



# From Ourense to Ribadavia... down the Miño to O Ribeiro

23

The Miño plays a key role in Galicia's geography and culture. This route follows its course from the city of Ourense to Ribadavia, through the wine-producing county of O Ribeiro.

It combines culture, nature and scenery, passing through areas where the legacy of Rome is in evidence and lands where the climate is almost Mediterranean.





Ourense is one of the largest cities in Galicia, its population being the third largest in the region. Water plays an important role in the life of the city, in the River Miño and its hot springs. A walk through the city offers an attractive combination of heritage, nature and good food, accompanied by some of the province's fine wines. The historic centre has many features of great interest, including the Cathedral, devoted to Saint Martin, which is in Romanesque style but subsequent rebuilding has introduced other influences. As Burgas is a seventeenth-century spa, though its hot springs have been used since ancient times, and today's visitors can still bathe in hot water in the centre of the city. Other charming corners include the Praza do Trigo, Eironciño dos

Cabaleiros and Praza da Madalena. The itinerary begins at A Ponte Vella, a Roman bridge reconstructed in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, a strategic point on the Vía da Prata, the Silver Way to Santiago. It was declared a Historical and Artistic Monument in 1961. There is a beautiful view

*Se queres tomar un bo viño,  
ó pasar polo Ribeiro  
vai por Castrelo de Miño.*

from the Chapel of Os Remedios. The route follows the banks of the Miño, taking in various bridges, including the Ponte do Milenio, an avant-garde bridge completed in 2001 which is a lookout point in itself. The route continues to descend along the left bank of the Miño until it

reaches the Termas de Outariz Park. In the section from Barbadás to Toén, the leafy riverside woods give way to extensive vineyards. The vines are protected by the river valley and grow well in the area's warm summers. The arrival of autumn fills the landscape with glowing colours. The route to Ribadavia passes the Castrelo Marina, a successful initiative combining recreational activities and hydroelectric power. Nearby, in the area round the reservoir, the beautiful Santa María de Castrelo Church overlooks the surrounding countryside from a hill above the river. Ribadavia, the capital of O Ribeiro, stands beside the River Avia, which flows into the Miño just outside the town. Its cultural heritage and the rich culture of its wine fully justify an unhurried visit.

▼ O Ribeiro vineyards

Ribadavia in the evening ►







There are many reasons for visiting **Ribadavia**, capital of *O Ribeiro do Avia*, an important wine-producing centre since ancient times and a Historical and Artistic Site since 1947. Surrounded by rolling hills, in the centre of the valley where the Avia flows into the Miño, it is a historical town that retains mediaeval features like A Alxama, the formerly prosperous Jewish quarter, which has left its architectural and culinary mark on the city's life. Important historical sites include Praza Maior, a square with porticos which is a popular meeting point; the rounded, Baroque home of the Counts of Ribadavia; the Santo Domingo complex, including the convent of the same name, the Virxe do Portal Church and, of course, the sixteenth-century castle of the Sarmiento, Counts of Ribadavia, where the route ends.



*Don't miss...*



The hot springs at Outariz are located on the right bank of the Miño. They can be reached from our route via a pedestrian bridge. Outariz and A Burga de Canedo form a large spa area, with hot springs producing water at 60° and various hot and cold bathing facilities.

## *Parque Náutico de Castrelo*

Documented since the ninth century, vine cultivation is known to have been introduced here by the Romans around the third century. The favourable climate and the properties of the dry soil on the slopes of the Avia, Miño and Arnoia valleys led to the development of a long wine-making tradition and a culture linked to wine.

Large areas of vineyards were lost in 1969, when the Castrelo de Miño reservoir was built. The surprisingly calm reservoir, the province's inland sea, stretches from Castrelo to San Paio, extending to the Laias spa and Barbantes.

Visitors can enjoy the changing colours of the vineyards on the banks of this vast expanse of water. To the north, the curious rock formations at Pena Corneira (675 metres), known as the *Menhir do Ribeiro*, are just visible.

The Marina is a centre for sport and recreational activities in the county. The Club Náutico has an excellent reputation and the rowing course is considered one of the best in Spain, attracting rowers from all over Europe to train and compete there.

The combination of sporting activities, walks, recreational areas and fine food and wine make a visit to the Castrelo Park highly recommendable.

