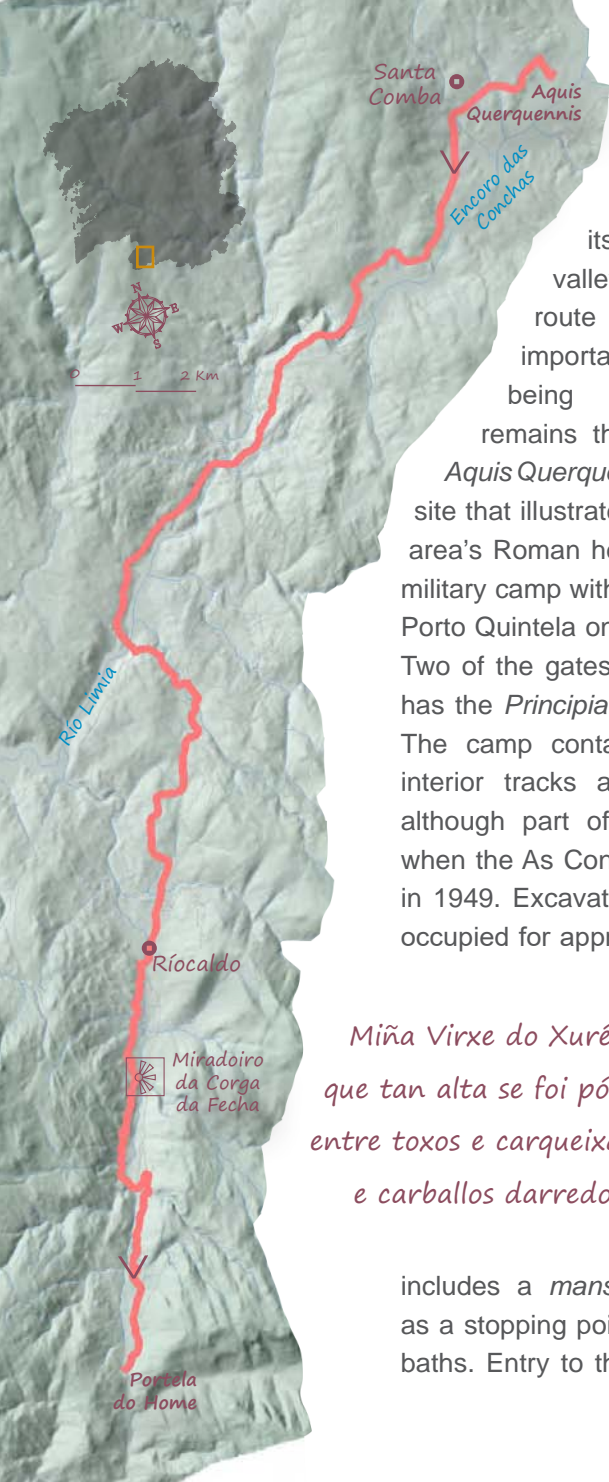




From Aquis Querquennis to A Portela do Home... Roman remains in A Baixa Limia

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The Roman heritage of A Baixa Limia is visible all around in A Baixa Limia, alongside its outstanding natural attractions and magnificent landscape. This pleasant route through the Limia valley visits a series of charming locations, allowing travellers to rediscover the historical routes through the Serra do Xurés, leading to Portugal.



*Miña Virxe do Xurés,
que tan alta se foi pór,
entre toxos e carqueixas
e carballos darredor.*

A Baixa Limia is a county with a character of its own. The River Limia valley has been a through route since ancient times, its importance for communications being confirmed by many remains that can be seen today. Aquis Querquennis is an archaeological site that illustrates the importance of the area's Roman heritage. This rectangular military camp with thick walls is located at Porto Quintela on the banks of the Limia. Two of the gates have been restored as has the *Principia*, or camp headquarters. The camp contains a series of walls, interior tracks and drainage channels, although part of the site was covered when the As Conchas reservoir was built in 1949. Excavations indicate that it was occupied for approximately fifty years (79 AD to 120 AD). Its location on the *Via Nova* would seem to indicate that it acted as a base for operations on this major artery.

The complex also includes a *mansio*, a construction built as a stopping point on the route, and hot baths. Entry to the site is free and there

is a modern interpretation centre providing additional information about its history. This route runs mainly along the old *Via Nova*. From Aquis Querquennis the course of the River Limia leads to the As Conchas reservoir. A short distance downstream lies the Lindoso reservoir in Portugal. The route continues across a modern bridge to Lobios, a significant municipality in the area. The peaceful road then leads to Os Baños, a remarkable complex with hot springs on the banks of the River Caldo, used by the Romans for contrasting hot and cold baths. The traditional villages with their carefully cultivated terraces gradually give way to a mountain landscape dominated by pine trees and rocky outcrops. Small streams, known as *corgas* in this region, flow from the hills and rush down the steep slopes. A Corga da Fecha is the best known. In the heart of the Serra do Xurés, after a small bridge over the River Caldo, the route comes to a series of Roman milestones, and a reconstructed stretch of the *Via Nova* which is a pleasure to walk along. A Portela do Home marks the end of the route, where the road enters Portugal. At 822 metres this iconic mountain pass is the most southerly point in Galicia. On both sides of the border there are areas of great natural beauty.



Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés is a protected natural space, declared a Natural Park in 1993. Located in the south-western corner of Galicia, it comprises a series of mountain ranges (Xurés, Peneda, Laboreiro, Quinxo, etc.) and the River Limia valley, an ecological corridor for the area. The landscape is dominated by mountains, with many round boulders and

pinnacles at the top of the worn peaks, none of which exceed 1,500 metres. The combination of the area's rich historical and ethnographical heritage with its natural attractions creates a space of great cultural and aesthetic interest. Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés, the largest natural park in Galicia, and Peneda-Gerês, Portugal's only national park, form an attractive cross-border protected space.





▼ Serra do Xurés

Aquis Querquennis ▲



Don't miss...

The lookout point at A Corga da Fecha

Road XVIII on the Antonine Itinerary, known as the *Via Nova*, was a Roman road built in the first century AD, linking Bracara Augusta (Braga in Portugal) and Asturica Augusta (Astorga in Castilla y León). In A Baixa Limia the *Via Nova* followed the Limia and Caldo river valleys, where it ran between the Serra do Xurés and Celanova.

The *corgas* are mountain streams. In A Baixa Limia the term is very common, as there are numerous such streams flowing down the granite walls of the Sierra de O Xurés.

The Fecha is a small tributary of the River Caldo. "Fecha" means "stream" so that Corga da Fecha would mean something like "the course of the stream". Other *corgas* such as the Carballón, Curro and Revolta flow into it. The volume of water in the streams varies according to the season, winter and spring being the periods when the flow is greatest.

With a drop of over two hundred metres, the Corga da Fecha is an impressive sight and one of Galicia's highest waterfalls. The water cascades over a series of rock shelves, falling from one level to the next.

On the road leading up to A Portela do Home there is a lookout point that allows the Corga da Fecha to be seen from a distance, so that it can be fully appreciated.

