons of Caíde** in the parish of Areias de Vilar; a place of great environmental value that is currently a sanctuary of biodiversity and refuge of bird fauna; it is one of the many natural refuges the river Cávado has in Barcelos and that can be discovered by boat or through interpretive tours across its banks. The riverbanks also contribute to the area's great value in terms of biodiversity.



## MOUNT OF THE *FACHO*

From the top of this place, which is less than 8 km away from the city of Barcelos, it is possible to have a fabulous view of the city of Braga, Barcelos and Vila Verde, as well as of the upstream route of the river Cávado from Braga to the Atlantic.

It is surely **one of the most privileged viewpoints of the Minho** and is located opposite *Bom Jesus* de Braga, which is perfectly visible from the southern slopes of this place, as well as the hill range of Gerês. It also has the Cávado Valley at its feet to the south, the immensity of the mini-holding properties and the Neiva Valley to the north, making it possible to appreciate the two slopes of the Minho, more humanized and industrialized to the south and more rural and natural to the north.



## NEIVA VALLEY

The **Neiva Valley** (*Vale do Neiva*) is a relevant natural area in the municipality of **Barcelos**. Here, the intervention of man increased the charm of the landscape. The characteristics of the watercourse of the river Neiva withstand the landscape identity of the valley, where primary resources such as agriculture in small walled plots and its huge heritage of mills are still the basis of the population's means of support.

The fauna of the river environment is made up of species such as trout (*Salmo trutta*), common barbel (*Barbus barbus*), Iberian nase (*Chondrostoma polylepis*), European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and otters (*Lutrinae*). We also highlight the clarity and quality of the waters of the river itself.

The ethnographic traditions of the Neiva Valley transport the visitor to a past-present and to a natural sustainability where all resources are used.



## MOUNTAIN OF THE PENHA

The **Mountain of the Penha** (*Montanha da Penha*) in **Guimarães** has an area of 1140 hectares. It is considered a place of extreme importance for the population, not only for the visual impact it has on the city, known as 'the city' lung in landscape terms and for its varied aspects: religion (with great concentration of people of faith since 1702), culture (caves and hermitages), sports (mountain biking, Bike Trials and Downhill), leisure (with pedestrian routes through the rails, cable car and guided tours of minibus) and the environmental aspect, as it has an important ecological diversity in terms of fauna and flora.



## PARK OF THE DEVESA

Inaugurated in 2012, the **Park of the Devesa** (*Parque da Devesa*) is a significant event in the history of **Vila Nova de Famalicão** and in the life of its inhabitants. It was the success of a dream of more than 50 years. In addition to having completely changed the look of the municipality allowing the conclusion of a series of works of urban restoration, it also changed the lifestyle of its citizens, promoting healthy habits such as sports and greater care with nutrition. It has 23 hectares of green area, crossed by a river, a lake and several cultural facilities. Other elements present in the park stand out, as the reconstitution of the balneário castrejo, a mill with educational characteristics, and the "ilha dos amores".

The park was built in a previous location of a Farm (*Quinta*) (*Quinta da Devesa*), preserving many of the trees that existed there, planting more than 2200 new trees, mostly native species. Other 37 thousand new plants and wide meadows were also planted in the park, receiving also an artificial lake, roads and resting locations.



## NATURE OF VIANA DO CASTELO

The municipality of **Viana do Castelo** has large part of its natural resources catalogued in the **Natura 2000 Network**, specifically the river Lima area, the North Coast area and the *Serra de Arga*.

In these territories there are relevant habitats of flora and fauna, diverse landscapes and traditions. Culture and heritage blend with the landscape to offer fantastic views. In addition, Viana do Castelo has **several pedestrian routes**; a municipal network of 26 routes that make their way along the coast, by the sea, on the banks of the river Lima, or across its green mountains.

There are also three **horse-riding tours** that offer the visitor a global view of the area, which are complemented by signalling panels and a web platform.



An aerial photograph of a coastal area in Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain. The image shows a wide, sandy beach with many people and umbrellas. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a deeper blue in the bay. In the background, there are several large, forested islands or headlands. The text "PROVINCE OF PONTEVEDRA" is overlaid in the center of the image.

**PROVINCE OF  
PONTEVEDRA**

PROVINCE OF PONTEVEDRA

## EXPERIENCING THE FEELING



The province of Pontevedra is located to the southwest of Galicia and limits to the north with the province of A Coruña, to the south with Portugal, to the east with the provinces of Lugo and Ourense, and to the west with the Atlantic Ocean. It has a total area of 4495 km<sup>2</sup> and is a celestial territory in terms of natural areas.

Thus, the presentation letter of the area cannot be other than the National Maritime and Land Park of the Atlantic Islands (*Parque Nacional Marítimo Terrestre de las Illas Atlánticas*), highlighting the archipelago of the Cíes Islands, in Vigo. You will get to the place convinced that you will find the best beaches in the world, but just by observing them from the city of Vigo you will understand that Cíes is much more. A magical immensity that overwhelms those who visit the area, and not only in the first time. It is difficult to find places of greater natural and scenic interest.

This province is a magical land where thousand streams are born and end, we find town halls like Lalín, which offers rural landscapes to be lived, felt and enjoyed, and to connect with nature. Everyone needs the peace these lands offer.

The province limits to the west with the Atlantic Ocean, this means that life is constantly linked to the sea; this is what happens in Vilagarcía de Arousa, which has a window to the sea from its privileged location in the beautiful *ría de Arousa*.

As for the city of Pontevedra, capital of the province, it also treasures a great variety of natural landscaping wealth. Here you can discover a diverse flora and fauna, as in *Xunqueira da Gándara*, a step away from the city centre, or in *Río dos Gafos*, both Natural Spaces of Local Interest.

Being able to enjoy all these visual experiences cannot be described with words, the sunsets over the beauty of the sea, the charm of its rural areas, the cultural and gastronomic heritage of the area; the link with nature must be lived. You must experience this feeling.



## NATIONAL MARITIME AND LAND PARK OF THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS

The **National Maritime and Land Park of the Atlantic Islands** of Galicia (*Parque Nacional Marítimo Terrestre das Illas Atlánticas de Galicia*) is the first and only space with this category of the Galician autonomous community and the second in the national territory of maritime-land nature. We are in the presence of a natural paradise of protected steep cliffs and marine bottoms of exceptional wealth. These islands are linked from the *ría de Arousa* to the *ría de Vigo*. The National Park **comprises four archipelagos**, three located in the province of Pontevedra, *Cíes*, *Ons* and *Cortegada*, and the *Sálvora* archipelago, located in the province of A Coruña.

- Guarded by the cannons of the ancient sunken ships in the area, the diverse sea beds of this National Park hide true **natural treasures**. The variety of scenarios that can be contemplated in this space is unimaginable; in addition to the sea bottom, we find majestic cliffs, beaches with a supernatural beauty, bushes, dunes, idyllic places with a large number of species: **more than 200 types of algae** sheltering and raising large numbers of fish and molluscs, seabirds, and even plants adapted to live among the sands of the dunes or in the narrow crevices of the cliffs.
- Each one of the archipelagos of the Natural Park contributes to its attractiveness, adding even more magic and diversity.
- Moreover, it has also been awarded with the 'Starlight' label, an international campaign in defence of the quality of the night skies and the right to observe the stars. The cleanliness of the sky in the area converts the Natural Park into a nocturnal spectacle that allows **astrological observation** practically throughout the year.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)



### THE CÍES ARCHIPELAGO

Located in the *Ría de Vigo*, the **Cíes Islands** are the main attraction of the National Park. An archipelago of 3,091 hectares composed of the Islands of *Monteagudo*, *Faro* and *San Martiño* and the islets of *a Agoreira o Boeiro*, *Penela dos Viños*, *Carabelos* and *Ruzo*. It is a **Natural Park** since 1980 and part of the **Natura 2000 Network**. It is a Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPAB**) and a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**).

- It has the **beach of Rodas**, which acts as a natural bridge between the islands of Monteagudo and Faro, and the "*Lago dos Nenos*" (currently called "*O Lago*"), being catalogued countless times by various rankings as **the best beach of the world**; fine golden sand, calm and crystalline waters, and a forest of pines (*pinus*) protecting the sand. All this gives the archipelago a great biological and geomorphological importance.

## PROVINCE OF PONTEVEDRA

- The Cíes has an **extraordinary wealth** in terms of flora and fauna, both terrestrial and marine. The most abundant animal species in the natural park is the yellow-legged gull (*Larus michahellis*), the most numerous world colony.
- The flora is scarce due to the environmental conditions and location, but the resistance to these phenomena is precisely what gives it a very high ecological value. The Galician coast has one of its richest underwater ecosystems surrounding the Cíes archipelago, where the important **brown seaweed forest** stands out.
- Besides offering diverse ecosystems in which a very varied vegetation flourishes, the Islands are internationally known for hosting important populations of marine birds, as well as non-marine species of birds and other kinds of vertebrates, especially reptiles.
- It also stands out for its contrasts, while the east part offers views of the *ría de Vigo* and quiet and protected beaches, the west side of the islands has high and steep cliffs, above 150 meters.
- The Cíes can be visited throughout the year privately and during vacation periods by public transport, although to do so it is necessary to request a permit, in both cases. It has a campsite where visitors can spend the night as it takes more than a day, and even more than one visit, to discover all its beauty.
- These islands were populated in the past, and the ruins of the Monastery of San Esteban have currently an Information Centre, in the Faro Island. Although there are many places on the islands from which to admire its landscape, there are **several viewpoints** that provide outstanding sceneries, the views from the different Lighthouses: the *Faro de Cíes*, the *Faro da Porta*, the *Faro de Monteagudo*, the *Pedra da Campá* or the *Alto del Príncipe*. All of them signposted, as well as the **four available routes**, located between the Faro and Monteagudo islands with itineraries of different distances and slopes.
- It is **necessary to require an authorization** -free of charge- to visit the islands. It is a measure carried out merely to control compliance with the maximum daily quota of visitors. This authorization can be obtained online and requested one month before the visit by accessing:

[www.autorizacionillasatlanticas.xunta.gal](http://www.autorizacionillasatlanticas.xunta.gal)



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)



## THE *ONS* ARCHIPELAGO

It covers a total of 2,641 hectares and is located in front of the **Ría de Pontevedra** being composed of the islands of *Ons*, *Onza* and the islet *Freitosas*. It is also classified as Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPAB**).

- On the island of *Ons*, the **dunes** and the **Melide beach** stand out. Still populated, this island has an added value: the existence of a small nucleus of rural-coastal population, which gives it even more charm. At the top, a lighthouse guarded by lighthouse keepers gives the final touch to a unique landscape.
- The surroundings of the *Faro de Ons* also have spectacular views and the archipelago of *Sálvora* can even be seen from there, along with the coastal towns of the area. There are also several viewpoints, including the *Fedorentos* viewpoint, which offers a panoramic view of the island of *Onza*, the *Cíes* Islands, the *Costa de la Vela* and the continental area close to the archipelagos.
- Its flora is, above all, scrub: heather (*Ericaceae*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), ferns (*Racheophyta*), genista (*Genista*), broom (*Retama sphaerocarpa* L) and common gorses (*Ulex europaeus*). Trees are reduced to willows (*Salix*) and common alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) in small watercourses, and to a lesser extent there are some specimens of eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus*), pine (*Pinus*) and Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*).
- In summer and Easter, it can be visited by public transport. It can also be enjoyed throughout the year if you have the possibility of going by private boat.
- The best way to enjoy the islands is through the indicated itineraries, since they show the main points of interest in the area. There are four routes of varied distances so that anyone can be able to enjoy them.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)



## THE CORTEGADA ARCHIPELAGO

Located in the interior of the *Ría de Arousa*, at the mouth of the river Ulla, it totals an area of 191 hectares and comprises the Islands of *Cortegada*, *Malveira Grande y Chica*, *Briñas* and the islet of *Cón*.

- This archipelago has a **very flat relief**, setting a main difference from the rest of the oceanic islands that make up the National Park. Its enclave protects its islands from the harsh sea erosion, which means that its bottoms are more covered with sands, widely used by the inhabitants of the area for the cultivation of clams.
- As for the flora, the interior of *Cortegada* Island keeps a humid formation of laurel and other trees that surround the abandoned town and its hermitage (religious retreat). On *Malveira Grande* Island there is one of the rare forests of Pyrenean oak (*Quercus pyrenaica*) of the Atlantic coast, being in optimal conditions.
- In *Cortegada* there is an information point where you can learn about the assets of the island. There are two circular routes to cross it and the almost flat topography makes the visit a pleasant walk in which you can enjoy the beauty of the area.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)



## NATURAL PARK OF MONTE ALOIA

The **Natural Park of Monte Aloia** is located at the southern end of the **Serra do Galiñeiro**, just 30 kilometres from the city of Vigo. It was the first Natural Park declared in Galicia with an area of 746.29 hectares. It is also included in the **Natura 2000 Network**.

- It has an irregular topography since its altitude ranges between 80 meters and the 629 meters from *Alto de San Xáio*. It totals 100 kilometres of trails in a unique landscape with five viewpoints and wonderful views over the river Miño.
- *Monte Aloia* is currently the result of a repopulation that took place more than one hundred years ago at the beginning of the 20th century by the mountain engineer Rafael Areses Vidal (whose house is today the visitor centre). Thanks to this engineer the park presents a great diversity of shrubs that includes, among others, cypresses (*Cupressus*), European silver firs (*Abies alba*) and cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*), creating an important biodiversity in the area. The vegetation is abundant; centenary exotic trees are mixed with small portions of autochthonous forest. The abundance of fungi is also interesting.
- The fauna is made up of common species such as the rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), birds of prey, amphibians and reptiles.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/monte-aloia>

NN  
2000 THE SAN SIMÓN BAY

The *San Simón Bay* (*Ensenada de San Simón*) is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located at the bottom of the *ría de Vigo*. It is a marine plain at the junction of the tides and the mouth of the river Verdugo, similar to a lake.

- The area is rich in bivalve shellfish such as the clam (*Pelecypoda*), the cockle (*Cardiidae*) or the oysters (*Ostrea*) and in water birds such as the snowy heron (*Egretta thula*), the sparrow hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) and a large number of waders (*Charadriiformes*). Occasionally, there are also bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and other kind of dolphins.
- It belongs to several town councils, including Pontevedra, and houses the *San Simón* archipelago. The area has a total extension of approximately 7 kilometres.
- The archipelago consists of four islands: *San Bartolomé*, *San Antonio*, *San Simón* and *San Norberto*.
- The most relevant, because of its history, is that of *San Simón*; it operated as a lazaret, prison for republicans, shelter of the Guard of Franco and orphanage for children of sailors. It was restored in the nineties and it currently has an Interpretation Centre.



Photo courtesy of Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.turismo.gal/recurso/-/detalle/16802/enseada-de-san-simon](http://www.turismo.gal/recurso/-/detalle/16802/enseada-de-san-simon)



## SERRA DO CANDÁN AND MONTES DO TESTEIRO

The **Serra do Candán** is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of 10.699 hectares. It forms landscapes of half mountain with a special orography with peaks like the *San Bieito* (1015 meters) or the *Monte Testeiro* (1004 meters). It covers several municipalities, including **Lalín**.

- On the northern slopes of the *Montes do Testeiro*, the **Zobra reserve** stands out, an impenetrable oak forest with chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*), European white birches (*Betula*) and common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*); there are many animals that feed on the latter's fruit during the winter.
- The fauna of Candán is also of great interest, for its variety and, above all, for the presence of species that are unusual in other locations. Also a great variety of forest birds, mammals (especially bats) and insects, with some species of rare butterflies such as the *Gonopterys rhamni*, the *Polygonia c-album*, the *Leptidea synapsis*, the *Anthocharis cardamines*, etc.
- The rivers **Lérez** and **Umia** are born in this hill range, as well as many streams. Here we also find the river that gives its name to the region, the **Deza**, with beautiful waterfalls.
- The species of flora and fauna contribute to its huge ecological value. All this set offers a wide range of colours that varies during the year.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://turismo.lalin.gal>



## RIVERBANKS OF THE RIVER *LÉREZ* AND THE *COBO* ISLAND

The river *Lérez* is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) included in the **Natura 2000 Network**.

- The river characterizes the city of **Pontevedra**, its banks have a lush forest that leave a typical picture of the Galician rivers along with its course, worth observing whenever you have the chance.
- This river also features the Island of *Cobo*, with 70.000 m<sup>2</sup>, or the *Isla de las Esculturas* (Island of Sculptures), a fluvial island of 7,6 hectares with numerous sculptural pieces inside, ideal for walking combining nature and culture.
- The flora is of a great variety of tree species, creating a shady environment during hot summers. Trails are also settled on both sides of the river to make the connection with nature.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.turismo.gal/recurso/-/detalle/31817/illa-das-esculturas](http://www.turismo.gal/recurso/-/detalle/31817/illa-das-esculturas)



## THE LAND OF THE TEN THOUSAND LITTLE STREAMS

The **river Deza** is a tributary of the river Ulla. It is born in the *Serra do Testeiro*, near Lalín, and has a length of 51 km. Its fluvial system is very representative due to its biodiversity, with endangered flora and fauna of high ecological value.

- This river is part of the **Natura 2000 Network**, but it is not the only one in this network of the Lalín municipality; the **river Arnego** and its cork oaks area (*Quercus suber*) are also protected since it is located on the banks of this river, being one of the best preserved mixed forests in Galicia; in addition, some of its specimens reach 25 meters in height.
- The fauna also finds in this place a refuge, hence, this Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) features, among other species, otters (*Lutrinae*) and river mussels (*Margaritifera margaritifera*), one of the last breeding populations of the whole European continent are still in the river Arnego; besides, its presence indicates a very clean environment, free of contamination.
- Both rivers can be seen perfectly from **Monte do Carrio**, one of the best natural viewpoints in the area.
- The truth is that you can find almost in any corner of Lalín of crystalline water rivers and a tradition of trout (*Salmoninae*).



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://turismo.lalin.gal>

The *Fraga de Cataós* is a **Natural Monument** located on the outskirts of the municipality of **Lalín**.

- It is a woodland of 45.185 square meters with exceptional examples of common oaks (*Quercus robur*), cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) and chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*), some of the latter reaching 30 meters in height and exceeding 5 meters of perimeter, considered to be those with the highest annual growth rate in Europe. They were planted at the beginning of the 19th century and its history can be seen from its majesty.
- The woodland is also called 'Carballeira de Quiroga' because a few meters away from it there is a palace that belonged to a family named Quiroga.
- Walking through the *Fraga de Cataós* is pleasant and easy, the intensity and beauty of the landscape can be enjoyed walking an easy **circular route**, perfectly signposted, with interpretive panels and an estimated duration of one hour.



## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### O CASTRO

Located in the centre of the city of **Vigo**, it is the park with the best panoramic views of the city. Its location does not imply that it is an urban park as **O Castro** is the opposite. A mount in the heart of the city and the place of the first population settlement. On the lower slope of the mount, you can visit its **castrexo archaeological site** to see what Vigo was like between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC.



### MOUNT OF THE GUÍA

This is another mount in the city of **Vigo**. It was used centuries ago as a point of orientation to enter the port of the city, being one of its most visible references from the sea. Today it is **one of the most visited viewpoints** of the location as the perspective is spectacular and from here you can see the magic of the *ría de Vigo*.



## PAZO MUSEO QUIÑONES DE LEÓN

The **Pazo Museo Quiñones de León** (manor house museum) in the park of **Castrelos** is one of the jewels of **Vigo**. It has a farm of 24,3 hectares that form the park, which is crossed by the river Lagares; a space full of charming places and where old trees stand out. The park has an outdoor auditorium that hosts various concerts every summer.





**PROVINCE OF  
A CORUÑA**

PROVINCE OF A CORUÑA

## SUBMERGING IN BEAUTY



The province of A Coruña is located in the northwest of the Euroregion. It has an area of 7950 km<sup>2</sup>, and borders the province of Lugo to the east, Pontevedra to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west. It is a large window to the coast that can help you imagine the immensity and beauty of its natural spaces.

The space that occupies the northwest segment of the coast of the province is known as the 'Costa da Morte' (Death Coast). There are dozens of kilometres of cliffs, inlets, deserted beaches and capes, which penetrate a sea of wild waters. At the beginning of this area we find the municipality of Carballo, extending along 187 km<sup>2</sup> of an unmistakable horizon, full of legends and mysteries.

It is also worth mentioning the Ártabra Coast. In Ferrol there are the best natural viewpoints from which to enjoy incomparable panoramic views.

A Coruña is the most populated province of Galicia, but not to the detriment of its ecosystems; Riveira is located here. It has an exceptional charm, being the only Galician town hall with a differentiated area in a Natural Park and in a National Park. Also of exceptional beauty, the city of A Coruña has 10 square meters of parks and gardens for each of its citizens. It also has large sandy beaches and a 10 km seafront that invites you to feel the magic of the place.

It is also worth mentioning the flora and fauna of this territory, surprising in innumerable occasions. In Narón for example, as far as vegetation is concerned, they one of the oldest magnolias in the continent, dating from the late eighteenth century, the '*magnolia grandiflora* of Santa Rita de Xuvia' with more than 6.5 meters of stem perimeter.

Finally, although it could well be the beginning, you cannot visit the area and skip Santiago de Compostela; who said that 'all roads lead to Rome' did not know Santiago, nor the charm of the pilgrimage routes to the Galician capital, nor the infinity of possibilities that they offer. Afar the paths, its parks and gardens also deserve mentioning, since they embellish a city that already has a supernatural charm.

To all the above we must add a National Park, two Natural Parks, a Biosphere Reserve and an infinity of protected places. Enjoying its coastline is key to understanding its beauty. It is definitely a place to visit.



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF THE *MARIÑAS CORUÑESAS AND TERRAS DO MANDEO*

The *Mariñas Coruñesas* and *Terras do Mandeo* is a **Biosphere Reserve** comprising 116.724 hectares, just over 14% of the province of A Coruña, distributed among seventeen municipalities and coinciding with the metropolitan area of the city of **A Coruña**. It is located in the area of the Cantabrian-Atlantic coast of Galicia.

- It is an area of **great biological diversity** that includes coastal and mountain ecosystems. It covers the coastline of the ría de Betanzos and the ría de Burgo and two large river basins, those of the Mandeo and Mero rivers. It frames both coastal and mountain areas, reaching its maximum altitude of 841 meters in the 'Monte da Cova da Serpe'.
- This Reserve has more than 97% of land, the rest being marine environment. It hosts **great wealth of wild species** in terms of flora and fauna, representing both the marine and coastal environment, such as the continental environment of the Atlantic Biogeographical region.
- It also includes huge cultural diversity due to the use of natural resources and the conservation of local livestock breeds. The population is slightly less than 200,000 inhabitants.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[http:// marinasbetanzos.gal/es](http://marinasbetanzos.gal/es)



## NATURAL PARK OF THE DUNE COMPLEX OF CORRUBEDO Y LAGUNAS DE CARREGAL E VIXÁN

The **Natural Park of the Dune Complex of Corrubedo y Lagunas de Carregal e Vixán** is located in the municipality of **Riveira**, between the *ría de Arousa*, *ría de Muros* and *ría de Noia*, and has just under 1000 hectares of protected space. It is the most visited Natural Park of Galicia and one of the most important enclaves of the natural heritage of the community. In addition to this classification, the 'Corrubedo Wet Complex' is also included in the **Natura 2000 Network** as a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and the Park is protected by other mechanisms that preserve the area classifying it as Protected Wetland, Wetland of International Importance-Ramsar and Area of special protection of natural values.

- It has the largest **mobile dune** in the peninsular northwest, more than 1 km long, 250 meters wide and more than 20 meters high, resulting from the combined action of the sea and the wind. It is the main attraction of the park; the prevailing winter winds move it a few centimetres every year inland due to the lack of vegetation.
- The park also has two lagoons; the **lagoon of Vixán**, a sweet lagoon that feeds on the waters of the Muíño stream and only communicates with the sea at very specific moments; and the **lagoon of Carregal**, of salt water, which maintains communication with the sea through different channels, and therefore its waters have higher salinity.
- Both form such unique habitats that the flora and fauna have very special characteristics. **More than 3,000 water birds** live here, as it is a Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPAB**).
- There are **five itineraries** that allow knowing the environment in depth and assure the visitor the enjoyment of the main resources of this place. Those unforgettable places are the Vilar beach, the mobile dune, both lagoons (*Vixán and Carregal*) and the *Río do Mar*. In addition to previous ones, the area has numerous important spaces such as the *Pipín* tumulus, the fortification *castro* (fortification) of *Porto Baixo*, the ethnographic group of the *Amendo* mills, the *Casa da Costa* (visitor reception centre) and the CIELGA (Interpretation Centre of the coastal ecosystems of Galicia - "Centro de interpretación de los ecosistemas litorales de Galicia").



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/complejo-dunar-corrubedo-lagoas-carregal-vixan>



## NATURAL PARK OF FRAGAS DO EUME

The **Natural Park of Fragas do Eume** is located only 60 km from the city of A Coruña and extends across 9000 hectares of lakes, valleys, forests and living, green nature on the banks of the river Eume. It is also a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and comprises five different municipalities with a total population of less than 500 inhabitants, which helps to get an idea of the virgin state of the forests.

- The **river Eume** is approximately one hundred kilometres of total length and carved a deep canyon. In some points, the slopes reach 300 meters of drop and erosion has created different ecosystems where native species still survive; thus, the whole area preserves the original vegetation of the Atlantic forests.
- The environment encourages biodiversity to be high; as for fauna, it is worth noting that we are in the ideal space for amphibians, of which there are more than a dozen species although many more animals that can be found here.
- As for the vegetation, it is worth seeing and enjoying, the beauty is unimaginable. The dominant tree is the common oak (*Quercus*).
- The *Fragas do Eume* have four different access points, without communication between them, although the most visited is the one that leads to the **Caaveiro Monastery**, recently rehabilitated and considered the heart of the park, with an exceptional panoramic view of the surroundings. Admission is free and includes a guided tour.



Photo courtesy of  
Turismo de Galicia

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://parquesnaturais.xunta.gal/es/fragas-do-eume>

## NN 2000 THE SÁLVORA ARCHIPELAGO

The **Sálvora Archipelago** belongs to the **National Maritime and Land Park of the Atlantic Islands**. This National Park includes four archipelagos. Sálvora belongs to the municipality of **Riveira**, in the province of A Coruña.

- It is located in the mouth of the *Ría de Arousa* and is composed of the Sálvora island and islets such as *Vionta*, *Con de Noro*, *Herbosa*, *Rúa*, *Insuabela*, *Gaboteira*, *Las Sagres* and *Forcadiñas*. The Sálvora island, together with the islets of *Sagres*, *Noro* and *Vionta* is also the first Galician space to receive the classification of "*Bien de Interés Cultural*" (**Asset of Cultural Interest**) (*BIC*) in the cultural landscape heading for its enormous environmental, historical and ornithological value.
- The landscape of the Sálvora island is relatively flat on the surface, however the sea bed is irregular due to the numerous islets. The north of the island has an abandoned town. Over the years, the salt and the wind have given way to numerous original sculptures.
- It has **two itineraries**, '*Ruta do Faro*' and '*Ruta da Aldea*', in which the visitor can learn more about the island and enjoy its magic.

It is a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) included in the *Corrubedo* Wet Complex. It comprises a total area of 2557 hectares, of which 248 are land hectares and 2309 are marine.

- To get to Sálvora, the visitor can do it either by private boat, applying for the necessary permits, or by catamaran, since there are several shipping companies that provide this service.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com](http://www.parquenacionalillasatlanticas.com)

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## NATURAL SITE OF *RAZO-BALDAIO*

At the beginning of the Costa da Morte in the municipality of **Carballo**, we find the **Razo-Baldaio protected natural area**, one of the most valuable in Galicia. It is a wetland of outstanding ecological importance included in the **Natura 2000 Network** and declared a Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPAB**).

- It is a gift for the eyes due to its landscape mixes of exceptional beauty, beaches, open sea, a lagoon and a marsh. A line of more than 3 km of dunes (some up to 20 meters) links *Baldaio* with the *Razo* beach, thus forming **one of the most extensive sandy areas of Galicia**.
- **Baldaio** is one of the most important wetlands in Galicia; a beach, a lagoon and a marsh. The sea penetrates inland and mixes with the fresh waters from the rivers of the area, thus creating the marsh.
- A bar of dunes completes the wetland, uniting it to **Razo**; a beach you cannot forget, open sea to the Atlantic with sunsets of intense colours that fade behind the *Sisargas* Islands. As for the significant geology, *Razo* is a fossil beach. In this aspect, the beach of *A Pedra do Sal* is also interesting as the fractures in the rocks are evidence of the formation of small faults, small breaks in the land due to the movements of the earth crust.
- The fauna of the place is also remarkable. *Baldaio* stands out in this aspect due to the special nature of its ecosystem, being each year the refuge of thousands of birds in their autumn and spring migratory routes. Marshes are also one of the most productive places on the planet, hence the shellfish abundance, especially the cockle (*Cardiidae*), the clam (*Amarilladesma mactroides*), the mussel (*Mytilidae*), the oyster (*Ostrea*)...
- The flora of this natural space also enjoys great diversity due to the varied nature of the ecosystem; small but resistant plants due to the difficult living conditions imposed by the environment.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
<http://www.turismocarballo.com/info.php?sec=13&idioma=gl>

NN  
2000

## COAST OF FERROL

The **coast of Ferrol** is part of the **Ártabra Coast**, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It is the perfect place to enjoy nature and the sea with plenty of wonderful beaches of fine white sand and crystal clear waters, with almost virgin vegetation.

- Among the great variety of existing options, **four beaches** stand out, which year after year achieve the blue flag award: the *Doniños* beach (almost 2 km of sand with dune area, a wetland with a lagoon and a marine promenade), the *San Xurxo* (in spite of its paradisiac appearance, precaution is necessary when bathing. It is ideal for activities such as surfing, bodyboarding or windsurfing), the *Esmelle* beach (the natural continuation of *San Xurxo* beach, only separated by rocks) and *A Fragata* beach (also known as *Porto Belo* beach). The beaches of *Santa Comba* and *Ponzos* are also noteworthy, practically virgin sands.
- In Ferrol, the best panoramic views can be seen from the capes *Prioriño* and *Prior*, with their respective lighthouses and **various natural viewpoints** to contemplate in winter the fight of the waves and the power of the sea, and in summer, the best sunsets.
- Two of them must be highlighted; the **Monteventoso viewpoint**, from which you can see the grandiosity of the ocean between the capes, the lagoon and beach of *Doniños* and a magnificent view of the mouth of the *ría*. It is also one of the main points of departure of paragliding activities. In addition, the **Chamorro viewpoint**, next to the hermitage with the same name, also called *Virgen del Nordés*. This is a symbolic place for the Ferrol inhabitants with its impressive view of the city, the *Serantes* valley and the entire *ría*, as well as the towns on the other shore.
- There are **four trails** to enjoy the experience in the area. The 'Ártabra Coast Route' has 50 km of route through the most magical places of the municipality of Ferrol. And three other options; the 'Carreiro Montes de Brión' (10 km) the 'Carreiro Circular: Vistas de Ferrol' (12 km) and the 'Carreiro dos Castelos' (2.5 km).

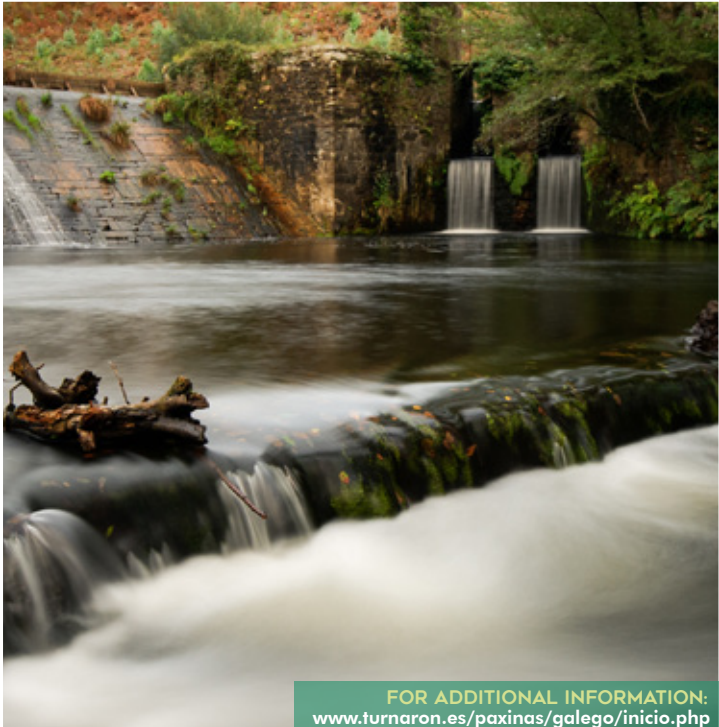




## THE RIVER XUVIA AND THE COAST OF NARÓN

The **River Xuvia** is located in the municipality of **Narón** and gives the municipality numerous natural areas. The space formed by the banks of this river and the banks of the river Castro with an area of 2074 hectares is included in the **Natura 2000 Network** and considered a Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and a Special Bird Protection Area (**SPAB**).

- One of the best natural places of Narón is the *Presa do Rei* with beautiful waterfalls, trees lying almost over the water, forming a unique ecosystem. We can find the Pedroso Recreational Area next to the river, an ideal environment to enjoy a day in the nature. You should also visit the Maritime Promenade of Xuvia (*Paseo Marítimo de Xuvia*), a magnificent place next to the *ría* with a bridge that connects Neda and Narón.
- In this last municipality, beaches are also remarkable with their isolated and virgin contour; the small coves of *Casal*, *Lopesa* and *Hortiña* have white sand and strong waves, the ideal space for nature lovers.
- In the Narón coast and through *Senda Ártabra*, you can walk the entire coast of the municipality by foot or bicycle, with a privileged view and unique features such as a small islet called *Pena Lopesa*.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
[www.turnaron.es/paxinas/galego/inicio.php](http://www.turnaron.es/paxinas/galego/inicio.php)

## OTHER NATURAL AREAS OF INTEREST

### THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE TORRE DE HÉRCULES

The symbol of the city of **A Coruña** stands on a hill 60 meters above sea level with a height of 57 meters: the **Torre de Hércules** (Tower of Hercules) is a lighthouse dating from the 1st century. It is the only Roman lighthouse preserved and the oldest in the world in operation, being declared a **World Heritage Site** by the UNESCO.

Its environment also has the significance of its landscape and the richness of the fauna and flora as it hosts 700 of the 3200 existing species in the municipality. The "*Parque Escultórico de la Torre de Hércules*" (Sculpture Park of the Tower of Hercules) is also located here, an open-air museum of 47 hectares in which you can appreciate the beauty of the sea in a fairy-tale setting.



### PARKS AND GARDENS OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

The landscape of **Santiago** is characterized by the presence of the green colour. From almost anywhere in the city, and especially from its historic centre or old town, there are views of **urban parks** and agricultural spaces or of multitudes of trees on the mounts that surround Compostela.

For centuries, the historic gardens have contributed to this sense of proximity to nature: a group formed by the majestic *Alameda Park* with the *Carballeira de Santa Susana*, the 'Garden City' of the South University Campus, its neighbour *Carballeira de San Lourenzo* and the *Belvís Park*, which continue among the most visited places in the city. Several of them coexist with author architectures, such as the park of *Santo Domingo de Bonaval* -designed by Álvaro Siza- and that of *Vista Alegre*.

Recently, two urban parks have been added to the two million square meters of public green spaces. One is the *Bosque de Galicia*, of 24 hectares, which is located on the slopes of *Monte Gaiás*, on which the City of Culture of Galicia was erected. At its foot and following the course of the river Sar, the *Paseo de las Brañas de Sar* stretches for 4 kilometres into the rural Santiago with seeded fields, mills, and a riverbank forest; then, passing the *Colegiata de Sar*, it arrives at Eugenio Granell Park.



## CAPE AND LIGHTHOUSE OF CORRUBEDO

It is the most suitable point to enjoy the beauty of the Wet Complex of **Corrubedo**, a protected area that extends from the *Sálvora* Island to the *castro de Baroña* (fortification). The natural wealth of the place is completed by the lighthouse, which is currently closed to the public.

Throughout this area, open-sea beaches stand out with its strong waves. However, in the same municipality of Riveira it is also easy to enjoy quiet beaches on the coast of the *ría de Arousa*.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight the variety of existing **natural viewpoints** and the diversity of trails, facilitating the visitor's contact with the flora and fauna of the place and enabling a complete visit that you can enjoy while feeling part of an unbeatable landscape.





A vertical photograph showing two hikers from behind as they walk along a dirt path through a lush, green forest. The hiker on the left is wearing a brown backpack and shorts, while the hiker on the right is wearing a blue backpack and shorts. The path is narrow and appears to be made of dirt and small stones. The forest is dense with various types of trees and undergrowth, creating a canopy of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, casting dappled light on the path. The overall atmosphere is one of a peaceful, natural setting.

**THE NATURAL PATH  
OF THE EUROREGION**

## THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES

The **Way of Saint James** is a pilgrimage with the purpose of reaching the tomb attributed to the apostle Santiago el Mayor, located in the crypt of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. More than 300,000 people a year carry out this pilgrimage path, the oldest in Europe, whether walking, cycling, or riding horse.

- Many of them decide to carry it out for religious or cultural reasons, however, each walker has his/her own reasons, motives, and experience of the Way of Saint James. There are also many who consider it a way to find oneself, to connect with nature and discover oneself in a way hitherto unknown.
- The *Camino* is an attractive proposal and a marking experience. For all pilgrims there is a time before and time after this journey and many repeat it, usually changing the route. Another great wealth of this Euroregion is offering its inhabitants and visitors countless options to carry out this experience.
- The different routes of the camino are crossed by forests, rivers, you can enjoy fabulous views of the sea and, in short, the pilgrim feels part of an exceptional natural environment.
- The UNESCO declared the pilgrimage to Santiago as World Heritage, since between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries this was the most important religious activity of Christianity.

### ► THE FRENCH WAY

There are many roads that lead to Santiago and different cities are crossed along these routes. Thus, **the French Way** is the route par excellence; with **Roncesvalles (France)** as a starting point, it is the busiest itinerary. It goes into Galicia through the province of Lugo. The town of **Sarria** is key in this trail as it is located 111 kilometres from the city of Santiago, being is worth remembering that the minimum distance necessary to obtain 'the *Compostela*' is 100 kilometres; an ecclesiastical document certifying that the pilgrim has made the Way of Saint James.



## ► THE MAR DE AROUSA AND RÍO ULLA ROUTE

The **Mar de Arousa and Río Ulla Route** is a fluvial maritime route along the **ría de Arousa** and the **river Ulla**. This route commemorates the arrival in Galicia by sea of the body of the Apostle Santiago, following, according to the legend, the same journey that his disciples travelled with him. It is therefore the first of the Itineraries, and runs through the municipalities of **Vilagarcía** and **Riveira**, among others.

## ► THE SILVER WAY

The **Silver Way** (*Vía de la Plata* or *Camino del Sureste*), is the longest route joining the Iberian Peninsula from north to south. It goes into the Portuguese northwest through **Bragança** and advances to Galicia through the bridge of the river Tâmega, the natural union of the **Chaves-Verín Eurocity**.

Afterwards, the pilgrims arrive in the city of **Ourense**, a meeting place with many other walkers who decide to start the journey there, since it is from this town where the minimum kilometres for 'the Compostela' are fulfilled. This route and the Winter Way converge in the natural environment of **Lalín**.



## ► THE PORTUGUESE WAY

The **Portuguese Way** to Santiago presents several alternatives. Thus, the route can be made through the Medieval or Central course, which crosses towns such as **Santa Maria da Feira**, **Porto**, **Maia**, **Vila Nova de Gaia**, **Matosinhos**, **Vila do Conde**, **Valongo**, **Famalicão** and **Barcelos**, and goes into Galicia through the province of Pontevedra; the journey through the Interior, a route in which the pilgrim can enjoy steep valleys and a mountainous landscape thanks to the proximity to the Serra do Alvão with cities as **Peso da Régua**, **Vila Real** and **Chaves**; and the variant along the Coast, which owes its name to the fact that the route runs along the coast, sharing sections of the Medieval route, since it also crosses the city of **Porto**, although it later makes its way through **Matosinhos**, **Vila do Conde** and **Viana do Castelo**, among others. It crosses the border flanking the Ría de Vigo.

## ► THE ENGLISH WAY

The **English Way** has as its starting point in the **ports of Ferrol and A Co-ruña**. It receives this name due to many devotees that disembarked in these localities and from here they undertook their way to Santiago, coming from the Nordic countries and the British Islands.

The Ferrol itinerary is the longest, however, the *ría* is the best companion for the pilgrim in this maritime route, a path into the town of Narón, where you can also enjoy the promenade of *Paseo Marítimo de Xuvia*. In **Narón**, the route of this English Way intersects another very ancient path of pilgrimage in Galicia at the location of the Monastery of *San Martiño de Xuvia*, it is the Route of *San Andrés de Teixido*.



## ► THE PRIMITIVE WAY

One of the first routes of which we have evidence is the **Primitive Way**; of high difficulty as it runs across the **high mountain**. It is worthwhile to enjoy the landscape. The route reaches another of its great attractions when the pilgrim prepares to cross the wall, in the city of **Lugo**.

## ► THE WINTER WAY

Given the difficulties the French Way presented, pilgrims established an alternative route that adopted the name Winter Way, since it was especially at this period when the previous route was harder. This new option departs from the French Way in Ponferrada and can be drawn practically following the route of the river Sil. It is also the only variant, among all the itineraries, which runs through the four Galician provinces. In this route the walker gets caught by the area of the canyons of the river Sil and the slopes of the river Miño. Before reaching Santiago, it passes **O Barco de Valdeorras**, goes into the capital of the *Ribeira Sacra*, **Monforte de Lemos** and travels through **Lalín**, since it joins the *Camino del Sureste* in the surroundings of the municipality.

## ► EL CAMINO DE TORRES

'*The Compostela*' is obtained by making at least **100km of pilgrimage**, but these must be completed by foot or on horseback; If the *Camino* is done by bicycle, the minimum distance increases to 200km. That is why **Guimarães** is a privileged point to be one, being one of the starting points of the *Camino de Torres*, since its distance to Santiago is 215km. Although in fact this variant of the route begins in Salamanca and finds its central point in the city of **Braga**.



Therefore, there are many natural connections established between the main cities of the Euroregion, from mountain landscapes, with their summits and valleys, to the steepest cliffs in its enormous coastal extension, passing through hundreds of kilometres of the rivers it treasures. **The Way of Saint James** is one of the ways to go through all these natural areas, but not the only one.

Thus, if the visitor has the indispensable time, it is advisable to use this guide to discover each National Park, each Natural Park, each Biosphere Reserve, each Protected Area... In short, each of the natural spaces that enrich this Euroregion and endow it with an exceptional natural heritage.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[www.eixoatlantico.com/es/servicio-publico/biblioteca](http://www.eixoatlantico.com/es/servicio-publico/biblioteca)

[www.santiagoturismo.com/caminos](http://www.santiagoturismo.com/caminos)

**NOTES:**









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