

galicia

hidden heritage



XUNTA DE GALICIA

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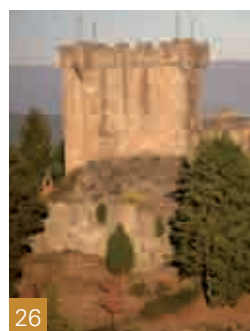
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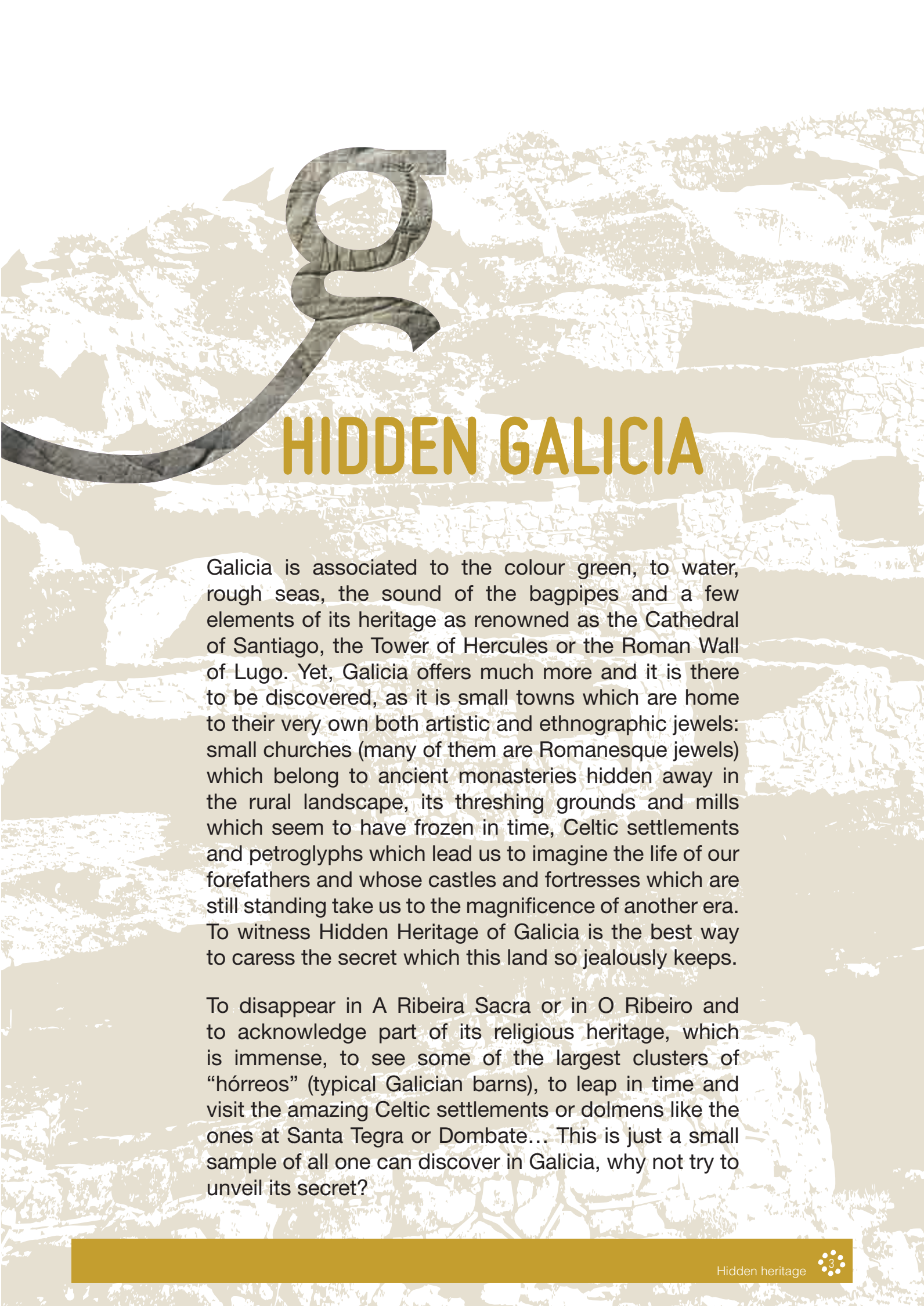
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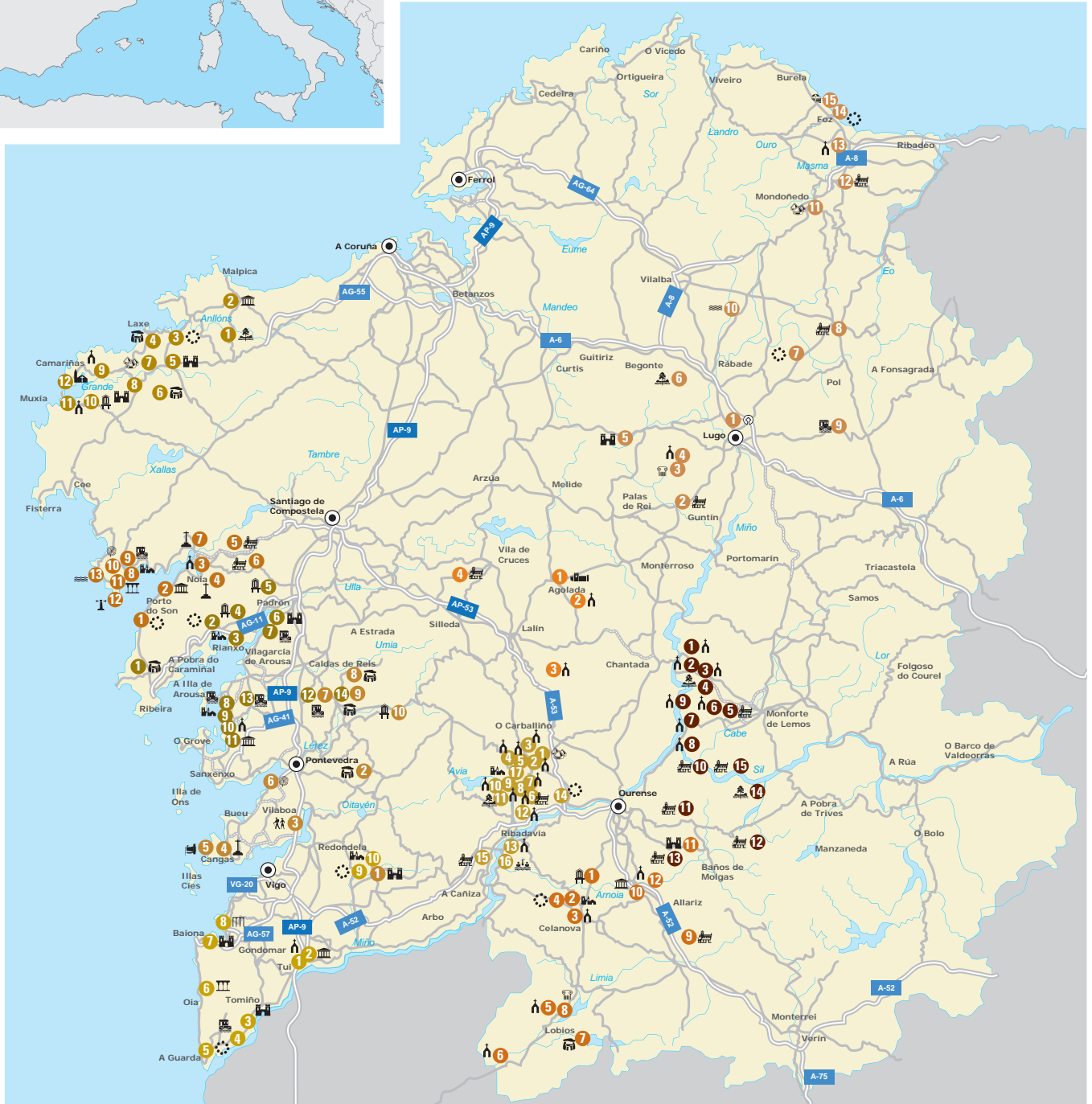
HIDDEN GALICIA

Galicia is associated to the colour green, to water, rough seas, the sound of the bagpipes and a few elements of its heritage as renowned as the Cathedral of Santiago, the Tower of Hercules or the Roman Wall of Lugo. Yet, Galicia offers much more and it is there to be discovered, as it is small towns which are home to their very own both artistic and ethnographic jewels: small churches (many of them are Romanesque jewels) which belong to ancient monasteries hidden away in the rural landscape, its threshing grounds and mills which seem to have frozen in time, Celtic settlements and petroglyphs which lead us to imagine the life of our forefathers and whose castles and fortresses which are still standing take us to the magnificence of another era. To witness Hidden Heritage of Galicia is the best way to caress the secret which this land so jealously keeps.

To disappear in A Ribeira Sacra or in O Ribeiro and to acknowledge part of its religious heritage, which is immense, to see some of the largest clusters of “hórreos” (typical Galician barns), to leap in time and visit the amazing Celtic settlements or dolmens like the ones at Santa Tegra or Dombate... This is just a small sample of all one can discover in Galicia, why not try to unveil its secret?



Hidden heritage








Motorway / Dual carriageway	
High capacity road	
Others	

Proposed experiences

The treasures of the “Costa da Morte” (Death Coast)

1	Verdes recreational area		Natural area
2	Forno do Forte ecomuseum		Museum
3	Borneiro Celtic settlement (castro)		Castro culture
4	The Dombate dolmen		Dolmen
5	Torres do Allo towers		Castle
6	The Pedra Cuberta dolmen		Dolmen
7	The Mosquetín fulling mills		Ethnographic area
8	Vimianzo castle		Castle
9	Santiago de Cereixo church		Church
10	The Ozón granary (hórreo)		Granary
11	San Xiao de Moraime church		Church
12	Virxe da Barca sanctuary		Sanctuary

A piece of history on the Muros and Noia estuary

1	Baroña Celtic settlement (castro)		Castro culture
2	Baroña Celtic settlement interpretation centre		Interpretation centre
3	Santa María A Nova church		Church
4	A Fonte stone cross		Stone cross
5	San Xusto de Toxos Outos monastery		Monastery
6	San Vicente de Augas Santas monastery		Monastery
7	The Descent of Eiroa stone cross		Stone cross
8	The town of Muros		Historic ensemble
9	The Pozo de Cachón tide mill		Mill
10	Laxe das Rodas petroglyph		Petroglyph
11	San Francisco de Rial convent		Convent
12	Louro lighthouse		Lighthouse
13	Louro lagoon		Lagoon

The Arousa estuary: windmills, water and tides


1	Axeitos dolmen		Dolmen
2	Large and small Neixón Celtic settlements (castros)		Castro culture
3	The town of Rianxo		Sea town
4	The Araño granary (hórreo)		Granary
5	The Imo granaries		Granary

6	Torres de Oeste		Castle
7	Vento de Catoira mills		Mill
8	Mareas da Seca mills		Mill
9	Fefiñáns manor (pazo)		Historic ensemble
10	Santa Mariña de Dozo church		Church
11	The wine ethnographic museum		Museum
12	The river Barosa mills		Mill
13	The Serén mills		Mill
14	Campo Lameiro archaeological park		Archaeological park

From stone to stone across the south of Galicia

1	Sobroso castle		Castle
2	Tourón archaeological centre		Archaeological centre
3	PRG-102 Riomaio mills trail		Hiking route
4	O Hío stone cross		Stone cross
5	Mount Facho de Donón		Viewpoint
6	Mogor petroglyph		Petroglyph
7	The river Barosa mills		Mill
8	Gargantáns stone		Archaeological area
9	Campo Lameiro archaeological park		Archaeological park
10	Eira de Pedre		Granary


















Celtic settlements, mills and “sambenitos”...

1	Tui cathedral		Cathedral
2	Tui Diocesan museum		Museum
3	Goíán military castle		Castle
4	Picón and Folón mills		Mill
5	Santa Tegra Celtic settlement		Castro culture
6	Santa María de Oia monastery		Monastery
7	Baiona “Parador” (state run manor/hotel)		Castle
8	Ramallosa medieval bridge		Bridge
9	Troña Celtic settlement		Castro culture
10	The town of Mondariz-Balneario (Spa)		Historic ensemble











Stone secrets






1	Old popular Agolada market		Historic heritage
2	Santa María de Ventosa church		Church
3	San Pedro de Vilanova church		Church
4	San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery		Monastery

Romanesque gems in the Ribeiro
















1	Arenteiro ethnographic park		Ethnographic area
2	Virxe da Saleta sanctuary		Sanctuary
3	San Xiao de Astureses church		Church
4	San Martiño de Cameixa church		Church
5	San Mamede de Moldes church		Church
6	San Clodio de Leiro monastery		Monastery
7	Santa María de Gomariz church		Church
8	San Miguel de Lebosende church		Church
9	Santo Tomé de Serantes church		Church
10	Santa María de Lamas church		Church
11	Pena (rock) Corneira		Natural area
12	Santa María de Beade church		Church
13	San Xes de Francelos church		Church
14	San Cibrao de Las Celtic settlement		Castro culture
15	Santa María de Melón monastery		Monastery
16	Prexigueiro springs		Springs
17	Pazos de Arenteiro		Historic ensemble

Crossing Lugo from the interior to the coast













1	The Lugo wall		World Heritage
2	Ferreira de Pallares monastery		Monastery
3	Santalla de Bóveda nymphaeum		Roman heritage
4	Bacurín church		Church
5	Friol fortress-museum		Castle
6	Pena das Rodas rock		Natural area
7	Viladonga Celtic settlement		Castro culture
8	Santa María de Meira monastery		Monastery
9	Castroverde mills		Mill
10	Cospeito lagoon		Lagoon

11	Mondoñedo Os Muíños neighbourhood		Ethnographic area
12	San Salvador de Lourenzá monastery		Monastery
13	San Martiño de Mondoñedo basilica		Basilica
14	Fazouro Celtic settlement		Castro culture
15	Arealonga beach		Beach

The Ribeira Sacra: among vineyards and monasteries

1	Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño church		Church
2	San Paio de Diomondi church		Church
3	San Martiño da Cova church		Church
4	Cabo do Mundo (Cape of the World)		Natural area
5	Santa María de Ferreira monastery		Monastery
6	San Miguel de Eiré church		Church
7	Santo Estevo de Atán church		Church
8	San Vicente de Pombeiro church		Church
9	Santo Estevo de Chouzán church		Church
10	Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil monastery		Monastery
11	San Pedro de Rocas monastery		Monastery
12	Santa María de Xunqueira de Espadanedo monastery		Monastery
13	Santa María de Montederramo monastery		Monastery
14	The river Mao canyon		Natural area
15	Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery		Monastery

Ourense: enchanted stones

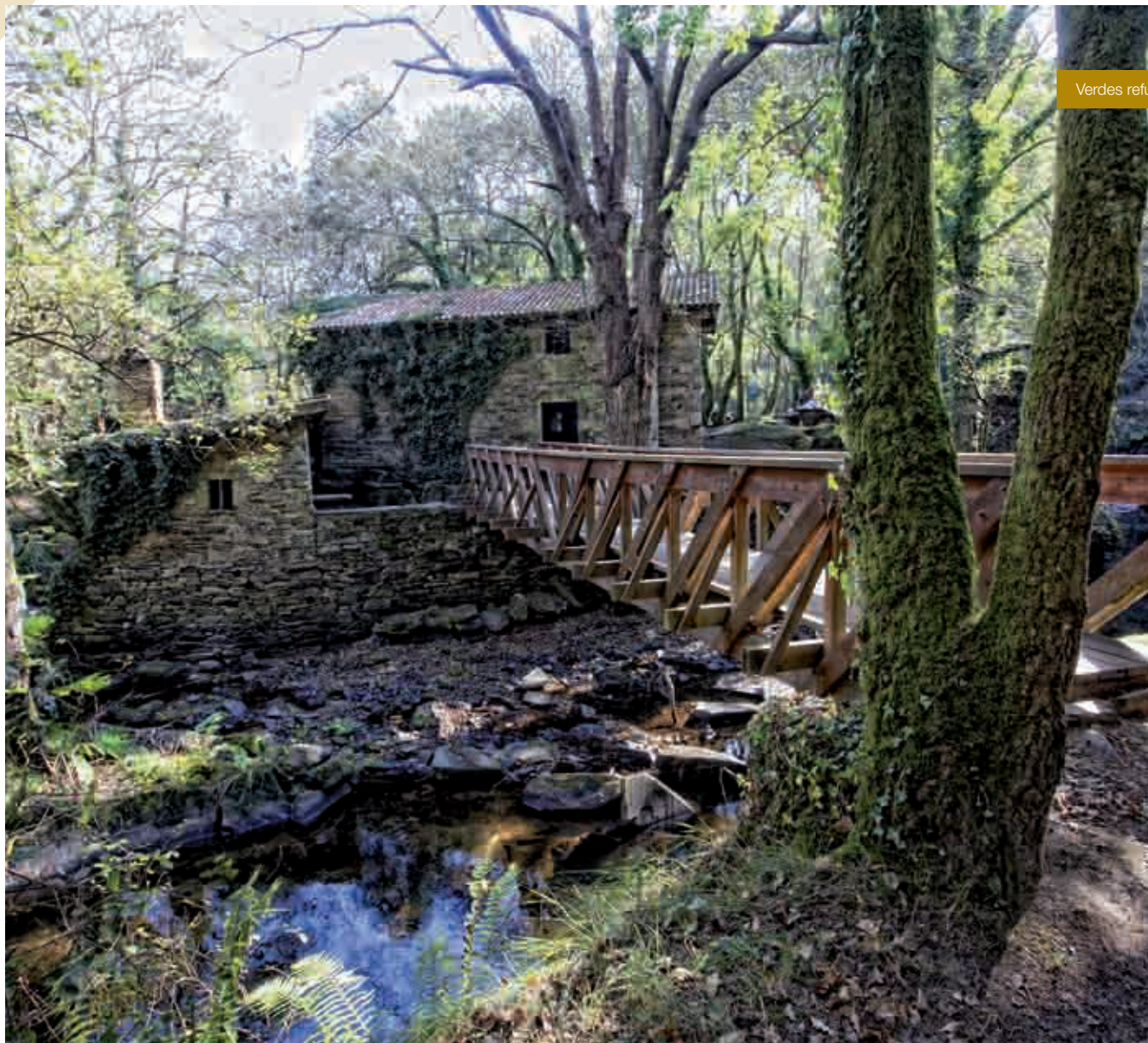
1	The Merca group of granaries (hórreos)		Granary
2	Vilanova dos Infantes		Historic ensemble
3	San Miguel de Celanova chapel		Chapel
4	Castromao Celtic settlement		Castro culture
5	Santa Comba de Bande church		Church
6	San Salvador de Manín church		Church
7	Val do Salas megalithic monuments		Archaeological centre
8	"Aquae Querquennae Via Nova" interpretation centre		Roman heritage
9	Bon Xesús de Trandeiras monastery		Monastery
10	The Santa Clara de Allariz sacred art convent museum		Museum
11	Maceda castle		Castle
12	Xunqueira de Ambía Collegiate church		Collegiate church

Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery



The treasures of the Costa da Morte

Can you keep my secret?



In spite of being called Costa da Morte, this stretch of the Galician coastline offers, in every town we will visit, lessons in life, history and tradition. As it has been blessed with a fair share of exuberant vegetation, Eduardo Pondal's "*Costa Verdescente*" (*Green Coast*) invites us to surrender to its charm.



- 1 Verdes recreational area
- 2 Forno do Forte ecomuseum
- 3 Borneiro Celtic settlement (castro)
- 4 The Dombate dolmen
- 5 Torres do Allo towers
- 6 The Pedra Cuberta dolmen
- 7 The Mosquetín fulling mills
- 8 Vimianzo castle
- 9 Santiago de Cereixo church
- 10 The Ozón granary (hórreo)
- 11 San Xiao de Moraime church
- 12 Virxe da Barca sanctuary

Day 1

From the Verdes refuge to Torres do Allo

Let us first venture into the land of the Costa da Morte by setting foot in the Bergantiños orchard, as the Verdes Refuge is known, in the town council of Coristanco. If one had to find a place where to set the legends about fairies, it would definitely be here. Man's touch, barely noticeable, enables the balance and harmony of this spot to remain intact. The mills, the tables, the stone benches, the canals and the wooden bridges slowly take us into world full of life where nature dictates its will. Even the voluptuous trees invade everything freely with their branches covered in creepers and the rocks, scattered along the river Anllóns, interrupt the continuous flow of the water creating rapids, falls and streams when and where they please.

The greenness and the stone of the Costa da Morte

Yet this old fishing preserve hides some secrets which we will only be able to discover by following its leaf-covered paths. The Verdes Refuge is,

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Coristanco.

Finishing point: Muxía.

Days: 2

Approximate distance: 105 km

Other interesting details:

- › Forno do Forte Ecomuseum: 981711520
www.concellomalpica.com/fornodoforte.
- › The Dombate Dolmen interpretation centre:
Telephone number for visitors: 669611993.
- › Torres do Allo towers: 981706028.
- › The Mosquetín fulling mills: 981706028.

without any doubt, an excellent recreational spot which will allow us to disconnect and spend a fun-filled day in the water, as long as we are aware of the strong current in the river called the Well of Hell. So we depart from this small piece of paradise and head towards Malpica de Bergantiños, to be exact to the Forno do Forte Ecomuseum, in Buño. This ethnographic space has the purpose of showing

how everyday life was for the labourers who combined their work on the farm with the production of pottery. According to philologists, the name of this town comes from the Latin word “*buda*”, a type of reed that grows spontaneously in clayey lands like the ones we find here. This abundance of clay, was essential for the development of the town’s most characteristic industry, pottery, which has placed Buño on the map. During the Pottery Show in mid-August, we have the opportunity to see how the old communal kiln worked.

The river’s murmur all the way to the Borneiro Celtic settlement (castro)

If we follow the course of the river Anllóns, we shall get to Cabana de Bergantiños where we can choose to follow a simple well-signposted trekking route along the “Rego dos Muíños” (The Stream of the Mills) or “Roncadoiro” (The Snoring Stream). It was, in fact, the snoring sound of the water as it dropped from one fall to the next which enabled the construction of the 24 mills which we can still find here today and also gave this stream its name. With this dull sound still in our head we at last get to the castro de Borneiro, known as the *Cibdá*, which was inhabited between the 6th century B.C. and the 1st century A.C. Most of the remains can be seen at the Saint Antón Castle in A Coruña.

This Borneiro Celtic settlement is surrounded by a moat and two defensive walls all around its perimeter except on the east where the actual slope serves the same purpose. From here, one can contemplate the entire surrounding territory in the same fashion as the ancient Celts would have done.

Without venturing out of Cabana de Bergantiños, we leave the *Cibdá* in order to visit the “*Galician megalithic cathedral*”, the Dombate Dolmen, and its interpretation centre. This funeral monument which is about 6000 years old, is made up of a mass of earth which is partially covered by a stone shell. On the outside we see horizontal flat stones and on the inside the construction has very uneven ones.

*My mum believes
I’m fishing in the woods
I’m at San Fins do Castro
Dancing a “muiñeira”.
(traditional Galician dance)
My mum was able to
So she built a house on the isle,
To watch those from Neaño
As they fish for sardines.
The Corme vicar is a tailor
From Malpica and a sailor.
The Pazos vicar a farmer
And the one from Cesullas a piper.*

Folk song from Cabana de Bergantiños



Forno do Forte ecomuseum



Learning about the Costa da Morte in depth

After this brief incursion into the megalithic culture, we shall move on to Zas to visit the Allo Towers. The shade in this narrow path surrounded by hundred-year-old oak trees takes us back in time to the foot of the “pazo” (Galician manor house), one of the oldest in Galicia. This building, one of the best examples of Galician civil architecture is now home to the Interpretation Centre of the Costa da Morte’s Touristic Resources and Territorial Heritage. It has a recognisable Renaissance style and the most relevant architectural points of interest may be found on the top part of the towers, around the windows, which are decorated with late Gothic elements.

In August, the town council of Zas becomes the capital of Folk music, as it holds a long-lived festival at the oak tree wood which lends its name to the celebration.

In order to bring this day to a close, there is nothing better than to sit down to a tasty dish of stewed ray fish, conger eel or haddock, a must at any of the towns on the Costa da Morte.

Day 2

From the Pedra Cuberta dolmen to the sanctuary of Nosa Señora da Barca

And from Zas to Vimianzo so as to discover yet another megalithic marvel, the Pedra Cuberta Dolmen. This is the only monument of its kind in

Galicia which still preserves pictures which were discovered by the German archaeologists Georg and Vera Leisner in the 30s and which are the cause of its international fame. The pictures are black and red on a white background with undulating, snake-shaped elements, the figure of an idol and a decorated base. These representations are certified to be among the most relevant in European megalithic art. The proportions of Pedra Cuberta are huge; the corridor in the entrance is 6 m long and almost 2 m high.

The heritage which tells us about the history of our ancestors

We can also visit the Mosquetín fulling mills. This is an ethnographic museum made up of two buildings where the curious structure of three fulling mills, which were used to beat and thicken wool, are kept along with another seven mills. We can take this opportunity to get to know this part of the river Grande. Enjoy the sound of the water rushing along the canals and step on the abundant stones which have been washed and polished by the current. The trees will provide shade as we can almost make out the dull sound of the wooden mallets which were the reason for the important textile industry in this region. The neighbouring Vimianzo Castle is where, every Easter and every summer, a Traditional Live Crafts Show is held and where we are reminded how the textile craft, among others, used to be a source of wealth.



From Vimianzo, we shall now head towards Camariñas and take the road to Muxía when we get to Ponte do Porto. On the way, we will bump into the Santiago de Cereixo church. This small twelfth-century temple is one of the most emblematic examples of rural Romanesque on the Costa da Morte. It was one of the stops for pilgrims who arrived to Ponte do Porto by sea and would then walk to Muxía and finally to Santiago de Compostela. Carefully observe both its porticos. On one of them, we will be able to find the tympanum with the first Romanesque representation of the *traslatio* of the body of the apostle St. James upon a stone boat. The truth is that this church has an intense Jacobean air to it. It is said that also from here started a route to Santiago of Compostela for the people who disembarked at the Cereixo port.

Walking through Muxía, a land of monks

We will now make our way to the coast to visit the Ozón “hórreo” (granary) in the town council of Muxía. We will be able to count the 21 pairs of pillars which make up this eighteenth-century huge granite granary, before moving on to San Xiao de Moraima church. Once we arrive, we will be greeted by some sacred grounds where we will find traces of an splendid and vibrant past. This medieval twelfth-century temple is integrated in the only historical monastery on the Costa da Morte, which was secularized long ago. Its portico, which reminds us of the Santiago de Compostela cathedral, is beautiful. Moraima was connected to the priory of San Martiño Pinario in Santiago, which gives us an idea of its importance. In the dark interior, which invites us to meditate, we will find paintings which represent the seven capital sins and death. And, if we walk around the graveyard, we will be able to see the excavation of a Roman-Christian necropolis.

A magical ending as we contemplate the sea

The sea of Muxía is not far from here. Once we get there, a magical ending to this second day would be to visit



one of the most emblematic sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin on all of the Costa da Morte and in all of Galicia, the sanctuary of Nosa Señora da Barca (Boat). This sober temple, which was built by order of the Counts of Monforte, reminds us of how the Virgin arrived here on a stone boat to encourage the apostle St. James to continue his preaching. At this huge atrium made out of natural stone which faces the sea, we will be able to touch and caress the sacred traces of this apparition: the *Pedra dos Cadrís*, (the stone of lower part of the back and associated with the boat); the *Pedra de Abalar* (the

rocking stone which symbolizes the sail)and the *Pedra do Timón* (the rudder stone). All of them are magical stones from the thousand-year-old craft which are said to have healing and fortune-telling powers which will only become true if the rituals are followed correctly...

To finish this half historical, half magical day, we ought not leave the Costa da Morte without tasting some of its sea delicacies at one of the restaurants in the area. Roncudo barnacles or grilled razor clams are just a couple of delicious suggestions among the wide variety on offer.

*I still recall, I do, when I was a student,
A poised young man who knew how to get along,
When I was on my way to Nemiña to study art
From the knowledgeable Nebrija and good old Villafañe;
And happy on my horse, as boys usually are.
When I passed Vilaseco, where the wind blows strong
At the top of the canal of Uces coast
Past Vilaseco through the scrubland,
I could already see from afar the Dombate Dolmen.*

Eduardo Pondal. “*Queixumes dos Pinos*” (The Moaning of the Pine trees)



Ozón granary

A piece of history on the Muros and Noia estuary

Can you keep my secret?



Baroña Celtic settlement

The hidden heritage in the lands which run along the Muros and Noia estuary will provide a great amount of surprises: Celtic settlements surrounded by the sea, stones which have the ability to speak, stone crosses, mills and a great deal of our History engraved in stone.



- 1 Baroña Celtic settlement (castro)
- 2 Baroña Celtic settlement interpretation centre
- 3 Santa María A Nova church
- 4 A Fonte stone cross
- 5 San Xusto de Toxos Outos monastery
- 6 San Vicente de Augas Santas monastery
- 7 The Descent of Eiroa stone cross
- 8 The town of Muros
- 9 The Pozo de Cachón tide mill
- 10 Laxe das Rodas petroglyph
- 11 San Francisco de Rial convent
- 12 Louro lighthouse
- 13 Louro lagoon

Day 1

From the Baroña Celtic settlement to the Descent of Eiroa stone cross

Let us begin our adventure in the lands of Porto do Son, at the Castro de Baroña Celtic settlement. The access to the settlement is along a dirt track guarded by pine trees and a beautiful beach. Protected by rocks, the sea and two walls which surround it, the settlement has been able to maintain in perfect conditions 20 circular or oval floor homes which we can visit. For an instance, we may watch how the waves beat fiercely against the rocks and feel the Atlantic wind on our faces...Undoubtedly; this is a perfect Celtic panoramic view!

A short stop for a snack at the Porto do Son dock. Once we get to the town centre, we can visit the Castro de Baroña interpretation centre, where we will be able to find out all about the life and culture of the ancient Celts thanks to the panels, the original pieces, the reproductions and the guided visits. The Centre is located inside the building which used to be the old Town Hall. As we are in Porto do Son, we might as well go for a walk on the dock and have a tasty snack at one of the terraces. If we follow the coastline, we will arrive at “-Little

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Porto do Son.

Finishing point: Muros.

Days: 2

Approximate distance: 70 km

Other interesting details:

- › Baroña Castro interpretation centre: open from Tuesday to Sunday from 10:30 to 14:00. More information at www.portodoson.org.
- › Pozo do Cachón tide mill: 981826050.

Compostela-”, as Noia is often referred to, so as to listen to the talking gravestones. To witness such a thing, we need to go to the Santa María A Nova church, built on an atrium used as a burial ground. This cemetery, where a large collection of tomb stones is preserved, was made with soil brought here from the Holy Land on board galleons from Noia, according to one of the many legends in the region.

Once inside this Gothic church, we can enjoy the spectacle of lights produced by its amazing rose



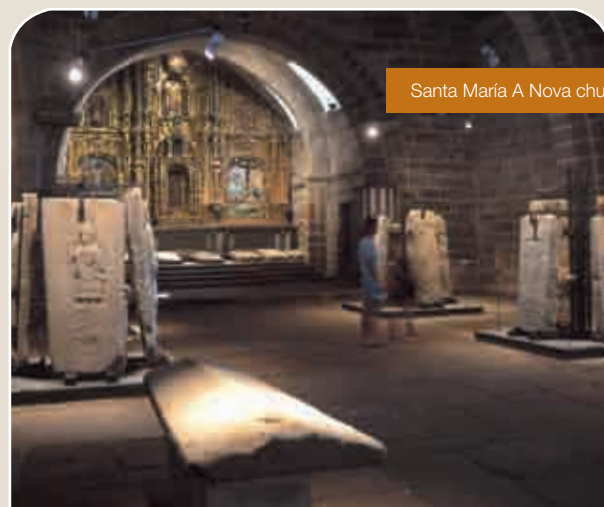
All I say is that there is no monastery in Galicia, however big it may be, whose estate is larger or more qualified than San Xusto's.

Antonio Yepes, *General Chronicle of the Order of Saint Benedict*

window. We should take a seat and calmly admire the Plateresque chapel and the Baroque altar. Yet, what will probably stand out the most in this temple turned into a museum is the huge amount of trade tombstones which cover the walls. Among the over two hundred gravestones, we can observe a quarryman's pick and mallet, a tailor's scissors, a butcher's knife as well as a fisherman's typical anchor or a nobleman's arms. The oldest ones are those which represent medieval trades.

We should not depart from Noia without visiting its old quarter, with its charming squares and its arcades which are fit for any medieval town. In fact, every year in July, this part of town dresses up in banners from the time to hold its famous Medieval Fair.

Our steps leave these stone monuments behind and head to the town council of Lousame, where we will discover the Descent of Berrimes Stone Cross, a piece by the Santeiro of Chave. Actually, the entire town council is full of these architectural elements which are scattered in the hills, by crossings, fountains, atriums or even bridges.



Santa María A Nova church



San Xusto de Toxos Outos monastery



Pozo do Cachón tide mill

A pleasant walk along the San Xusto river

Also in Lousame, we can visit the San Xusto de Toxos Outos monastery which we can get to by following a trekking path which runs by the river San Xusto. This is a very pleasant walk in green surroundings, full of waterfalls, medieval bridges and the ruins of old factories. As we approach the monastery we can walk among the remains of the mills, the vegetable garden or the pigeon loft which are still preserved. The peace and quiet this place brings is only spoilt by the trickling sound of water on the rocks.

In the nearby town council of Rois, we come across another little gem: the San Vicente de Augas Santas Baroque church which is home to alterpieces which date back to 1738.

As this first day draws to an end, we make our way to Muros. As it is on the way, we should take this opportunity to make one last stop at the Descent of Eiroa stone cross, a piece from 1879 made out of a whole granite block.

Day 2

From the town of Muros to mount Louró

Without saying a single word, the fishing town of Muros will tell us about its noble past by simply allowing us to stroll through the streets in its old quarter, which have such curious names as “Health”, “Hope” or “Patience Street”... This is a good opportunity to slowly discover these streets which will surely make a good impression. A perfect place to begin our walk is at the quiet Town Hall square also referred to as the Curro da Praza (The Corral of the Square) due to the fact that bullfighting events were held here. We will be able to observe pieces of the old wall as well as fishermen’s homes here and there as we cover the streets and squares. These traditional homes had one or two floors with a balcony and a porch, which at times was below the actual road. Years ago, it was quite common to see men fixing their fishing tackle while the women washed and salted down the fish here.



Muros town hall square

Covering the Muros coastline

We can regain our strength by making the most of the local cuisine and stopping at one of the taverns or restaurants in town, where we can taste some delicious octopus tapas or fresh fish stew as we stare at the dock, where the crafts and the fisherman's boats are rocked by the waves by mount Costiña and mount Rebordiño. Our next visit takes us to the interpretation centre situated at the Pozo do Cachón tide mill, a mechanism which works thanks to the force of the tides and which dates back to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It is one of the largest in Spain of its kind yet, its relevance has nothing to do with its size and a lot to do with its ethnographic and cultural value. At the beginning of the last century, people would come here to so-called Santa Rita Baths, an establishment which specialised in healing illnesses by means of seaweed marine baths. Following our route along the coast and leaving the town centre behind us, we shall enter the parish of Louro, known for its touristic tradition, its beaches and the amazing mount Louro. But first let us go in search of the town's prehistoric traces. Our destination is the Laxe das Rodas petroglyph. It was discovered in 1956 and according to experts on sun worshipping, it could be a calendar. It is made up of a group of ten figures which represent two spiral symbols, seven circular ones and a solar horse.

As we are passing through Louro, we should make another stop at the San Francisco do Rial convent which awaits on a beautiful valley at the foot of mount Oroso. On the way a very original Stations of the Cross built thanks to the donations of the faithful stands out. This path of sacrifice is made up of fifteen stations where scenes from the Passion of Christ are depicted.

Outside the convent, we should take a note of the curious sundial. If the "dials" say it is time for a swim, we can go down to San Francisco beach and cool down in its pristine waters. First we can feel the warm sand on our bare feet and then, the coolness of the salty water while we relax in a bath full of thoughts and feelings.



A perfect sunset from the Louro lighthouse

And if, after this relaxing moment, we still have enough energy and we feel up to it, we can follow the 2 km route to the Louro lighthouse as the sun goes down. It is situated on Queixal point, just at the foot of the 241 m mount Louro. It was inaugurated in 1862 and it illuminates the Muros and Noia estuary. From its privileged position, it has been a reference for sailors and witness to many a shipwreck, the best-known of which was that of the Spanish Armada's Cardenal Cisneros cruiser in 1905. We can go to the top and end the visit with an incredible panoramic view of this stretch of the coastline. We can sit down and recover from the climb as we look around us. On one side, San Francisco beach which we have just left behind; straight ahead, the estuary, and on the other side, the solitary beach and the Xarfas lagoon, which has been declared an area of natural interest.

From here, we will have the best perspective to remember all the experiences we have lived during these past two days as we trace our steps from the south to the north along the Muros and Noia estuary.



San Francisco de Rial convent

*I was afraid to row, I was afraid of the clear water.
Even if I had good oars. Even if the sea was calm.
I would never row! Never row! I am no longer afraid.
That long sea has already dried.
And without knowing where it came from.
If it is someone else's or mine I sail in the high sea.*

María Mariño



Mount Louro

The Arousa estuary: windmills, water and tides

Can you keep my secret?



Nothing remains more hidden than those moments in time which we have not lived. By means of this route within the deepest treasures of Arousa, we will come close to the *modus vivendi* of the ancient civilizations that left their footprints upon the best enclaves our land has to offer.



- 1 Axeitos dolmen
- 2 Large and small Neixón Celtic settlements (castros)
- 3 The town of Rianxo
- 4 The Araño granary (hórreo)
- 5 The Imo graneries
- 6 Torres de Oeste
- 7 Vento de Catoira mills
- 8 Mareas da Seca mills
- 9 Fefiñáns manor (pazo)
- 10 Santa Mariña de Dozo church
- 11 The wine ethnographic museum
- 12 The river Barosa mills
- 13 The Serén mills
- 14 Campo Lameiro archaeological park

Day 1

From the Axeitos dolmen to the Catoira mills

We depart from the town of Ribeira and our venture into Neolithic architecture begins by visiting the Axeitos dolmen, also referred to as the Moor's Stone. As we walk along a track between trees and silence, we come to this prehistoric communal tomb. It has a regal appearance even though it dates back to sometime between the year 4000 and 3600 B.C. which makes it one of the oldest megalithic funeral monuments in Galicia. Elders say that in between the dolmen and the rock known as the Friar's Stoup, there is a gold beam, a mythical construction where legend places valuable treasures.

The rich archaeological heritage of the Barbanza mountain range

By taking a small leap in the history of our evolution, we will make our way to the big and small Neixón Celtic settlements, in the town council of Boiro. As we descend towards the estuary, we will cover a path which leads directly to the Neixón peninsula, one of Arousa's most beautiful landscapes. On the

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Ribeira.

Finishing point: Campo Lameiro.

Days: 2

Approximate distance: 126 km

Other interesting details:

- › The Barbanza archaeological centre: Open from Thursday to Sunday. Contact number: 981 843810. More information at www.centroarqueologicodobarbanza.org.
- › Mareas de Seca mill: Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 14:00 and 16:30 to 19:30. More information at www.cambados.es.
- › The wine ethnographic museum: Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 to 14:00 and 16:30 to 19:30. More information at www.cambados.es.
- › Campo Lameiro archaeological park: Information and booking 981696066 or at reservas@paar.es. www.paar.es.

rocky point of this peninsula, defended by rocks and steep slopes, the Neixón Celtic settlements expanded during the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. We can walk on this piece of history and take as much time as we need to appreciate its grandeur. We can almost hear our ancestors warning about the Roman invasions.

By the settlements, on a spot which is surrounded by nature, we will come across the Barbanza archaeological centre where we can learn about this region's archaeological heritage.

A stop on the way to visit Rianxo

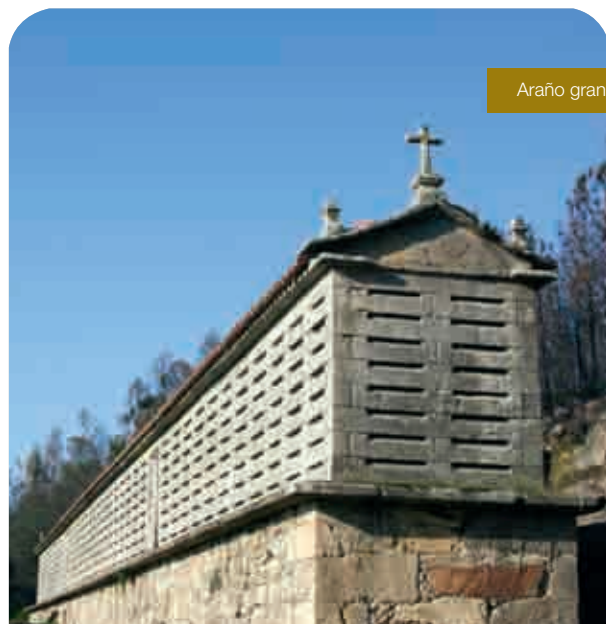
It is time now to visit the town of Rianxo. We will take a small diversion to get there and go for a walk by the shore or the dock where we will have a great view of the Barbanza mountain range. We can take this opportunity to try some delicious Rianxo "xoubiñas" (little sardines), or some mussels from the estuary and thus regain our strength to be able to continue on our trip.

Still in the Rianxo municipality, precisely in the small village of Araño, our thirst for hidden architectural gems will be quenched with a building which is from a more recent time than the previous ones which we have visited. It is the Araño Granary, one of the largest in Galicia, and which is a part of an architectural group made up of the Santa Baia church and the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Miracles. On this occasion, we will not be able to count the pillars of the granary because its base is covered by a wall. Alternatively, we can choose to walk its length (37 m) and imagine what was stored in it during the 17th century, which was when it was built. Many say it was an example of the true power of the Church during the period, as the harvest of the villagers was kept here and part of it had to be donated to the clergy.

If we continue along the path of our ancestors, our next stop will be at the Imo granaries, in the town council of Dodro. The granaries in the picturesque village of Imo are situated on the highest part of the village. This place used to be a communal threshing floor. As we come closer, we will be able to see the stone granaries with their wooden doors in between the small houses, which are separated by narrow streets.

Catoira and the Vikings

On the other side of the river Ulla, the town council of Catoira awaits. On our way there, we will come to the well-known bridge over the river with the Western Towers, where every first Sunday in August the Viking Celebration which has placed this town on the map takes place. Thousands of people come here every year to watch the landing. On board a *draka*, and wearing helmets and horns, the *new Vikings* re-enact the attack of the Nordic peoples over a thousand years ago.



Elders say that in between the Axeitos dolmen and the rock known as the Friar's Stoup, there is a gold beam, a mythical construction where legend places valuable treasures.



However, Catoira is also known for its Abalo windmills, which are unique in Europe due to their double sail system. We will get to the windmills after a short uphill walk among bushes. From the top, we will be able to feel the very same breeze as the sails as we contemplate one of the best panoramic views of the estuary. We can sit by the thick stone walls, which will share the heat which they have accumulated during the day, and we will be able to watch the sun set as this first day reaches its end.

Day 2

From Cambados to Campo Lameiro

We shall carry on towards the town council of Cambados, where the oldest wine festival in Galicia is held. The wine festival began in 1953 when several friends gathered to choose which of their “albariños” (Galician white wine) was the best. Before we discover the mysteries of the god Bacchus, we will visit the Mareas da Seca Mill Museum in the heart of the Arousa estuary, between point Tragove and point Fefiñáns. This mill’s system is very different to what we have seen up until now, as it makes the most of the tides to grind. During the three hours that the low tide lasted, up to 200

kg of flour were produced in two turns, one by day and another by night. This mill is said to have been built during the 16th century by order of the Lord of Fefiñáns Manor, which it belonged to until the 19th century and where many farmers from all over the Salnés region came to grind their cereal. It started to work in 1622 and it kept on doing so until the 70s, when the last miller retired.

Walking over the Arousa estuary

We will be able to visit the museum which still preserves the machinery that is used for grinding. After our visit, we can walk on the estuary; more precisely over the estuary along the 50 m long footbridge called the “Seca” (Dry). This is because when the tide is low the inner part becomes dry and it becomes full of water again when the tide is high. Still in Cambados, we shall now head to the top of the town. Next to the Pastora viewpoint, we shall visit the Santa Mariña de Dozo church, or at least what remains of this late-fifteenth-century, beautiful Gothic temple, which was built on top of a Romanesque hermitage. It has only one nave divided by several transversal arches and lateral chapels. Currently, the premises and the surrounding area has become a beautiful graveyard where the arches of the ceiling of the church remain,



Seca tide mill

naked arches which provide this spot with a mysterious, almost theatrical halo.

Very close to the Santa Mariña church, we come to the Cambados ethnographic wine museum made up of an old rectory house and a new building which are connected by a footbridge. We shall enter the museum prepared to take a walk through history, geography, popular culture and all the wine aspects of the Rías Baixas brand. We should not forget that the best way to pay homage to these lands is to enjoy its magnificent wine, accompanied by some of the local cuisine, like some “empanada” (Galician pie), some grilled “zamburiñas” (small scallops) or some tasty Padrón peppers.

The Serén mills along the Water Route

We will wander into the nature-filled town council of Meis where the restores Serén mills can be found. They are located on a privileged spot and the best way to get to know about them is to complete the well-known Water Route. We can follow the course of the river and the pretty paths.

In the very middle of the route, we should catch our breath by the sculptural group which is an example of the “Aldea labrega” (Farming Village). As a summary of the entire trip we will see before us a selection of Galician architectural symbols: the granary, the washing place, the mills, the well, the stone crosses and even a small chapel.

We should be careful not to get too tired by the walk, which become a little tougher as it becomes steeper. When we reach the top, we will have incredible views. On our way back we can pick one of the bars along the route to sit down and relax while we taste some delicious corn “empanada” (Galician pie).

The river Barosa: the power of water

In the neighbouring town council of Barro, we will come across another must, we are referring to the River Barosa falls. We still have a lot to see, so we shall focus on the mills and the



Santa Maria do Dozo church

spectacular waterfall. As we continue along the river, the sun begins to set on this lush riverside landscape. On this occasion it is the waterfall which greets us as do the first mills. On the first stretch the force of the water is amazing and as we ascend, the views will encourage us to continue. Let us sit down on one of the wooden benches, strategically placed so we can catch our breath, as the sound of the water behind us blends with the smell of damp soil.

We will now, while we remain in the heart of nature, take a leap to visit another less lush area, the Campo Lameiro archaeological park. This outdoor rock art

complex holds almost one hundred stones and rocks with petroglyphs with a great archaeological and historical value. Here in Campo Lameiro, we can find one of the most important concentrations of rock carvings, whether we consider quantity or quality. The archaeological area which we can walk about and observe an exceptional group of rock art stations preserves a landscape which is similar to the original and it also has a replica of a small settlement where aspects of daily life during the Bronze Age can be seen. To learn more, we should visit the interpretation centre which has projection halls, exhibitions and a library.



The river Barosa mills

From stone to stone across the south of Galicia

Can you keep my secret?

Mount Facho de Donón



We are about to present a trip along the south of Galicia by petroglyphs, mills and castles in amazing natural locations. Without a doubt, no one will feel unmoved.



- 1 Sobroso castle
- 2 Tourón archaeological centre
- 3 PRG-102 Riomaio mills trail
- 4 O Hío stone cross
- 5 Mount Facho de Donón
- 6 Mogor petroglyph
- 7 The river Barosa mills
- 8 Gargantáns stone
- 9 Campo Lameiro archaeological park
- 10 Eira de Pedre

Day 1

From Sobroso castle to Mogor beach

The thirty hectares which the Sobroso forest covers will be the first vast view this route has to offer and then we shall focus on Sobroso castle which, in the same way as the forest, takes its name from a tree which can be found in this area, the cork oak. The origin of this fortress dates back to the 9th century, when Bermudo II sought refuge here during the battle of Portela Arenaria, which is currently Vilasobroso, the town which can be seen ahead. Since then, Sobroso has been a silent witness to the hardships of multiple historical Galicians, above all, due to its role as a military bastion, which finally ceased.

Witnesses of the Irmandiñas Riots

Along its hallways walked the Counts of Galicia in 1095, Urraca and Raimundo of Burgandy; the “irmandiños” during the uprising which destroyed the castle during the second half of the 15th century; or Pedro Álvarez de Soutomaior, Pedro Madruga, who later rebuilt it... Currently, this defensive

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Mondariz.

Finishing point: Cerdedo.

Days: 2

Approximate distance: 140 km

Other interesting details:

- › Sobroso Castle museum (visiting hours):
From Tuesday to Friday from 10:00 to 13:00
and weekends and bank holidays from 11:00 to 14:00 and from 16:00 to 19:00.
- › Tourón archaeological centre: Open only
for previously booked visits. Bookings at
986767235, at centroarqueoloxicotouron@pontecaldelas.org or at the tourist information
office in Ponte Caldelas.

fortress is where the Museum of Galician Costumes and an ethnographic museum are located. We should walk through the corridors and rooms and discover, by means of the permanent exhibition, what our ancestors' lives were like and learn more

about our culture. We will be able to see the kitchen with its utensils and its hearth, the noblemen's quarters, the bedrooms with their linen bedcovers, which are an ancient traditional craft which can be contemplated in the exhibition as well as crafts like basketwork, clogs, tiling, carpentry...

During our visit, we will discover that the fortress is made up of three different size structures which offer an imposing air due to the fact that they placed on top of each other. On our way back, we should stop and explore the trees in the wood where nearly 40 different species coexist, above all oak trees and others related to Mediterranean climates like the cork oak, the strawberry tree and species from the Laurel family. There are also recreational areas and controlled wildlife.

A leap in history

We shall now head towards the heart of the town council of Ponte Caldelas to go a little further back in History. At the Tourón Archaeological Area we will encounter one of the most unique pieces of open air cave art in Galicia. Let us be guided by the signs which are distributed so as to visit the five spots where we can observe petroglyphs and rock carvings which date back to the Neolithic, end of the Bronze Age. We can then visit the archaeological centre to see how the landscape of the time was interpreted.

We will now take a leap from Celtic art to traditional Galician art represented by water mills. At the rego do Portiño, a tributary of the river Maior as it crosses the municipality of Vilaboa, we will come across the Riomaior mills. Short paths will lead us from one to another. There are 34 of them and almost all of them have been restored. The magical current of the water and the small waterfalls will guide us until we reach the last one called the Miguel Lois

Sobroso castle is where the Museum of Galician Costumes and an ethnographic museum are located. Here we can find out what our ancestors' lives were like and learn more about our culture.

Sobroso castle



mill. As we return following the same paths, we should allow the freshness of the vegetation have a soothing effect upon us.

It would be a good idea to make the most of the visit and have lunch at one of the establishments on the dock at Vilaboa, with a view of the Vigo estuary: the fresh fish and the seafood are the best bet.

One of the most important stone crosses

Next we shall make our way to the Morrazo peninsula, where we shall stop at the Hío stone cross, in the municipality of Cangas. But first, we can take this opportunity to go to the top of mount Facho where we will encounter more rock art at an ancient Celtic settlement which has remains from the 10th century B.C. We can even enjoy the clear views of the coast, which we have just left behind, for a moment. In the horizon the outline of the Cies Isles protecting the estuary and cape Home can be made out.

The Hío historical monuments include the church which bears the same name and where we will be able to identify several architectonic styles and shapes, like the vaults, which remind us of the San Martiño Pinario monastery in Santiago de Compostela. Yet, undoubtedly, the most important piece is the unique late nineteenth-century Baroque stone cross, which is considered to be one of the most important in Galicia. Before it, every August 16th when mass is over, a traditional fourteenth-century dance called the “San Roque or Pilgrim Dance”, and which has been declared of Galician Touristic Interest, is performed.

The path leads us now towards the coastline of the Pontevedra estuary, precisely to the municipality of Marín where we will find the Labirinto de Mogor petroglyphs, which are very close to the beach with



Hío stone cross

the same name. There are still some examples of groups of concentric circles which are connected among each other resembling a labyrinth. There are several explanations of their meaning. Some say that they were made by a seafaring people colonized Western Europe during the Neolithic period; others believe they are a Prehistoric calendar or even that they have nothing to do with time but rather have a sacred, artistic or symbolic meaning. No matter which explanation we choose, we still need to kneel down and run our fingers through the lines in the stone in order to feel the sediments of History.

The best way to end this day is to contemplate the sunset from the promenade at Mogor beach.

Day 2

From the river Barosa falls to the river Lérez trails

Let us steer away from the coast towards the interior of the lands of Pontevedra. Here, in the Barro municipality, we are able to enjoy the sound of the water rushing down from a height of over 30 m at the Barosa river waterfall, around which the ethnographic-environmental complex with the same name is located. This place's unique topography allows us to understand why there are seventeen mills which make up this great hydraulic complex. We can discover them as we climb up the path which runs parallel to the canal under the coolness of the riverside trees. They are almost camouflaged due to the landscape and the very colour of the granite base of the fall. The muffled sound of the falling water is intense even in summer, when we can make the most of the natural pools and feel the refreshing caress of these waters upon our skin.

A leap to Prehistoric times

Very near to this place, the History of Moraña makes itself clear in the shape of Prehistoric remains like the Lapa of San Martiño de Gargantáns which dates back to the year 3000 or 2000 B.C. It is a 2 m monolith which is included in the coat of arms of the municipality. As we approach it, apart



The river Barosa waterfall

from noticing its simplicity and its conic shape with engravings on both sides, we will realise that it is not whole, which leads us to believe that this was not its original location and that it may have been even higher. Its exact purpose is unknown but there are those who relate it to burial signs, to territorial boundaries among tribes or even to the worshipping of the sun.

We head further inland to the perfect place to find out about our Prehistoric culture: the Campo Lameiro Rock Art Archaeological Park. It is an open-air park where we will be able to contemplate almost one hundred petroglyphs in their environmental context and over eighty explanatory panels, as well as the recreation of a settlement from the Bronze Age. It feels as if we have gone back 4000 years in History. Campo Lameiro is considered to be one of the largest archaeological parks in Europe and the biggest on the north west of the Iberian Peninsula.

Our traditional architecture close up

Back on route and closer to present day, we shall head towards the municipality of Cerdedo to come across the Eira de Pedre. Surrounded by the church, which dates back to before the 17th century, and traditional style houses from this part of the province of Pontevedra, we will find ourselves among a group of restored “hórreos” (Galician granaries) at the so called Eira Grande. This vast communal area, where the ground is made up of large dark stone slabs, tells us about the subsistence farming and the curious economy and organization of the people of the time. A few metres away, a path runs parallel to the river Lérez. Let us take this opportunity to go for a walk through this silent, green valley in the late afternoon to see how the daylight slowly disappears as we wander off down this old pilgrim track between farmlands and pastures. A relaxing end to two intense days.



Bridge in Pedre. Cerdedo

g Celtic settlements, mills and “sambenitos”...

Can you keep my secret?

Santa Tegra Celtic settlement



This route accompanies the river Miño and the history which runs parallel to its waters to the place where it spills into the sea, to then continue up the straight stretch of the southernmost Galician coastline.



- 1 Tui cathedral
- 2 Tui Diocesan museum
- 3 Goián military castle
- 4 Picón and Folón mills
- 5 Santa Tegra Celtic settlement
- 6 Santa María de Oia monastery
- 7 Baiona "parador" (state run manor/hotel)
- 8 Ponte medieval da Ramallosa
- 9 Troña Celtic settlement
- 10 The town of Mondariz-Balneario (spa)

Day 1 From Tui to A Guarda

Let us begin in the monumental and historical town of Tui, which is located just on the inner tip of the mouth of the river Miño. In the past, it was the capital of one of Galicia's seven provinces until the current division was made. Tui was an important settlement during every moment in History and also a target due to its strategic location. In fact, when the Middle Ages were at their peak, it was the religious, economic, military and commercial heart of the south of Galicia. During this period of economic growth, the construction of the cathedral on the highest point of the city began and lasted until the 15th century.

Romanesque and Gothic gems in the Santa María cathedral-fortress

The best thing we can do after a relaxing walk about the old quarter is indeed to visit the Santa María cathedral-fortress, which bears this name due to its defensive use. Here we will come to the western door of the temple. This entrance, which

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Tui.

Finishing point: Mondariz-Balneario.

Days: 2

Approximate distance: 125 km

was carved in the 13th century, is the most important iconographic composition in Gothic Galician art. This aforementioned style and Romanesque can be contemplated inside the cathedral as a result of the construction having lasted so long. Its cloister, another Galician Gothic gem, is one of the few from medieval times that can be found intact in Galicia. We can end our tour by admiring the views from the Soutomaior Tower. And, if we happen to see some cracks on any of the vaults during our visit, not to worry, they have been there since the Lisbon earthquake in 1775.

Once we are out, on the north side of the cathedral, we can visit the Diocesan Museum of Tui where we will come across some strange objects which might bring a shiver down our spine: the only collection of saintbenedicts "sambenitos" in Spain. The term comes from "saco bendito" (blessed sack),



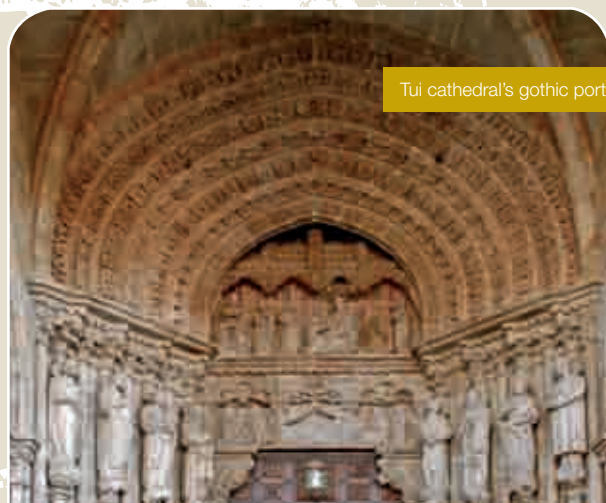
Tui cathedral's cloister

which was a type of large scapular shaped like a poncho which was used during the Inquisition to humiliate those who were condemned for religious crimes. The prisoners were forced to walk barefoot wearing the “sambenito” and carrying a lit candle. Frequently, after the execution, the “sambenito” was put on public display as an example and shame for the family of the prisoner; the well known expression “colgar un sambenito” (to hang a “sambenito” around one’s neck) comes from here. Our walk continues at a relaxing pace towards the river between narrow medieval paths which serve as viewpoints from one wall to the next. Surrounded by noble homes, we will be able to make out the international bridge which connects Spain and Portugal and across which the Portuguese Way travels towards Santiago de Compostela. It will feel as if we have travelled back in time and we will understand why Tui has been declared a Historical-Artistic Town. Before leaving the old quarter, we should enter some of the taverns and bars to savour some Galician food and, especially, the Miño eels which have their very own gastronomic festival on Saint Telmo during Easter.

Defensive constructions by the river Miño

We shall carry on through the Galician part of the mouth of the river Miño, towards Tomiño, in order to visit the Goján Fortress also known as San Lourenzo. This space is a part of a group of defensive buildings on both sides of the river Miño on what is known as the “Raia Humida” (The Damp Line). They are all from the Modern Age and they are owed to the War of Independence from Castile which Portugal began in 1640. The Goján Fortress is specifically located on top of the old Barca Fort. Even though its size is small, it has a perfect, symmetrical structure.

We will be able to relive the life of our ancestors at the Santa Tegra and Troña Celtic settlements (castros).



Tui cathedral's gothic portico



Before heading to A Guarda, it is worthwhile stopping at the ethnographic cluster of the Folón and Picón mills in the municipality of the Rosal. If we have enough time, we can follow the just over 3,5 km route which connects the 67 hydraulic mills from the 17th and 18th century and look at them from a distance to appreciate their staggered layout in order to make the most of the energy of the water.

A special panoramic view

We are now in the Town Council of A Guarda, where we will end the first day of our visit in the south

westernmost part of Galicia. This municipality, together with O Rosal, is situated on the mouth of the river Miño, a vast wetland of great ecological value which can be contemplated from the Santa Tegra Celtic Settlement near the top of the mountain. With the mere act of setting foot here we will be able to recreate the life of our ancestors. Some of the remains from the excavations were recovered, like the circular “castros” (Celtic settlements) where we can appreciate the layout of the prehistoric homes with their typical plant roof. There are also rectangular houses, with rounded corners, due to Roman influences. Even though it may seem like



Bird's eye view of Tui

a chaotic settlement, there is a logical order around “family units”, which we could try to discover while we are here; as well as the petroglyphs which are in and around the premises, or Pedra Furada, a great hollow rock with a natural window. Up to five thousand people once lived here. They had a self-sufficient economy and they also made pottery, jewels, fabrics and utensils which we can see at the archaeological museum in town. We can find a perfect end to this day at one of the terraces in town by watching the sun set while we taste some fresh lobster, whose gastronomic festival is held in July.

Day 2

From the Oia monastery to the Mondariz-Balneario spa town

From the Miño mouth, we shall continue on this second day of our trip towards the north along an unusually straight stretch of coastline which contrasts with the meandering Galician estuaries. On our way to Baiona, we can stop at the Oia monastery, founded in 1137. Its outline resembles that of a castle or fortress by the sea. In fact, on several occasions it was used as a defensive bastion.

A walk in order to remember the discovery of America

The old Monterreal fortress in the town of Baiona also once had this purpose. Walls were built around it during the 14th century to prevent enemy attacks and it is currently a National Touristic Parador. In order to enter the premises, we should cross a great 17th-century door and then we should go for a walk along the base so as to feel the essence of this fishing town. Curiously, this was the first European port to receive the news of the discovery of America. We will find a replica of the *Pinta* Caravel which arrived in Baiona on March 1st 1493. The terraces by the dock, with pretty views of the Baiona Royal Yachting Club, beckon us to rest for a while and, while we do, we can enjoy some delicious lobster and rice at one of them.

Ramalloso bridge



We should then proceed to visit the Ramalloso Medieval Bridge, which crosses the river Miño and divides Baiona and Nigrán. Under the bridge there is a “peto de ánimas” (a small monument to leave alms) and, in the middle, a stone cross where we will discover the image of Saint Telmo. Up until a few years ago, women who had lost their babies would wet their tummies in hope in the water of the river at midnight. The spell would only work if they took as godparent the first person to cross.

A Celtic settlement in the middle of mimosas

We shall now go up to mount Doce Nome de Xesús, in the municipality of Pontearreas, where we will relive Prehistory at the Celtic Settlement of Troña.

We will be accompanied the entire time by lush vegetation, mainly mimosas, under the impression of travelling back in time. This ancient settlement is also connected to popular beliefs and folklore due to the importance of its strategic location. Walls, moat and parapets make up a defensive system at about 280 m above sea level which reinforce the aforementioned idea. It dates back to somewhere between the 6th century B.C. and the 2nd century A.C. and currently about thirty constructions have been excavated and there are interesting archaeological remains to be found.

After this intense two-day route, a good way to bring it to an end would be to visit one of the main spa towns in Spain: Mondariz-Balneario, which maintains all the charm and splendour of the Belle Époque period.

Troña Celtic settlement



Stone secrets

Can you keep my secret?



The Deza-Tabeirós geodestination is characterised by the great amount of stone treasures of an incalculable ethnographic and cultural value which it is home to. Throughout this itinerary, we will discover great architectural monuments which are just waiting to offer us the mysteries they hide.



- 1 Old popular Agolada market
- 2 Santa María de Ventosa church
- 3 San Pedro de Vilanova church
- 4 San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery

Day 1 From the Agolada “Pendellos” to the river Toxa fall

Water is an essential element in these lands in the heart of Galicia. Let us begin our route in the town of Agolada, a land full of bridges, traces of the Romans which still allow us to cross the rivers Arnego and Ulla.

The market from the Modern Era

A few metres away from the town square, and walking around a great oak tree, we will be able to discover the routes of Galician trade thanks to the Agolada Pendellos. “Pendellos” (a type of shed) are as much a part of traditional Galician architecture as “pallozas” (haystacks), “hórreos” (granaries), “muiños” (mills) or even “pazos” (manor houses) are. They make up one of the best preserved market places in Galicia and they were built during the 18th century and this was the place around which all the economy in the region revolved. They were built with stone, tiles and wood but underwent an intense process of restoration. If it happens to be

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Agolada.

Finishing point: Silleda.

Days: 1

Approximate distance: 65 km

Other interesting details:

- › Carboeiro monastery: More information at www.mosteirodecarboeiro.com

raining or if it is foggy, our stroll along the uneven cobbled ground will almost become magical as we touch the counters made out of huge rough slabs or listen to the rain tinkling on the tiles. All we need to do is close our eyes and the leap back in time we were in search of will be complete. If we listen carefully, we may still listen to the animals which arrive at the market pulling their carts, the voices from the past praising their goods and the bustling crowds at the counters.

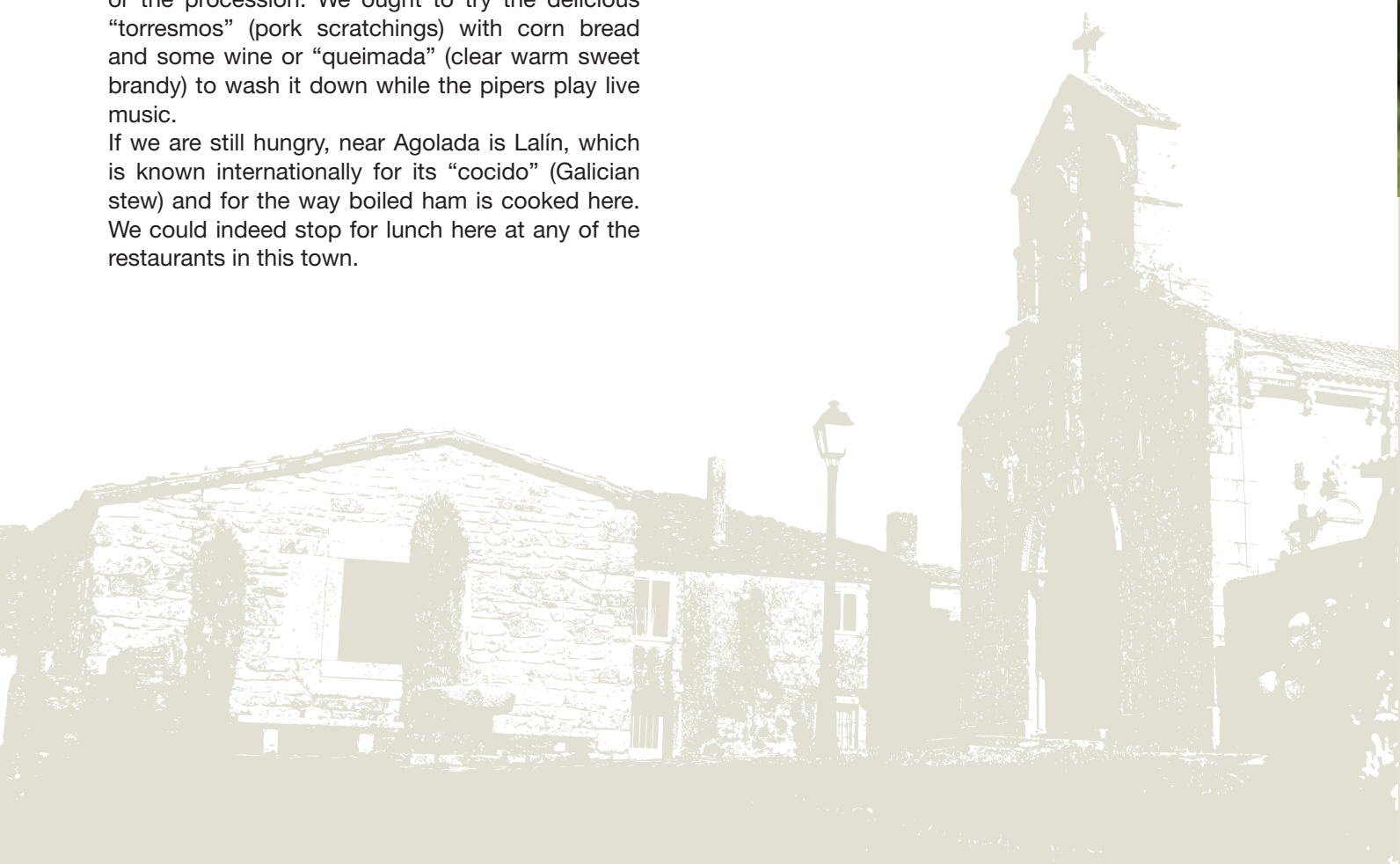
So as to keep tradition alive, for the last few years, there are three days of festivities when various activities take place during the month of August. The most unique is the re-enactment of a traditional



Agolada "Pendellos"

medieval market. Craftsmen from all over Galicia dress up and come to present their products and at the same time we can take part in workshops or the procession. We ought to try the delicious "torresmos" (pork scratchings) with corn bread and some wine or "queimada" (clear warm sweet brandy) to wash it down while the pipers play live music.

If we are still hungry, near Agolada is Lalín, which is known internationally for its "cocido" (Galician stew) and for the way boiled ham is cooked here. We could indeed stop for lunch here at any of the restaurants in this town.





The “pendellos” (a type of shed) make up a market place in Galicia which dates back to medieval times. They were built during the 18th century and this was the place around which all the economy in the region revolved.

The little Portico of Glory

However, the town council of Agolada hides even more treasures, like the little Santa María of Ventosa Romanesque church. This small twelfth-century temple hides a beautiful secret inside, which no one would imagine judging from its rustic appearance. It is home to the shrine of the abbot Lope de Ventosa, which experts describe as a reconstruction of the Portico of Glory. Yet the most spectacular elements are those in the collection of sculptures and medieval frescos which seem to be emerging from inside the walls.



San Pedro de Vilanova church

The shrine of the abbot Lope de Ventosa



We may now venture into Dozón where the San Pedro de Vilanova church awaits in a rural location. This is indeed a gem from the Galician Romanesque period. It was built in 1154 and it was part of an old Benedictine nuns' monastery. The San Pedro church is built on huge quarry granite stones which are perfectly fitted. We can contemplate the geometrical and plant motifs, which were most probably inspired by the neighbouring monastery, Santa María de Oseira.

A monastery in the heart of Silleda

The next stop on our route will focus on the Benedictine monastery of Carboeiro, in the very heart of Silleda. To get to it, we will need to cross lush landscapes and a medieval bridge. At the same height as a small hill on one of the river Deza's meanders, hidden in the lush vegetation, we will come across the most relevant architectural gem from the late Romanesque (or Romanesque transition) period in Galicia. The name Carboeiro (coal) is due to the forest vegetation in the area which for a long time has been used to make charcoal.

The Carboeiro church has many aspects in common with the Cathedral of Santiago, such as the use of ribbed vaults which were first attempted in Santiago and the ornaments in the main entrance which represent the old musicians from the Apocalypse, which we may also admire in the Portico of Glory. To better enjoy our visit, we should go on a guided visit which not only takes us around the church but also through the monks' quarters which were restored at the end of the 20th century.

Now that we know about the life of the monks, we can end our visit by walking around the outside of the monastery where we will be able to admire beautiful constructions like the pigeon loft or the Devi's bridge, which bears this name due to the fact that in past times it was a strategic place for muggers and thieves.

As our day comes to an end, there is no better option than to visit the river Toxa waterfall. The sound of the water, which is able to make its way through

San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery



the many birch and ash trees, will guide us to one of the highest waterfalls in Galicia. Here, seated by the river and caressed by the sounds of nature we will surely be able to disconnect from everything thanks to peace and quiet which can be found in the heart of Galicia.

The sound of the water, which is able to make its way through the many birch and ash trees, will guide us to one of the highest waterfalls in Galicia.

The interior of Carboeiro church

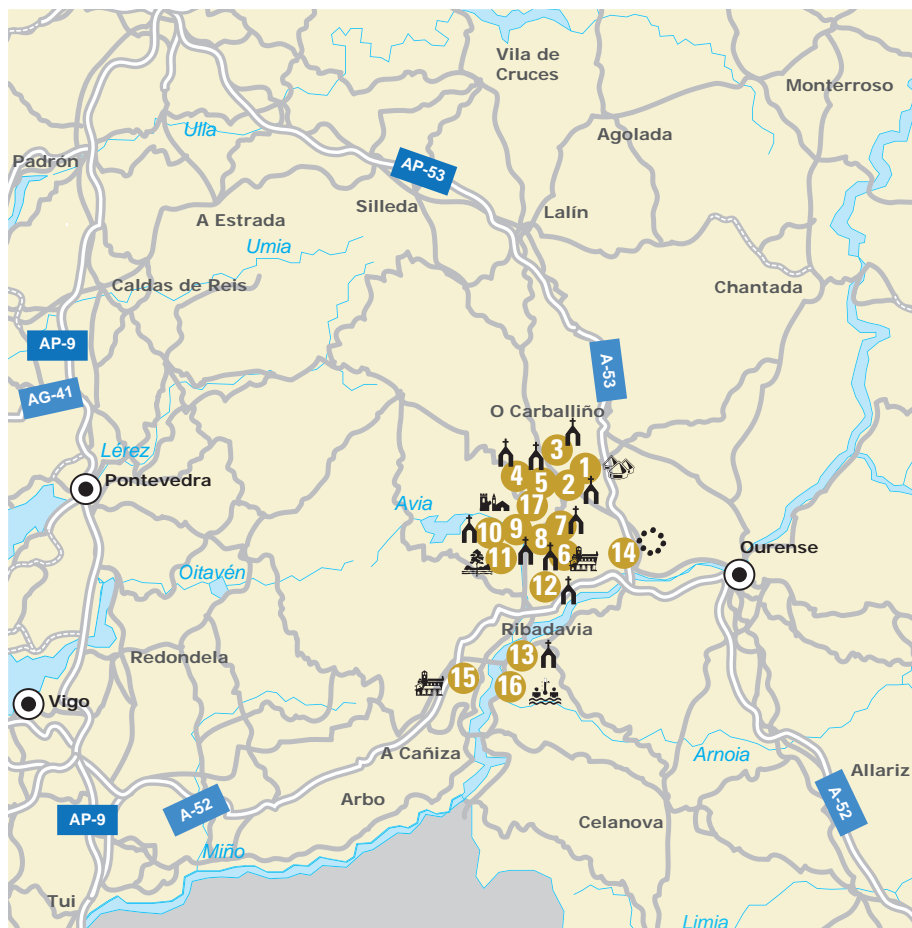


Romanesque gems in the Ribeiro

Can you keep my secret?



On this trip through the lands of the Ribeiro, we shall discover great ethnographic treasures scattered all over a land marked by the water of the rivers which cross it and the colours of its vines.



- 1 Arenteiro ethnographic park
- 2 The Virgin da Saleta sanctuary
- 3 San Xiao de Astureses church
- 4 San Martiño de Cameixa church
- 5 San Mamede de Moldes church
- 6 San Clodio de Leiro monastery
- 7 Santa María de Gomariz church
- 8 San Miguel de Lebosende church
- 9 Santo Tomé de Serantes church
- 10 Santa María de Lamas church
- 11 Pena Corneira rock
- 12 Santa María de Beade church
- 13 San Xes de Francelos church
- 14 San Cibrao de Las Celtic settlement
- 15 Santa María de Melón monastery
- 16 Prexigueiro springs
- 17 Pazos de Arenteiro

Day 1

From the Arenteiro ethnographic Park to the San Clodio de Leiro monastery

We shall set off by following the course of the river Arenteiro as it crosses the lands of O Carballiño. Here, awaits the Arenteiro ethnographic park made up of restored mills whose purpose is to teach us about the traditional uses of the river. If we follow the riverside walk from Veiga Bridge we will get there, by crossing wooden footbridges or walking through paths covered in lush vegetation. It is a 5 km circuit and thanks to the bridges which connect both sides and we will be able to change from one to another.

In order to catch our breath, we can sit down and relax on one of the benches and listen to how the hypnotic rush of the water blends in with foliage of the trees which are swayed by the wind, what a pleasant feeling! We should enter one of the establishments in the town centre to taste a “cunca” (a cup with no handle) of the famous Ribeiro wine. If we feel hungry, we can also have some “richada” meat, some eels or some boiled octopus with sea

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: O Carballiño.

Finishing point: Ribadavia.

Days: 3

Approximate distance: 76 km

salt, olive oil and hot paprika which is so typical of O Carballiño. For dessert, there is nothing better than the Carballiño custard-filled fried pastries.

As we continue towards the east, we come to the town council of Boborás, where small architectural gems can be found. Our first stop will be at the popular Virxe da Saleta Baroque sanctuary hidden in a thick wood which surrounds us with spirituality with every step we take.

Without leaving the municipality, we come to another small gem, the San Xiao de Astureses Romanesque church. It was founded by the Templar Knights during the 12th century and it became a part of the Order of St. John of Malta two centuries later. The temple preserves its Romanesque structure: only one nave and an interesting semi-circular front part. In our search for more Romanesque traces, we arrive at the San Martiño de Cameixa church, a

building which, in spite of being restored during the 18th and 19th centuries, it still maintains an ancient medieval air about it which is reflected by its sculpted, shaped stones.

After visiting these monumental stones, it is time for a short walk. Let us venture into the lush vegetation of an autochthonous wood and follow the cobbled path to the top where the San Mamede de Moldes church, built in the 12th century on top of an old Celtic settlement and integrated into the cemetery, hides. This sanctuary stands out not only for its simplicity but also for its surroundings. At the foot of the temple we can contemplate interesting ethnographic pieces: a market stand and an old graveyard whose coldness fades away thanks to the warm colours of the sunset.

Colourful plots of land to end our day

This first day draws to an end in the town council of Leiro where, guarded by amazing colourful plots of land, we come to the San Clodio Cistercian monastery. Its origin is uncertain yet it was built during the 12th century and it was home to Benedictine monks who made it a very prosperous farming centre. On the façade, we can look for the Caravaca cross, referred to as the “Divine Relic”, which was venerated by the villagers for freeing the vines from the effect of hail.

Day 2

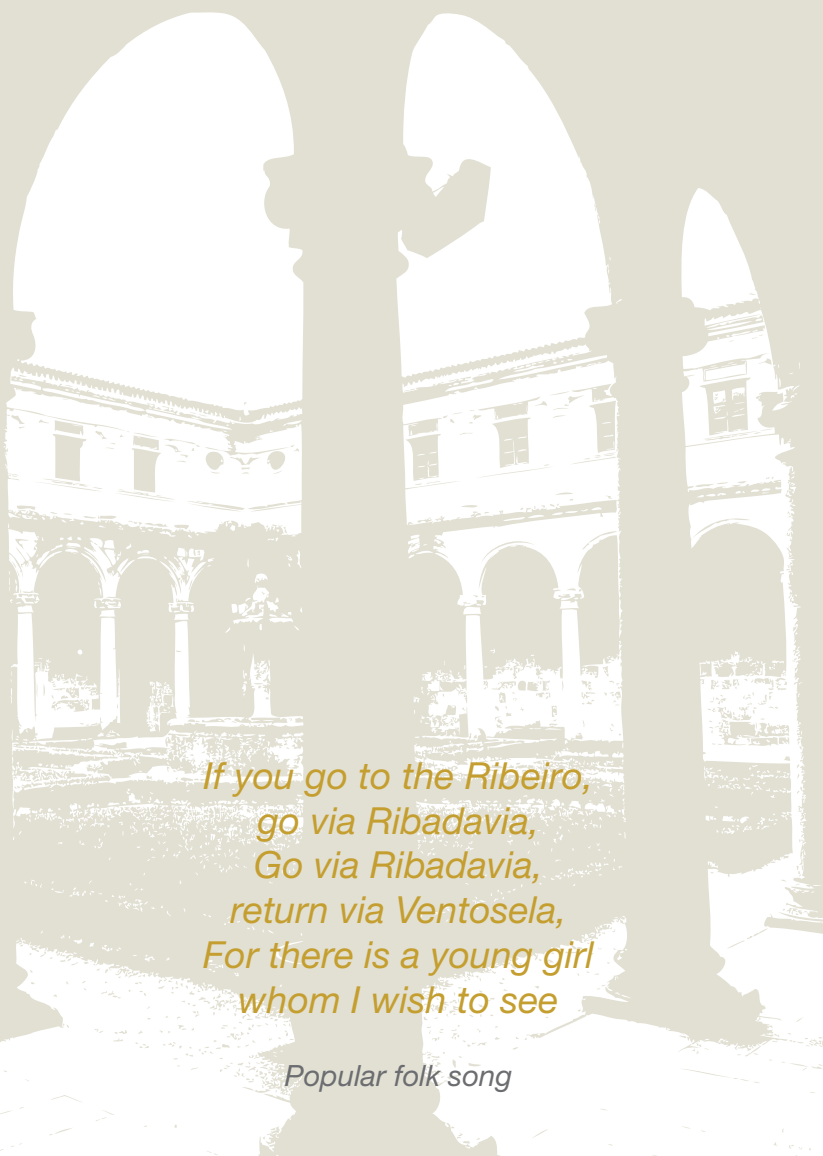
From the Gomariz church to the San Xes de Francelos church

On this second day, we will stay in Leiro hoping to discover the huge amount of small gems which still await us. As we venture into the parish of Gomariz, the late 12th-century church greets us from up high. From here, we have a privileged view of the meandering course of the river Avia. During the months of February and March we need to add the show the mimosas put on to the view: the mountain is covered in yellow and the air is filled with a characteristic aroma. Of the original sanctuary, related to the monks of the San Xusto de Toxos Outos monastery, in Lousame, we will still be able to contemplate the wall seating and the brackets on the eaves.

Still in a medieval atmosphere, we shall head to the parish of San Miguel de Lebosende where its church still preserves a western façade from the late Romanesque period. Another sample of rural Romanesque is what we may find at the Santo Tomé de Serantes church, a prototypical structure from this period which has one rectangular nave and a wooden ceiling. From this same period is the Santa María de Lamas church, an extremely simple building, which presents a classical rural rectangular nave.



Arenteiro ethnographic park



*If you go to the Ribeiro,
go via Ribadavia,
Go via Ribadavia,
return via Ventosela,
For there is a young girl
whom I wish to see*

Popular folk song

San Tomé de Serantes church



The parish of Lamas rises, according to tradition, near a castle which no longer exists and where supposedly Alphonse VII was held captive. From Santa María de Lamas, two roads will guide us to a curious rocky formation, Pena Corneira and the Outeiral Viewpoint both at an altitude of almost 600 m so we will be able to enjoy excellent views from either place.

A walk in nature

Setting off at the Leiro riverside walk, we shall prepare for the uphill walk to Lebosende along the so-called Royal Way by the footbridge. A lonely landscape of autochthonous vegetation will lead us to the recreational area at Pena Corneira (Horn-shaped Rock) where we will find the granite “horns” which are the reason for its name.

And from this wonder of nature we will change to a wonder made by man. A must is a visit to the Encomenda of Beade, a historical-artistic medieval group of monuments which was restored during the Modern Age and which is made up of a church, a Calvary, Stations of the Cross and a chapel.

We will now head to Ribadavia which, as we can make out by its name, stands on the river Avia. Here, we are welcomed by the San Xes de Francelos church in the valley which bears the same name. It dates back to the 9th century and it is a unique pre-Romanesque construction. The façade of its chapel has some several noticeable elements. We should note its Visigothic-influenced horseshoe arch, the columns with Corinthian capitals and the two biblical scenes. Yet, maybe

San Martiño de Cameixa church



San Clodio de Leiro monastery





San Salvador church. Pazos de Arenteiro

the most interesting part is its famous latticework decorated with various motifs.

Day 3

From the San Cibrao Celtic settlement to Pazos de Arenteiro

We set off on this third day of our trip towards the “City” which is how the San Cibrao de Las castro is known. It is one of the largest Celtic fortified settlements in Galicia, in the municipal areas of Punxín and Santo Amaro. It was inhabited continuously from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.C. and which stands out due to its advanced state of Romanization. Its name, surrounded by mysteries, takes us to San Cibrao, a warlock who converted to Christianity and finally became a saint. According to tradition, San Cibrao is the author of the “*Ciprianillo*”, a book which was used not only to find the treasures of the Moors but also to free them from their curse.

The settlement is situated by Mount San Trocadero so we will not be able to see the river Miño from here but we will be able to contemplate the neighbouring settlements of Santa Ádeda, Trelle or Coto do Castro.

Strolling through a medieval village

We shall move on to Melón to visit its Santa María Cistercian monastery, one of our less known gems which is a mixture of several styles: Romanesque, Renaissance and Baroque. The temple, founded during the 12th century, has seen better times but in spite of this, it still maintains great charm within its thick walls and in both its cloisters.

Back in the beautiful town of Ribadavia, we shall take a short diversion to visit the outdoor Prexigueiro thermal spring complex. The river Cerves springs have been known for ages, for they were already mentioned in the documents of the Santa María of Melón monastery, to which they belonged. They are located in the heart of nature so it would be a good idea to follow one of the sign-posted



San Cibrao de Las Celtic settlement

routes by the river. After the walk, we can slip into our bathing suits and step into the pools, all of which have different temperatures. One of the best moments to enjoy these springs is when the contrast between the warmth of the water and the coolness of the night becomes evident.

Pazos de Arenteiro

After the relaxing feeling of the spring waters and our contact with nature, we will make our way to the town council of Boborás, in fact, to the medieval village of Pazos de Arenteiro. Our first stop will be at Ponte da Cruz over the river Avia which, invaded by nature, shows the wounds from the battles between the neighbours and the Napoleonic troops. Pazos de Arenteiro is surprising due to the richness of its houses and “pazos” (manors). Actually, its name is a reference to the many manor houses built by

the river Arenteiro, which are an inheritance from its glorious past.

Let us wander about the village savouring every corner of history and the monuments hidden in this Historic Artistic Monumental Group will come to greet us. We should not miss the Casa de Arriba, the Feixóo, Tizón and Currelo “Pazos” (manor houses) or the San Salvador church, which is home to the gravestones of those who wished to be buried here, a right which was obtained by paying the price with wine.

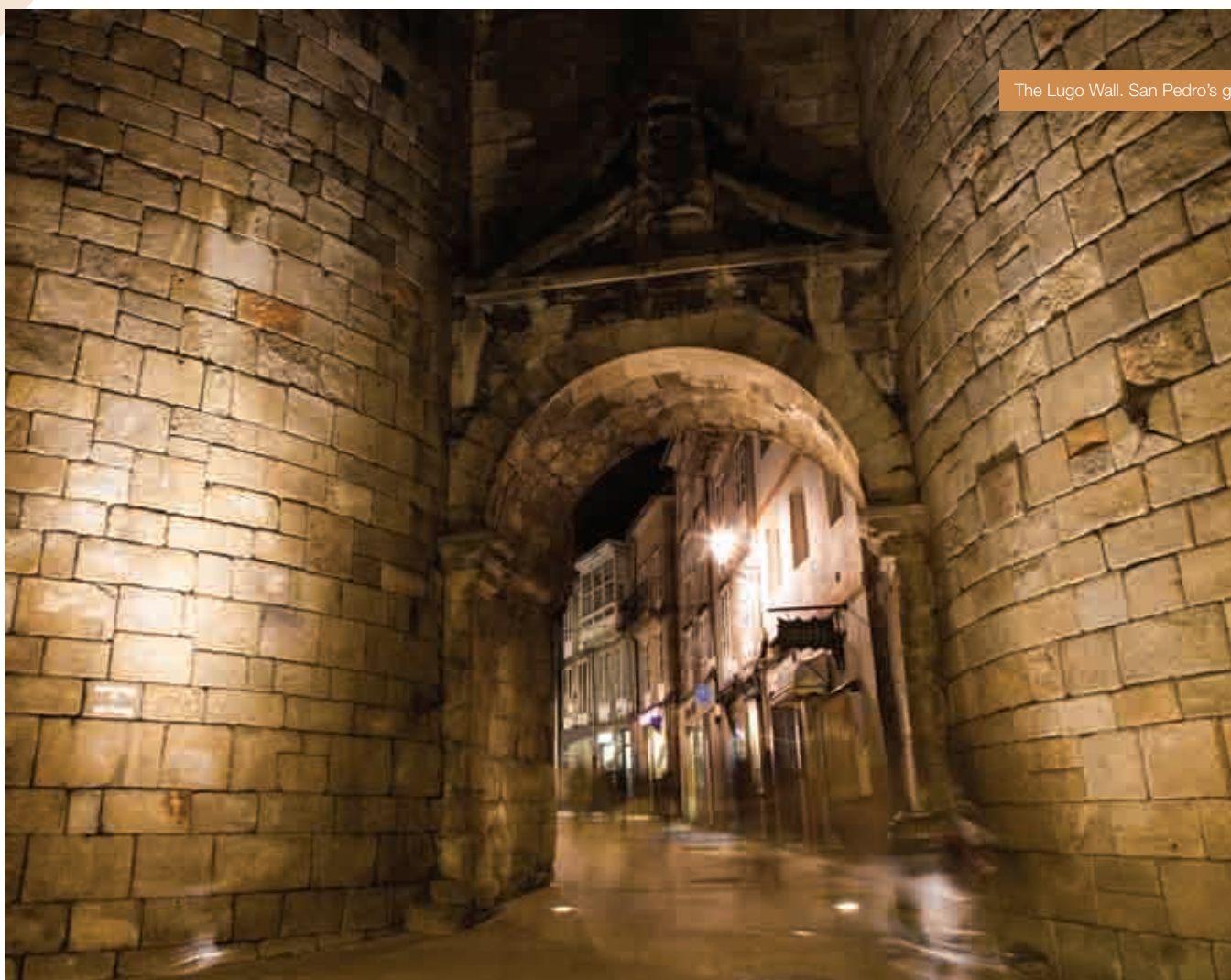
Pazos de Anteiro also owes part of its relevance to its strategic location between Ribadavia and Chantada; proof of this is the “peto das animas” (small religious booths) leaning against the front of this medieval church where the mule drivers would leave some coins to pray for the holy souls of the Purgatory. If we still feel up to it, we can walk along the river side along a thick oak tree grove.



Santa María de Melón monastery

Crossing Lugo from the interior to the coast

Can you keep my secret?



The Lugo Wall. San Pedro's gate

The “Terra Chá” (Flat Land) is special for many reasons: its unique orography and landscape which are the cause for its name; it is where the river Miño, the most important river in Galicia, begins its journey and other signs of human life which have established themselves with the passage of time. In this region, we will find traditions and gastronomy which are connected to the fruits from its soil and from its waters. And speaking of water, this route will not end here; rather it will continue to the coast of Lugo, a perfect ending to the itinerary.



- 1 The Lugo wall
- 2 Ferreira de Pallares monastery
- 3 Santalla de Bóveda nymphaeum
- 4 Bacurín church
- 5 Friol fortress-museum
- 6 Pena das Rodas rock
- 7 Viladonga Celtic settlement
- 8 Santa María de Meira monastery
- 9 Castroverde mills
- 10 Cospeito lagoon
- 11 Mondoñedo Os Muíños neighbourhood
- 12 San Salvador de Lourenzá monastery
- 13 San Martiño de Mondoñedo Basilica
- 14 Fazouro Celtic settlement
- 15 Arealonga beach

Day 1 From the Lugo wall to Outeiro de Rei

As we shall begin our journey in the capital of the province, we will save the first moments to visit the Lugo wall, which was declared World Heritage by UNESCO in 2000 and is a permanent reminder which the founders of the city left behind.

A calm stroll through Lugo's World Heritage

Let us enter the walled area of *Lucus Augusti*, a name the Romans gave this settlement, and climb up to the top and cover the almost 2,3 km of this wide two-thousand-year-old walkway. Walking along this Roman construction will take us back in time, yet; without a doubt, people passing by, chatting or practising sport will allow us to realise that the wall is more alive than ever as it looks just like any other street in this small quaint city. If we happen to be here at the beginning of the summer or in October, we will be able to mingle with the crowds of thousands who come to the *Arde Lucus*,

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: Lugo

Finishing point: Foz

Days: 3

Distancia (aprox.): 189 km

Other interesting details:

- › San Paio de Narla fortress-museum: 982375156.
Closed on Mondays.

a celebration which evokes the Roman past of the city, and the festivities in honour of the Patron Saint, San Froilán, respectively.

We can also visit the river Miño, the most important Galician river, in Lugo. Further along, we will discover its birth place, but first, let us discover other treasures on the outskirts of the capital of the province, where the "Terra Chá" (Flat Land) region begins.

We shall start off at the town council of Guntín so as to visit the Ferreira de Pallares monastery. With the refreshing sound of the river Ferreira as our companion, we will take a simple route to the so-called Horse Bridge. From here, we will make our way to the monastery in order to better appreciate

the value of this place which was founded in 909 by the Counts Ero and Laura. We should visit the cloister and the Taboada mausoleum and outside the temple, we can drink some water which falls upon an anthropomorphic gravestone which by chance has become a stoup. Who knows, it might even have magical powers...

A temple with an indoor pool

Also very close to the capital of Lugo, only 14 km away, we will discover yet another curiosity from the architecture from the past: the Santalla de Bóveda nymphaeum. This Christianised temple dates back to Roman times and, in the very centre of its rectangular floor, we will observe a small pool. This structure, which is unique in Western Europe, has different interpretations concerning its origin: a bathing place, a nymphaeum or a monumental group following the Roman rite to honour the goddess Cibeles, who is worshipped in capital of the Empire as the great mother of the gods.

We will now head north and, if the weather is nice, we can contemplate the exterior beauty of the Romanesque church in Bacurín, which dates back to the second half of the 12th century, and then we can make our way to the Friol fortress-museum. It is true that no matter how many times we pass by a certain place, our eyes may see it in a different way and discover new secrets about it. We can put this enormous capacity we have to surprise ourselves into practice when we visit this 14th-century castle, practically entirely rebuilt during the following century and later turned into a museum during the 20th century.

Most of the farming implements, the armour, the chariots and the kitchen utensils are from the 16th century. We will soon stop counting the arms on exhibition and we will be able to imagine past times. The kitchen with a granite oven and the hearth, and, to end our visit, we should climb up to the tower and even though we will be exhausted, we will be able to enjoy the excellent views.

The infinite power of stone

Water turned the “Terra Chá” into a very productive area and for centuries, different communities have established themselves in these such fertile lands. Our ancestors probably knelt before the Penas de Rodas in the town council of Outeiro de Rei to give thanks to the Earth goddess and the Sun god. These two great granite boulders used to be a place of worship during prehistoric times and, maybe also astronomy station where a farming calendar would be organised in these rich lands of the Miño. We will get to these rocks after covering the first kilometres of a trail. If we still have enough energy left, we can continue up to the Terra Chá Viewpoint for breathtaking views.



The Taboada's mausoleum. Ferreira de Pallares

*“Who said clear river Miño
That you were born in Fonmiñá,
For when you get there,
You are already a young lad.”
“River Miño, river Miño,
Go by slowly,
Don't wake up
My little baby”.*

Popular folk song

Santalla de Bóveda nymphaeum



As we are in Outeiro de Rei, we should take this chance to try its delicious fried eels and then visit Bonxe so that we can take home with us a souvenir from one of the most important pottery towns in Galicia along with Buño in A Coruña, Gundivós

(Lugo) and Niñodagua in Ourense. Another typical piece of craftsmanship from this region are the clogs made out of birch wood. And, referring to food, one of the basic items in the Galician diet: the potato.

San Paio de Narla fortress



From the Viladonga Celtic settlement to the Cospeito lagoon

We shall begin our second day on the road a little further more north of the province. In the municipality of Castro de Rei we will again visit the past. As thousands of years went by, the inhabitants of these lands stopped being nomads and settled down in fortifications like Viladonga. Let us enter the museum to be able to understand what life was once like in the homes and streets which are now these remains.

Seeing the birth of Galicia's longest river

Very nearby, we shall move forward in time and visit the Santa María de Meira monastery. This space, with its sober, austere appearance, is a stone witness to the settlement of the Cistercian religious Order in Spain. The calm landscape and the rich soil drew the Order to this region and being the birth place of the river Miño, at the Pegregal de Irímia, in the Meira mountain range here too was probably another advantage which would allow to follow their main premise *Ora et labora*.

Of the old monastery, only a part of a door which leads to the cloister of processions, which is a part of the Renaissance cloister, and to the church, remains. We should not miss the Romanesque iron fittings on the twelfth-century façade door. It is one of the few in its style which can currently be complicated in Spain. We should then turn around to admire the curious bell-gable with three bells on top of the wall.

Let us take another leap in space and time to observe the evolution of society in works of civil engineering. The increase in population was the reason for grinding methods to improve. The hand mills, which have two stones which have to be moved manually, gave way to the hydraulic mills. A good example can be found on the Castroverde mills route. A visit to this enclave is a good option to enjoy a mid-mountain landscape in all

its beauty and maybe see a stray roe deer...Divide the route into two stretches, PRG-133 and 134, in order to explore the area thoroughly. Just at the beginning of the second one is the Lamela mill, one of the few in Galicia with an exterior water wheel.

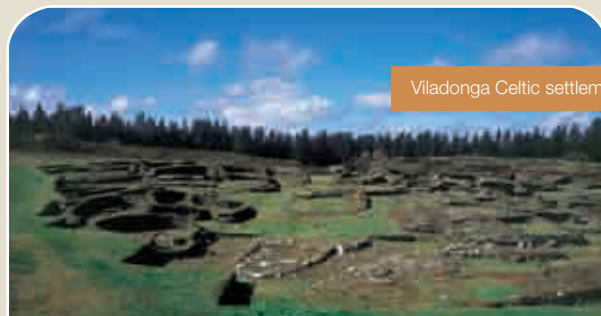
Following the course of the water to the Cospeito lagoon

As we follow the water and the multiple ways it has of appearing in nature, our next stop will be at the Cospeito lagoon where we will be able to contemplate its varied natural wealth. We can take some time to relax and discover some of the many bird species which nest here or any other animal which may hide in this surprising habitat. We should now find a secluded spot, take our shoes off and feel how freedom and coolness run through our legs, as we enjoy the view of the landscape and allow our mind to associate different ideas...Could it be true that under these waters there is a sunken village?

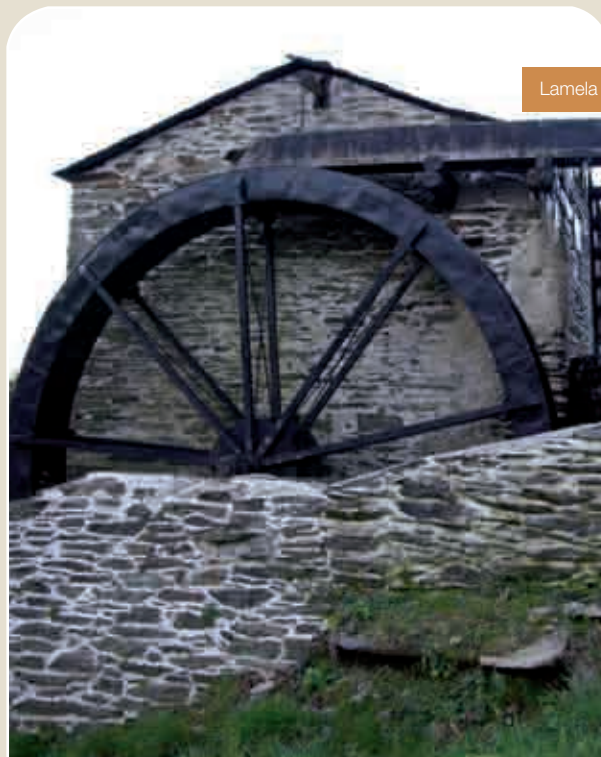
Day 3

From Mondoñedo to Arealonga beach

On this third and last day of our trip, we shall follow the water to one of the ancient capitals of the Kingdom of Galicia, Mondoñedo. The typical sound of the mills ceases to accompany the course of the river Valiñares as it passes by the Muiños neighbourhood; however, we should take this opportunity to walk along the paths which connect the houses which are right by the river and the maze of bridges and corridors which have made the people of Mondoñedo rename this place "Venice".



Viladonga Celtic settlement



Lamela mill



Santa María de Meira church



Os Muíños neighbourhood. Mondoñedo

A sweet Mondoñedo souvenir

As we are in Mondoñedo, we ought to take a walk through its old quarter and take with us a tasty souvenir: the famous Mondoñedo cake whose ingredients are pastry, sponge, almonds, fruits dipped in syrup and pumpkin soaked in syrup.

The San Salvador monastery, will be the reason for our visit to the rich valley of Lourenzá, which is famous for its beans which have their very own festival on the first Sunday in October. Inside is the shrine of its founder, Count Osorio Gutiérrez, *Count Saint*. According to legend, if we stick a finger through the whole of the lower part of the urn and we are able to touch his bones, our wish will come true. On the main day of the festival, on the last Saturday in August, there is a long line of eager people waiting to see if the legend is true in spite of not really knowing what there is inside. Are we willing to take the chance?

Discovering the Lugo coastline

We shall begin to reach the end of the trip in the “Mariña” (the coast of Lugo), precisely in the town council of Foz. We will first stop at the San Martiño of Mondoñedo basilica. With traces from the 11th century and a final structure from the late 12th century, it is considered to be the oldest cathedral in Spain. We should go for a walk in the surrounding area and place our hands upon the buttresses which hold up the walls and wet our hands in devotion in the Zapata fountain. According to legend, the bishop San Gonzalo threw a slipper where the spring is today and as it hit the ground the water sprung.



Stone altarpiece at San Martiño de Mondoñedo basilica

Our steps will lead us to the sea shore, in the municipality of Foz, so as to contemplate, astonished and marvelled, the Fazouro “castro” (Celtic settlement). This is the only primitive settlement which has been excavated and turned into a museum on the entire Galician Cantabrian coast. Let us cross the bridge over the river Ouro in order to get to the Punta do Castro peninsula. The erosive effect of the sea has sculpted part of the area and with what we will have learnt in Viladonga we will be able to discover similar elements which will help us to understand and interpret our visit. If the weather, the time and our own desires allow it, a swim at Arealonga beach will be refreshing. It will also be a perfect excuse to lie down calmly and collect our thoughts and remember all the secrets we have discovered during these past three days.



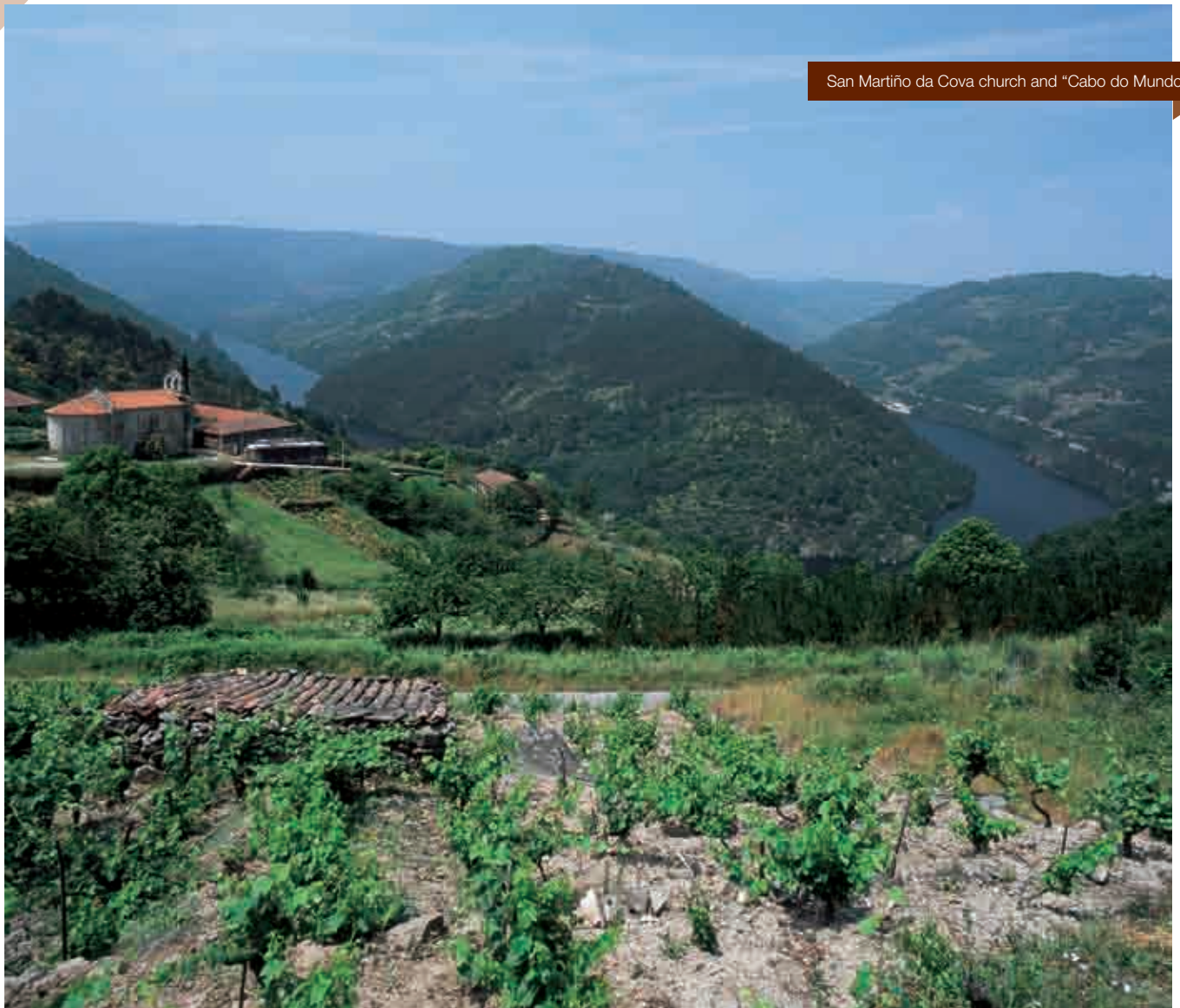
San Martiño de Mondoñedo basilica

Fazouro Celtic settlement



Ribeira Sacra: among vineyards and monasteries

Can you keep my secret?



The Ribeira Sacra is a land marked by the two great rivers which give it its shape, as well as by the faith and spirituality which still surrounds the numerous monasteries scattered all over its beautiful landscape. It has been inhabited since the beginning of time and its rich history, its amazing natural features and its delicious food are a safe bet for our senses.



- 1 Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño church
- 2 San Paio de Diomondi church
- 3 San Martiño da Cova church
- 4 Cabo do Mundo
- 5 Santa María de Ferreira monastery
- 6 San Miguel de Eiré church
- 7 Santo Estevo de Atán church
- 8 San Vicente de Pombeiro church
- 9 Santo Estevo de Chouzán church
- 10 Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil monastery
- 11 San Pedro de Rocas monastery
- 12 Santa María de Xunqueira de Espadanedo monastery
- 13 Santa María de Montederramo monastery
- 14 The river Mao canyon
- 15 Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery

Day 1

From Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño to Cabo do Mundo viewpoint

We shall begin our journey in the municipality of O Saviñao, in the province of Lugo, to come up close to one of the religious buildings due to which this land receives the name of “Sacra” (sacred), the Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño church. It was built during the late 12th century and it is one of the most impressive examples of Galician rural Romanesque. Its location by the side of the river on a slope, made it necessary to build a crypt in order to elevate it; thus, it seems to be suspended on top of the vineyards. Its delicately chiselled granite façade reminds us of Mestre Mateo’s Portico of Glory.

Legends, festive pilgrimages and beautiful natural landscapes

Without abandoning this town council, we will now visit the San Paio de Diomondi church. Its origin is mythical and legendary and it became Benedictine during the 10th century. On August 22nd and 23rd, the

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: O Saviñao.

Finishing point: Parada de Sil.

Days: 3

Approximate distance: 175 km

devout invade the parish to celebrate the Remedios pilgrimage. Apart from the religious service and the petitions to the Virgin, they also make the most of this opportunity to have a hearty meal in the hundred-year-old oak tree grove a few metres away from the sanctuary.

If we follow the course of the river Miño, we will get to the San Martiño de Cova church. It is a late thirteenth-century Romanesque temple which was a part of the Santo Agostiño monastery. This beautiful building hides inside paintings which represent the Holy Trinity. From here, we will also be able to enjoy the great views of the rugged landscape which surrounds the church. Before arriving at San Martiño and after crossing a path covered in thick vegetation, we will arrive at the Cova viewpoint from where we will have a priceless view of the gorge of the Miño, the so-called “Cabo

do Mundo". This is a spot where the river twists and turns amidst great calm. If we walk carefully down a very steep narrow track, surrounded by terraces, we will reach Cova river beach. Protected from the breeze by the surroundings, it seems welcoming in order to spend a refreshing summer afternoon.

Day 2

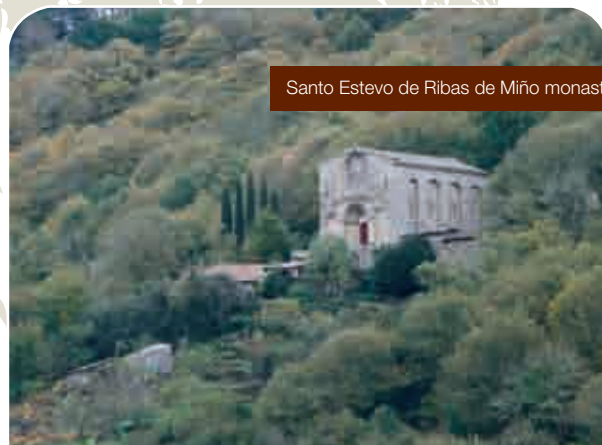
From the monastery of Santa María de Ferreira to Santo Estevo de Chouzán church

On our second day, without leaving the Miño riverside, we shall make our way to the town council of Pantón which is rich in historical heritage and has impressive natural features. Our first stop will be at the Santa María de Ferreira monastery where a small community of nuns still live. We should walk through the church patiently so as to admire its Moorish coffered ceiling or the medieval sculpture of the Virgin with the Child. It would be a sin to leave without tasting the nuns' almond biscuits to confirm if their fame as excellent pastry cooks is deserved.

A walk between the human and the divine

Let us carry on towards the church of the old 10th-century San Miguel de Eiré monastery. Of the original medieval work, a curious late 12th-century temple, which is associated to Castilian Romanesque, is preserved. The viewpoint-tower is quite unique as it seems to divide the temple into two totally different parts: one human and another divine. We should not miss the paintings on the dome or its Pantocrator.

We will now move on to the Santo Estevo de Atán church, which was a part of the monastery founded by the bishop of Lugo during the 8th century. It suffered great damage during the Muslim incursions, thus; it was rebuilt between the 12th and 13th centuries. Its pre-Romanesque latticework is what most stands out. Inside we can admire the group of paintings among which the Annunciation, Saint Gabriel and the Virgin Mary are the most relevant. We shall then set off to visit the San



Santo Estevo de Ribas de Miño monastery



*The stone monastic gesture
Blesses the peace of the village...
The paths kneel down
Hugging a stone cross in the
blue eternity
Of stone and sky.*

Luis Amado Carballo



The river Sil canyon

Vicente do Pombeiro church, from the 12th and 13th centuries.

To bring this second day in the heart of the Ribeira sacra to a halt, we will venture into the town council of Carballedo. As we follow a very steep path, we will suddenly come across the Santo Estevo de Chouzan church, which was declared an Artistic-Historical Monument in 1950. The temple was moved stone by stone in 1962 to avoid it from being flooded by the Belesar reservoir. Inside, the Judgement Day paintings catch our eye. On a short walk, we will enjoy the almost magical surroundings as we listen to the wind in the trees and the murmur of the water.

Day 3

From Os Peares to the Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery

We will begin our third day in the Ribeira Sacra by once again following the river Miño to the municipality of Nogueira de Ramuín, where at Os Peares, its dark waters merge with the green waters of the river Sil. We shall now continue along local roads to the beautiful and impressive Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil monastery. The current construction dates back to the 12th century

although it is originally from the 10th. It is situated on the southern bank of the river Sil, the convent was totally restored and for the last few years it has been a part of the “Paradores Nacionales” (state-owned hotels) network.

A Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque Tourism “Parador”

It was at its peak five centuries after it was founded when nine sanctified bishops retired here. Traces of their presence can be seen in the Cloister of the Bishops, where we will be able to contemplate their shrines, and also on the monastery’s coat of arms where nine mitres are depicted.

The monastery, which has a beautiful Baroque façade, also reveals elements from other artistic styles due to the different modifications it has undergone: Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. Let us take a walk inside to discover its hidden secrets. Inside the church, the stone altarpiece by one of Maestro Mateo’s disciples stands out. Among the best preserved rooms in the monastery is the kitchen, with a great central stone hearth. The stairs of honour by the entrance, which are covered by a ribbed vault and have nine ornamented rose windows, are also something to be admired.

Santa María de Ferreira monastery



San Miguel de Eiré church



On the closest Sunday to November 11th, a great “magosto” (chestnut feast), where chestnuts and wine from the region are plentiful, takes place in Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil.

Tracking the first traces of Christianity in Galicia

Let us move a little away from the current which has been guiding us. As we reach the town council

of Esgos, we will come across the first signs of Christianity in Galicia at the San Pedro de Rocas monastery. If we are up to it, we can follow the Royal Way on foot from the village to the temple along tracks through regional vegetation which once connected the different villages in the area. The route will prepare us for the spiritual halo which surrounds San Pedro, a place which was chosen many centuries ago by hermits to retire, pray and complete penance.

Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil monastery



This temple, excavated from the rock, hides a great treasure waiting to be discovered inside: the so-called Word Map of the Devout. We can see how Christ's apostles were dispersed all over the world in order to preach. When we enter the church, it will almost feel like being inside a primitive cave. A deathly silence and gloom can be sensed. Surrounding the temple, anthropomorphic gravestones, which seem to have a magical varnish due to the blend of stone, rainwater and lichen, can be found. Near these tombs, we can look for the San Bieito miracle fountain, whose water is said to heal warts and fade wrinkles.

The next monastery on our route is Santa María de Xunqueira de Espadanedo. After all the works of restoration these walls have undergone during the past 800 years, what most stands out is this Romanesque church's Neoclassic façade and a sober, yet beautiful, cloister where with a little bit of patience we can discover three sun dials.

A Renaissance beauty

We will now set off in search of the best example of monastic Renaissance art in Galicia, the Santa María de Montederramo monastery. After being founded during the first half of the 12th century by Benedictine monks, it soon became a part of the Cistercian Order. Its lower or hospice cloister, built during the 16th century, is especially outstanding. We should not feel observed as we walk by, even though sculpted human heads on the medallions may seem to be looking at us.

Just over 10 km away from here, we can admire one of the largest birch trees in Galicia. Birchwood was used to make farming tools and the typical clogs, which would come in handy to walk along the muddy tracks. And, if it happens to be October 12th, we are in luck, as we can take part in the Meat Feast. This feast was inherited from the Ox Market Fair. This great gastronomic meeting takes place around stewed Galician beef accompanied by other local products.

On our way to our next religious enclave, we ought not forget to stop and contemplate nature's great work of art at the river Mao canyon.





If we follow a narrow winding road, we will get to Parada de Sil where the most rugged and steepest canyons in the Ribeira Sacra await. On a clear day, lots of viewpoints will allow us to make out several municipalities in the Ribeira Sacra of Lugo in the background. The most famous ones are the so-called “Balcóns de Madrid” (Madrid Balconies) from where, in mid-air, we can admire the spectacular rocky walls, which rise almost 300 m above the ground.

A monastery among chestnut trees

So as to bring this day to a close, back by the river Sil, we shall continue under an hundred-year-old chestnut tree dome until we get to the Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery. In this almost fairy tale spot, nature takes over. In the middle of the grove we will come to a well-preserved architectural group, which used to be a refuge for monks and priests in the past. Let us take the wooden footbridge to the almost hidden temple. The peace and quiet which reign here will make a lasting impression.

Inside the 12th century church, there are some interesting Renaissance mural paintings which depict several saints. Its beautiful simplicity contrasts with the spectacularly decorated rose window which allows the light to illuminate the inside. Other elements which stand out are the unusually shaped pyramidal belfry tower, which plays the part of a



Santa María de Xunqueira de Espadanedo monastery



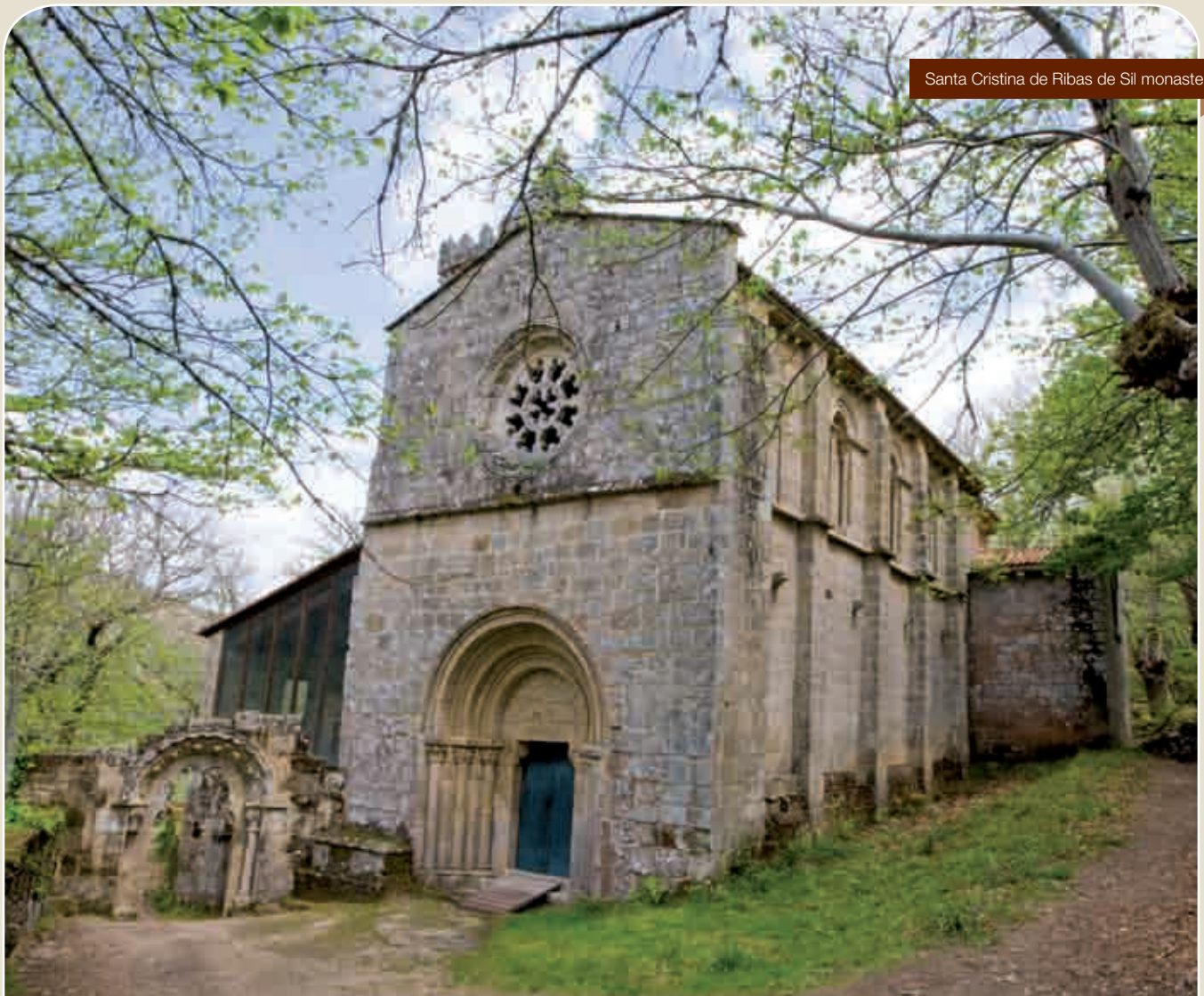
Santa María de Montederramo monastery

*The Romanesque flower decorates this land
And the wind still bears its aroma.
Ribas de Miño, Nogueira, Diomondi,
A Cova, Eiré, Atán, San Fiz de Cangas,
Pombeiro, Ribas de Sil, Santa Cristina:
Once you were consecrated stones
Round rose windows like the world
Symbols of perfection and divinity,
Today melancholic mater, taking part
In the bitter-sweet faithful rite of nostalgia!*

Manuel María *"The Miño, a canal of light and mist"*

lookout tower too, the cloister and the gravestones which belong to the first abbots. The impressive lookouts upon the river Sil are also a must. Let us say farewell to the Ribeira Sacra in peace after covering its magical mountains where the wild

features of nature live in perfect harmony with faith. Whether we have been guided by the Miño or have sailed down the Sil canyons, we have indeed been able to discover unreachable spots where true medieval gems are hidden.



Santa Cristina de Ribas de Sil monastery

Ourense: enchanted stones

Can you keep my secret?

A Merca group of granaries



Throughout this trip across the land of Ourense, we will discover a great deal of its forgotten heritage. Stone survivors from another time in different stages of preservation but all of which maintain their value as artistic and ethnographic witnesses intact.



- 1 The Merca group of "hórreos" (granaries)
- 2 Vilanova dos Infantes
- 3 San Miguel de Celanova chapel
- 4 Castromao Celtic settlement
- 5 Santa Comba de Bande church
- 6 San Salvador de Manín church
- 7 Val do Salas megalithic monuments
- 8 "Aquae Querquennae Via Nova" interpretation centre
- 9 Bon Xesús de Trandeiras monastery
- 10 The Santa Clara de Allariz sacred art convent museum
- 11 Maceda castle
- 12 Xunqueira de Ambía collegiate church

Day 1 From the granaries in Merca to the Salas reservoir

We will begin our visit at a record-breaking village, as here we will be able to admire the largest group of "hórreos" (granaries) in Spain. Up to 35 granaries can be accounted for in the "conxunto de hórreos da Merca" (A Merca granary collection). Lined up along a slope for perfect ventilation, they are the best witnesses of very much alive rural past. If we walk across the "Campo da Feira" (Market Square), we will listen to the wind through the holes in the ochre-coloured wooden walls. In A Merca, all the granaries are made of wood except for two which are a combination. If we wish to discover how old each one is, the trick is to look at the type of nails on the little door. Blacksmith nails mean we are before the oldest granaries.

Leaning in towards Medieval times...

After this ethnographic stop, we shall head on to the land of Celanova which has been mentioned so many times by our most famous authors like Curros

USEFUL INFORMATION:

Starting point: A Merca

Finishing point: Xunqueira de Ambía

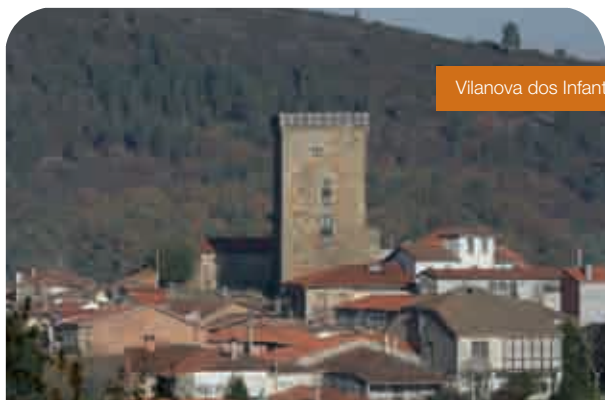
Days: 2

Approximate distance: 112 km

Other interesting details:

- » The Santa Clara Sacred Art Museum. Closed from January 15th to February 15th. More information on opening hours and tickets at www.allariz.com.
- » Archaeological Aquae Querquennae Centre: 988444401. More information on opening hours and tickets at www.fundacionaqvianova.com/contacto.

Enríquez, Celso Emilio Ferreiro or Méndez Ferrín. We will start off at the medieval town of Vilanova dos Infantes. As we slowly walk along its streets, we will come to one of its stately houses which surround the castle, which was pulled down by the Irmandiños in the mid-fifteenth century and later rebuilt. We can also see the remains of a monastery



Vilanova dos Infantes

next to the current Romanesque parish church. Inside the temple there is a 12th century, full-size, Byzantium-style Christ. We should specially pay attention to the cross as it looks like the branches of a tree.

Once we get to the centre of Celanova near to the monastery, we should visit the little San Miguel Mozarabic chapel. It is unique in the Iberian Peninsula and it is essential in order to understand the Christian resettlement. What will probably first catch our eye is its size, just about 22m² although its structure is also interesting. We should go in and admire its horseshoe arch with an alfiz.

A few kilometres away from Celanova, awaits the Castromano Castro on a hill over the river Arnoia. Let us stop on the top of this rocky hill and look into the vast horizon and imagine for a moment how the peoples who once inhabited this settlement went about their daily routine. We can walk around the perimeter of the wall which is over 500 m long and look at the stone-covered embankment. Its location, on the Via Romana (Roman Road) XVIII, is the reason for the great amount of remains found here like coins, pottery or milestones which are currently on exhibition at the Ourense Provincial Museum.

The Visigothic charm of Santa Comba de Bande

Continuing southwards, and following the steps of the past, we make our way to Bande to visit its Santa Comba Visigoth temple. This sanctuary, which dates back to the second half of the 7th century, has a Greek cross floor and a rectangular perimeter where the main chapel and the portico stand out. When we are here, we should note the charm surrounding us: outside, the remains of an adjoining chapel, where people were baptised so that they could enter the church as Christians, can be seen; in fact, the baptismal font is still preserved. Another thing which will catch our eye is the fountain known as “the lovers’ little well”.

*Near the city of Ourense
On the way to Celanova,
Where the wind is warmer
Than the beaten Galician land,
From a circle of mountains
At their green side
A valley full of flowers is born
Covered in aromatic shrubs
Pine trees and others
Rich with fruit and shade.*

Description of Celanova according to
Curros Enríquez



Castromao Celtic settlement

The moved temple

Let us move on to the neighbouring town council of Lobios to visit the San Salvador of Manín church, commonly known as the Aceredo church. This sacred place has a rich history full of tales. The most extraordinary one, undoubtedly, is about how it was moved, stone by stone, twice. The temple was originally built in Manín and then moved during the 18th century to the lands currently flooded by the Lindoso reservoir. Its architectural value, as it is one of the best examples of Baroque architecture in the region, saved it again in the 20th century where it was placed in its current location.

The Xurés dolmens

We shall now go even further back in time and visit the Mau de Salas dolmens in the town council of Muíños. This is one of the most important

Megalithic sites in Galicia. Nearby, we will also be able to visit the rugged Xurés Park which has an amazing natural, landscape value.

At the Maus de Salas site, we will be able to discover several Megalithic burial monuments from different periods. One of them, the “Casiña da Moura” (The Moor’s little house), is not in its original location due to the flooding caused by the construction of the reservoir. In order to get to this corridor dolmen we need to cover a few kilometres and cross a bridge over the top part of the reservoir. After crossing the Salas reservoir, we come to the Casola do Foxo from the beginning of the Megalithic period. At first, the entrance was located to the southeast like in almost all of the Galician dolmens. In any case, the entrance is not the original one, due to the fact that shepherds covered it to protect themselves from the wind.

To bring this day to a close, there is nothing better than to go for a short stroll around the reservoir: as



Santa Comba de Bande church



San Miguel de Celanova chapel

the sun goes down the water reflects a warm colour which seems to be the perfect way to disconnect our minds.

Day 2

From the Aquis Querquennis military campsite to Xunqueira de Ambía

Back to Imperial Rome, on this second day we shall inspect the Aquis Querquennis military Roman camp, in the municipality of Bande. It was built during Vespasian's reign and it was abandoned approximately in the year 120 A.C. The best theory about its construction is the one which sustains it was made to guard Via XVIII or Vía Nova (Roman Roads) between Bracara and Asturica, currently Braga (Portugal) and Astorga (León). Proof of this is that it had many of the desired requirements: it was easy to access and there were pastures, lots of wood and the precious thermal spring waters.

Before arriving, we can stop at the Aquea Querquennae interpretation centre where the answers to many questions will be provided.

A relaxing bath at the Bande springs

Coming back to our trip, we shall arrive at the Bande Baths. In these springs, two altar stones were found. On one of them, we will be able to read "Boelius Rufus kept this vow to the nymphs, interceding for their own health on their behalf". We should not forget our bathing suits because as soon as we feel the steam from the four pools, their invitation will be difficult to resist. Now that our body is relaxed after our bath in the warm spring waters, we can make our way to Xinzo de Limia to visit the old Bon Xesús de Trandeiras monastery. It dates back to the 16th century and its style is Portuguese Gothic with Renaissance elements. We should not skip the chance to visit its harmonious cloister: a walk through its theatrical ruins will give us the impression of travelling to better times. There are several legends about the origin of this construction. One of them speaks of how some Portuguese



gentlemen decided to build a chapel which attracted great devotion here after the image of the Baby Jesus appeared before them. This act of faith motivated the Franciscans to found the convent. Further north we come to a fairy tale town, Allariz. It is situated by the river Arnoia and it is one of the best preserved historical group of monuments in Galicia where stone, wood and nature play the leading roles. We should walk its streets and pay good attention to everything we see in this open-air museum. Without almost realising, we will come to the Santa Clara convent which we should not forget to visit. It was founded by Lady Violante, King Alphonse X the Wise's wife. Here we will find an ivory image of the Abraceira Virgin from the late 13th century. It is a seated image of the Virgin holding the Child which, as it opens up, looks like an altarpiece destined to tell the life of Mary, with scenes from the Birth, the Ascension, the Coronation, the Annunciation and the Epiphany. And Allariz is an ideal place to have lunch at one of

the restaurants by the river while we contemplate the beautiful scenery. We should not forget to try its "amendoados" (almond biscuits), undoubtedly, a delicious souvenir from this trip.

The thick walls of Maceda castle

To end the day, we will head to the town council of Maceda to see one of the most relevant civilian buildings from Galicia's Middle Ages, the Maceda castle. The purpose of this fortress was to guard and defend, first against the Muslim incursions and later against the Portuguese. It is said to have the thickest walls of all the European fortresses. As a curious detail, we should note that King Alphonse X, the Wise, who was the author of the well-known Cantigas de Santa María, lived within these walls when he was 11.

If after everything we have seen and done, we still have room for more, we could make one last effort and visit the Collegiate Church in Xunqueira de Ambía.



Maceda castle



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