



# PORTUGAL

## WALKING ROUTES IN THE LEZÍRIA DO TEJO REGION



**PORTUGAL**  
**WALKING ROUTES**  
**IN THE LEZÍRIA**  
**DO TEJO REGION**



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*Degree of Difficulty: Easy.*

## CREDITS

**Promoter:**  
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[www.visitribatejo.pt](http://www.visitribatejo.pt)

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## INTRODUCTION



Ribatejo is located in the heart of Portugal, some 50 km from Lisbon, and offers visitors excellent cuisine, good wines, rich heritage and typical Portuguese hospitality – all attractions that will guarantee memorable moments.

Boasting a mild climate and some 3,000 hours of sunshine per year, the region has a vast range of architectural heritage that is classified as being of national interest, with examples from many different historical periods.

Its natural heritage is perfect for leisure activities and for contemplating its diverse landscapes. From the Aire and Candeeiros mountains to the north, to the vast floodplains of the Tagus to the south, there are various options for all those who like to combine discovering nature with open-air activities and moments of great excitement.

For those who like to hike, we suggest 11 walking routes that can offer you a pleasant week's holiday in touch with nature and the best that Ribatejo has to offer. Each trail can also be taken individually, according to your availability.

Intentionally simple to use, this guide lets you discover the region through various local itineraries that allow contact with places which are environmentally interesting, whether because of the landscapes, the emblematic fauna of the Mediterranean eco-system or the rich architectural heritage.

All activities can be done independently and according to your availability. Each trail has a technical sheet providing information about the length, estimated duration, a map with a layout of the trail and the most important points of interest at the location. For each trail, you can access a file that you can transfer to your GPS device and a file that allows you to view the maps of the itineraries proposed on the Internet.

All trails included in this guide are the responsibility of the various participating entities. There may be changes to the points of access to some properties which could impact the proposed itineraries.

In order to obtain additional information on cultural activities, accommodation and restaurants, we suggest you visit [www.visitribatejo.pt](http://www.visitribatejo.pt)

**COME AND DISCOVER RIBATEJO!**

## THE REGION

Ribatejo is a region of Portugal that has its own geographic identity, marked by the structuring presence of the Tagus River. This is the biggest river in the Iberian Peninsula – over 1,000 km long from source to mouth.

For millions of years it has transported sediments collected throughout its drainage basin and deposited them along its final course, forming extensive plains known as the Tagus floodplains, and in the regions that are more distant from the river at a higher altitude, we have the Ribatejo heath.

In terms of landscapes, the region boasts great diversity characteristically dominated by five large units:

The Tagus **Estuary**, the largest in Western Europe, covering an area of some 34,000 hectares, is a region of brackish waters and extraordinary natural and scenic interest.

The **floodplain** where the very flat terrain lets you see the landscape far away into distance, which is not very frequent in Portugal, except in panoramic points in the mountainous regions. The floodplain area consists of plains that extend along the Tagus River and these soils are considered to be some of the best agricultural soils in Portugal.

The **heath** consists of land that is hillier, higher and has less biodiversity, and the so-called “neighbourhood” that is located on the right bank of the Tagus River, exhibiting low relief and sandy, limestone and clay formations with various tones of white, brown, red and orange.

The cork oak **grove** is a type of forest that is the result of human action in relation to cork oak forests, which made up the original vegetation of the region. The vegetation consists of prairies and pastures that are frequently used by grazing animals.

The Candeeiros **mountain range**, rising to an altitude of 678 metres is characterised by limestone massifs that have an intricate network of tunnels and caves open to visitors.

It is all of this hugely valuable and diverse natural landscape, together with a rich architectural heritage and the traditional activities of its peoples that make up the cultural identity of this region that is worth visiting.



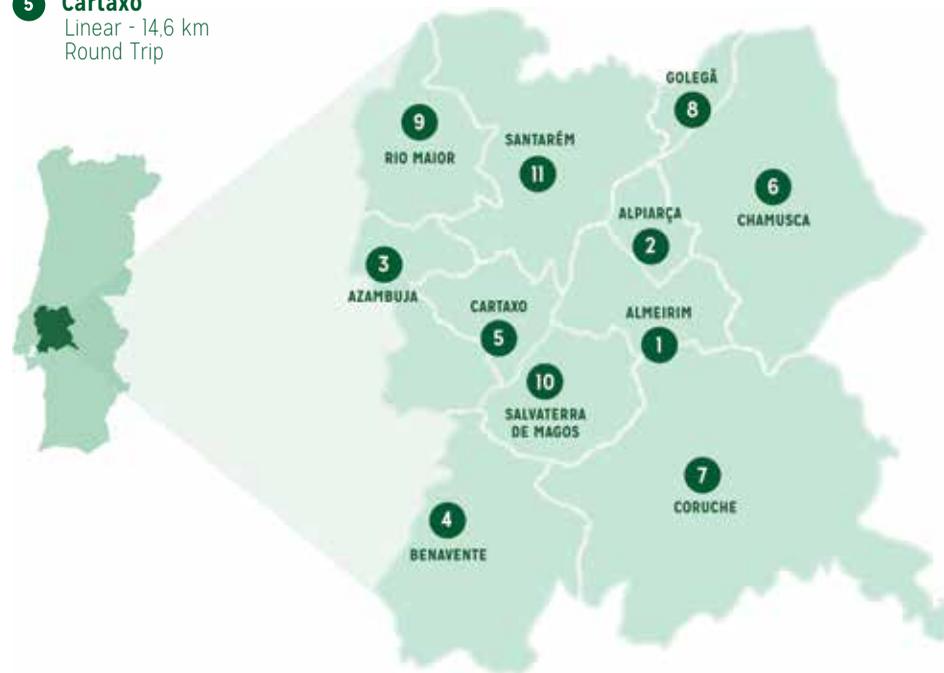
## THE TRAILS NETWORK

The Network extends for 100 km divided into 11 itineraries. With an average of 9 km per trail, they can be easily completed in half a day, leaving free time to visit other points of interest and enjoy the rich cuisine and local shopping opportunities.

There are ten circular itineraries and one linear route. The paths can be travelled throughout the year, but it is in autumn and spring, when the weather is milder, that new life brings a more colourful palette to the landscape, thanks to the myriad flowers, the songs of the resident birdlife and the aromas of wild herbs filling the air.

All the trails are marked with marks registered by the FCMP. You can obtain the technical data of each individual trail in PDF format and all of the trails in gpx, kml or kmz format. This information is available via Internet at [www.visitribatejo.pt](http://www.visitribatejo.pt)

- |  |                                       |  |
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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



All of the trails are described by undertaking the itinerary in a clockwise direction, favouring hiking and optimal interpretation of the landscape. There is a technical sheet for each trail that provides advance information about the location of the itinerary, the starting point of the trail, gps-wgs84 coordinates, the type of trail, whether it is circular or linear, degree of difficulty, length in kilometres, approximate duration, accumulated climb, accumulated descent, maximum altitude, minimum altitude and recommended season.

## SIGNAGE



The trails are marked by signs in various formats, mainly in urban areas where they often appear on urban furniture. There may also be marks on natural objects.



Right Way



Wrong Way



Turn Left



Turn Right



© FCMP



## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS



- Prepare for your activity in advance. Find out the distance you will be walking and the estimated time it will take to make the trip. Calculate the departure time, making sure you can complete the trail before nightfall.
- Take a flashlight with you, along with a first-aid kit and a compass or GPS device.
- Take water and food with you in case of unforeseen events.
- No one likes to find rubbish on the trail. Take your rubbish with you. Do not leave behind traces of your passing through.
- In some areas there will be considerable exposure to the sun during the summer. Calculate your itinerary so as to avoid the hotter times of day, and wear a hat and apply sunscreen.
- There are often mosquitoes in the summer. Use insect repellent.
- Do not feed wild animals or collect samples of plants, animals or minerals.
- Use local services, encouraging economies of proximity and products and crops of the region.
- Travel in silence, since this is the best way of observing the surrounding nature.
- When you use companies, make sure they are officially registered (RNAAT).
- Share your experiences with your friends and on social media. #VisitRibatejo
- Always stay on the indicated paths.
- On unmarked trails it is necessary to use a GPS device or local maps.
- Respect private property. Open and close all fences or gates that you find along the way.
- Be careful during hunting season, which is between 15 August and 28 February; especially beware of Thursdays, weekends and public holidays.
- If you are going alone, always notify someone you trust of where you are going, providing them with details of the trail, which direction you are going in and your estimated return time.
- It is always best to travel in a group or accompanied by a local guide.
- All pets must be put on a leash.

## ALMEIRIM



Locality served by the A13 motorway with central bus station and the Santarém train station approximately seven kilometres away. Human occupation began approximately in the first century B.C.E., with crop and livestock farming. Here you can find evidence of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods, but also the Chalcolithic Period and the Bronze Age. The Iron Age had a significant impact on the region and the Roman legions of Decimus Junius Brutus were here, going up the Tagus River and landing near Santarém, where they noticeably left their mark. Established in 1411 by D. João I, Almeirim was a recreational resort for members of the Royal Court who came from Lisbon for leisure and entertainment. Almeirim is a national landmark due to its excellent and appreciated culinary offerings. The melons and wine and wine are justifiably famous around here and the so-called "rock soup" (sopa da pedra) is the most famous dish.

## RIBEIRA DE MUGE, A NATIONAL TREASURE

PR 1  
ALR



- LOCATION**  
 Marianos - Casal da Tira
- TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
 Casal da Tira in the square next to the brook
- GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
 39.179478, -8.471476
- AIRPORTS**  
 Lisbon: 93 km | Oporto: 258 km | Faro: 298 km
- RECOMMENDED SEASON**  
 ALL YEAR

134 m  
ACCUMULATED CLIMB

134 m  
ACCUMULATED DESCENT

132 m  
MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

37 m  
MINIMUM ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR  
TRAIL TYPE

EASY  
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

11.3 km  
LENGTH

4 h  
APPROXIMATE DURATION

ALMEIRIM >>



This trail runs along the Muge Brook, one of the tributaries of the Tagus River, and also takes you through the surrounding fields with well-preserved cork oak groves and a fertile meadow that is good for farming.

The starting point in the square near the Casal da Tira Bridge offers easy parking and has restaurants on hand. The trail continues along the western side, along the town's main street. It is a typical rural town with single-storey homes, adjacent agricultural plots, vegetable gardens and orchards. There are also small vineyards for personal consumption dotting the landscape. Beyond the houses and the asphalt section of the road, the remainder of the trail takes you along dirt roads. After the first kilometre, cork oaks begin to dominate the landscape.

At the start of the dirt road, do not turn left; rather, go straight ahead for some 600 metres. At the sign that says "ponto de água" (water point) turn left. After this initial flat part, the climb to the highest point begins. This entire section runs through a cork oak grove awash in the sound of forest birds. The cork oak forests of the Iberian Peninsula are the ideal habitat, offering food and shelter to many species of animals; more than 160 species of birds have been noted in this ecosystem, not to mention 37 species of mammals and 24 species of reptiles and amphibians.

Half-way up, on the right side, there is a small reservoir where some animals go to drink water; you can easily spot mammals such as foxes or **wild boars** (*Sus scrofa*).

Once you reach the fork in the road, follow the path on the right. Some 500 metres farther on, as you near the peak, the path joins another road. Go

left here. This part of the route goes through two continuous patches of forest. Various paths branch off from here, but always follow the one on the right, keeping a dispersed cork oak grove on your left and a denser pine forest on your right-hand side. In this area you may come across several **strawberry trees** (*Arbutus unedo*). After about 900 metres turn right and continue uphill through the middle of the pine forest. Some 150 metres ahead, turn right once again and keep following the main road along the ridges, now with the pine forest on your right and an area of heath on your left.

On a clear day, you can see Almeirim, Santarém and the Aire Mountain from this higher part. This is also a good location to see large eagles, such as the buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) or the **short-toed snake eagle** (*Circaetus gallicus*), which, as the name suggests, feeds mostly on reptiles, especially snakes, but also lizards. Sometimes it will hunt small mammals and on rare occasions birds or insects.

Some 1,200 metres ahead, turn right and cross the pine forest. From here on, the trail begins to descend until it reaches the Muge Brook and the dispersed cork oak grove. About 100 metres ahead, when you reach a fork in the road, take the path on the right and, after another 100 metres, turn left. Keep going for about 150 metres and turn left once again. Another 100 metres ahead, once you reach the fork in the road, turn right once again and keep going straight ahead for about 400 metres until you reach the Fazendas de Almeirim picnic park.

Here you will find a spring that feeds the Vale d'Água fountain and several tables where you can stop for a rest. There are many birds here, such as the **great tit** (*Parus major*). While standing next

to the fountain, on your left side, there is a small lake and in front of it the vegetation of the brook. Follow a narrow path and cross a small footbridge to the opposite bank. Turn right here. Now that you are returning to your starting point, the path will always be level along the Muge Brook and its dense gallery forest.

Continue going straight ahead along the **Muge Brook** with various fields of crops, orchards and vineyards on your left. This meadow is very fertile and good for farming due to being relatively flat, since this means that during the flood season the river overflows and floods the adjacent fields.

You will cross an asphalt road and see several tracks on your left, but keep going straight on. About two kilometres ahead, the road seems to end and turn to the left. At this point, keep going straight ahead along a path surrounded by dense vegetation, keeping the waterline to your right.

Some 200 metres ahead, you will once again come to a dirt road. Keep going straight ahead; there is a fenced-off field on your left where you will sometimes see animals. About 700 metres farther on, you will come to an asphalt road. Here, turn right and cross the bridge, thus returning you to your departure point.

## RIBEIRA DE MUGE, A NATIONAL TREASURE HIGHLIGHTS

### WILD BOAR (*SUS SCROFA*)

Its body is rounded and it has short, but strong legs, giving it a physically robust look. Its fur is dark brown. It follows a matriarchal social structure, normally formed by three to five animals, accompanied by their young, while the lone adult males only join the females during the reproductive season (November to January). The mother is extremely protective and may react violently to any threat to her young. Therefore, do not approach. If you hear warning sounds, walk away slowly without turning your back to the animal.



### STRAWBERRY TREE (*ARBUTUS UNEDO*)

This is a bushy evergreen plant that is native to the Mediterranean region and Western Europe. It can grow to a height of about five metres. Its oval-shaped leaves are dark green. This species is well-adapted to shady areas and hilly regions. The fruit, known as arbutus berries or "medronho" in Portuguese, is round and red. Fleshy and edible, the berries have a pleasant flavour and are very often used to produce liqueurs and brandies.

## RIBEIRA DE MUGE, A NATIONAL TREASURE HIGHLIGHTS

### SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE (CIRCAETUS GALLICUS)

This is a very light-coloured eagle with very long wings. Its back is brownish-grey and its underside is light, spotted with brown tones. It has a large head and, like most birds of prey, the female is larger than the male. As its name suggests, it feeds mostly on several species of reptiles. It lives throughout the Mediterranean basin, Russia and the Middle East, along with Pakistan, India and some Indonesian islands. It can be seen in forest areas with clearings, farm land, rocky areas and semi-desert regions. It nests in trees.



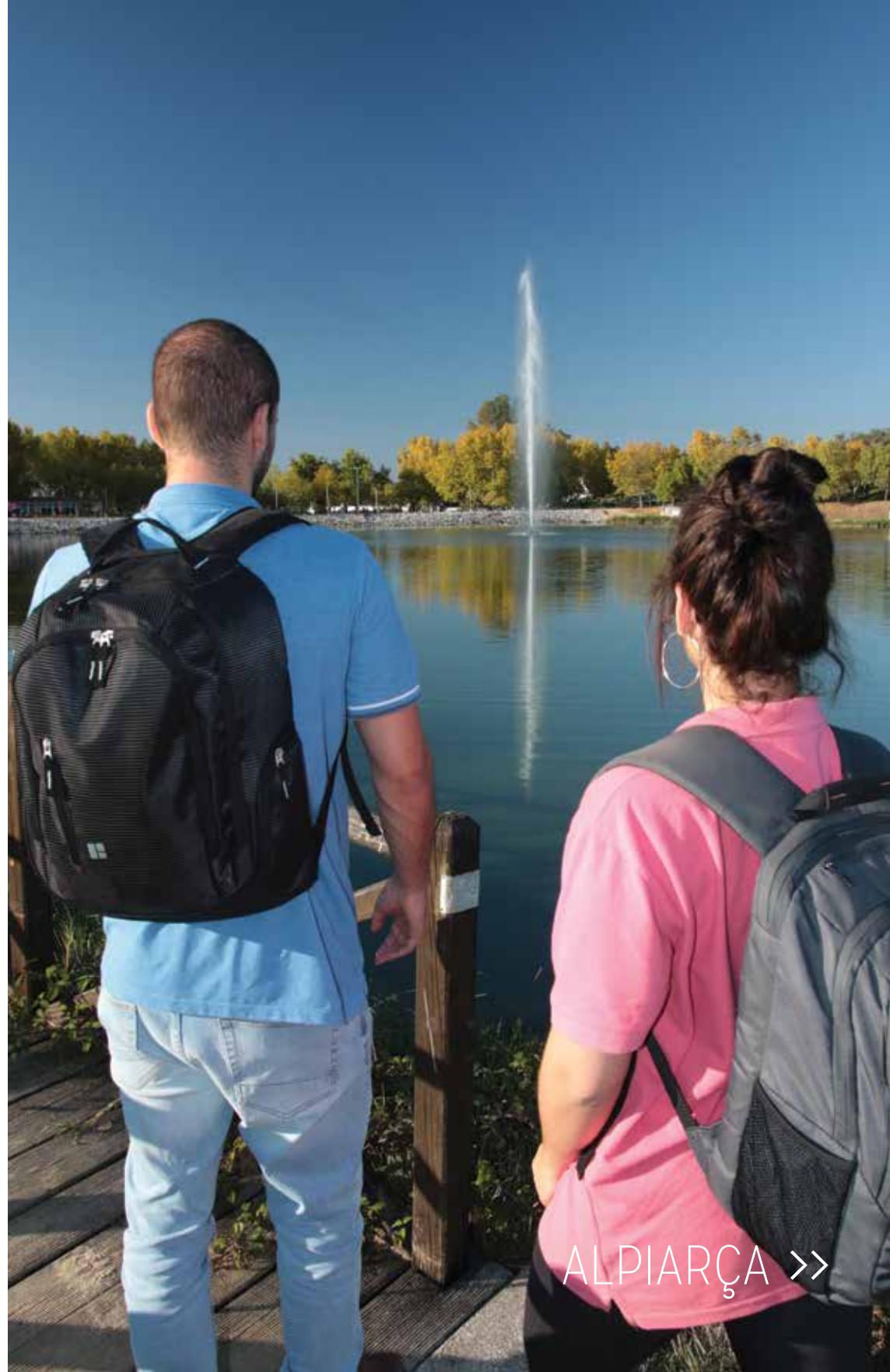
### GREAT TIT (PARUS MAJOR)

This species is very common throughout Europe and Asia. In Portugal, it is abundant and nests throughout the territory. Measuring 13 to 14 cm long, it is easily identified through its characteristic face mask and yellow breast with a black strip going from the throat to the abdomen. Common throughout the country, it is easily found in parks and gardens, cork oak groves, coniferous forests, olive groves or gallery forests. Because it mainly consumes insects, it performs an important role in combating forest infestations.



### MUGE BROOK

Tributary on the left bank of the Tagus River, the source of the Muge Brook is at an elevation of 207, near Água Travessa and it flows into the Tagus River, upstream from Escaroupim. Sixty-eight kilometres in length, its main tributaries include the Lamarosa Brook, the Calha do Grou Brook, Chouto Brook and the Rosmaninhal Brook. The vegetation growing alongside the river is referred to as a gallery forest. In this section we can see a well-preserved gallery with large trees, such as ash, poplars, alders and willows, supporting a rich diversity.



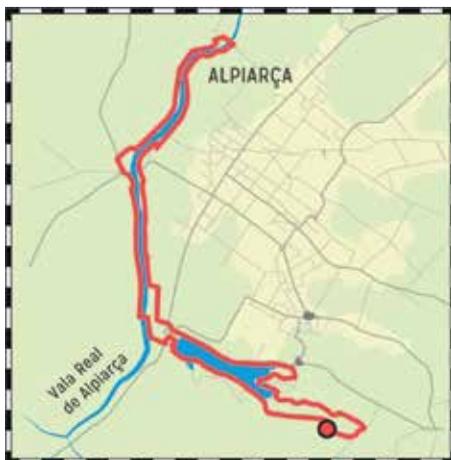
# ALPIARÇA



Locality easily accessible via the A1 and A13 motorways. There is a central bus station and Santarém train station is 11 km away. With deeply-rooted links to agricultural production, this area is a major producer of melon and watermelon, which are the highlights of the annual fair held at the Carril fruit market. In the culinary arts, regional specialties include pão-de-ló (a type of light sponge cake), mutton stew and *miga fervida* (a kind of bread soup). The municipality's main attraction is the Casa dos Patudos, former residence of republican official José Relvas who bequeathed all of his estate to the municipality. Here you will find one of the most important and valuable collections of paintings, sculpture, porcelain and tapestries in the country. Next to the museum, the Patudos Reservoir offers a series of places of interest for leisure activities. Nearby, the Patacão "beach" is the ideal place to interact with the Tagus River. Alpiarça is an excellent wine region famous for its estates that can be visited along the Tagus Wine Route.

## THROUGH THE CAVALO DO SORRAIA RESERVE

PR 1  
APC



**LOCATION**  
Alpiarça



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Cavalos do Sorraia Reserve



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.242092, -8.575890



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 91 km | Oporto: 256 km | Faro: 305 km



**ALL YEAR**

**RECOMMENDED SEASON**

54 m

**ACCUMULATED CLIMB**

55 m

**ACCUMULATED DESCENT**

42 m

**MAXIMUM ALTITUDE**

8 m

**MINIMUM ALTITUDE**

**CIRCULAR**

**TRAIL TYPE**

**EASY**

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY**

10.2 km

**LENGTH**

3 h

**APPROXIMATE DURATION**

Beginning at the **Reserve**, the trail passes through farmland and vineyards until reaching Vala Real de Alpiarça, also passing through the Carril green park and the Casa dos Patudos, returning to the initial point via the Patudos leisure complex.

There is restaurant service and easy parking. The trail starts by following the tree-lined avenue in the direction opposite to the entrance to the Reserve. After about 300 metres you will find a gate that you should always close once you pass through. Follow the dirt road for a few metres until you see a narrow path to your right surrounded by vegetation, which leads to the **Patudos reservoir**. Here, go left and stay on the path along the bank.

At the reservoir, among many other species of birds, you will commonly find the **moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*). After crossing the wooden bridge, go straight ahead and then turn right, go past the entire wall of the dam and then turn left on to the national road. Keep to the left side of the road and cross safely using the pedestrian crossing. Ahead you will see a dense reed bed located on the banks of the Vala Real de Alpiarça Canal. Follow along the right side of the drainage canal you see in front of you and when you reach the reed bed turn right. Some 150 metres ahead, cross the bridge to the other side and turn right.

This section follows the Vala Real de Alpiarça, a waterline measuring 65 kilometres that starts east of Aranhas de Cima and flows into the Tagus River on its left bank.

Keep going along the bank for about 1,300 metres until reaching the bridge over the asphalt road that connects Alpiarça to Santarém. Carefully cross the road and go straight ahead on the asphalt road. Some 100 metres ahead, turn right on to the dirt road

that passes through the vineyard and when you reach the waterline turn left.

The history of vineyards and wine in Ribatejo dates back to before Portugal existed as a nation, the Romans having been mainly responsible for introducing this culture to the region. This region of extensive plains next to the Tagus River is periodically flooded and this contributes to the fertility of these silty soils that are excellent for wine. The white wines are very diverse with a palette of aromas ranging from the fresh and aromatic Arinto to the floral Fernão Pires, while the red wines are historically associated with the various national varieties and most recently with the combination of these varieties with international varieties.

In this riverside region we can watch the colourful **bee-eater** (*Merops apiaster*), the most exotic bird that visits during the spring and summer and which usually nests here. Keep going along the path alongside the bank for some 1,200 metres until you reach a dirt road. Turn right, cross the bridge and then turn right again, along the path that follows the opposite bank from where you came.

After some 600 metres, cross the small bridge over the drainage canal and keep going straight ahead along the bank until you find the fruit market and Carril picnic park. Take advantage of the shade and freshness of the dense woods to take a break. Keep going along the bank of the waterway and pass under the bridge's arch, continuing straight ahead along Vala Real for some 900 metres; once you see the prominent Casa dos Patudos, turn left along the road that follows the vineyard, then turn right and continue for some 400 metres along the road that runs adjacent to the buildings, until you reach the national road that crosses Alpiarça.



**Casa dos Patudos** is a must see, whether you choose to do so before or after your walk. This notable architectural complex designed in 1904 is in the revivalist and nationalistic style of the time, evoking various styles of the past and of popular architecture, using Portuguese production techniques for the ceramic tiles, ironworks and furniture. Inside, you will find a significant legacy of national culture waiting for you.

Cross the national road and turn right towards the reservoir. Along the dam wall, now follow along the left side, covering the opposite bank from where you started. You can opt for the dirt track alongside the water or, if you prefer, take the cobblestone walkway and enjoy the shady avenue lined with plane trees, continuing for some 900 metres until

you come across a dirt road on your right. Turn here and a few metres farther on take the first right and continue along the cork oak grove until the waterway bank. The road continues for about another 300 metres and once you reach the main road turn right and keep a look out for the gate on the fence on your left side to find the access to the Reserva do Cavalo (Horse Reserve). For everyone's safety, always close the gate. This last kilometre takes you along an ensconced valley with considerable biodiversity and the silence is broken by the singing birds and croaking frogs. You will often see horses in a fenced-in meadow at the top. Once you see the entrance to the Reserve keep going straight ahead and you are at the starting point.

## THROUGH THE CAVALO DO SORRAIA RESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

### CAVALO DO SORRAIA RESERVE

This breed of horse has found a sanctuary here. Of the three Portuguese breeds of Lusitano, Garrano and Sorraia, this last is the most threatened, with less than 200 breeders all over the world. This breed harks back to the ancestral wild horse, whose signs of primitiveness are evident from the zebra features in their limbs and head, two-coloured manes, greyish or spotted yellow hair, donkey stripes and the so called mule stripe that appears along the backbone. There is a breeding centre here for these horses, which are unlike any other breed anywhere in the world.



### ALBUFEIRA DOS PATUDOS

Located between a well-preserved cork oak grove and the town, this body of water is one of the most-visited in the region. Around it you will find a pleasant picnic park, swimming pools, campsite and café and it is often used by sports fishermen. Pétanque tournaments are often held in the gardens that surround the reservoir; this boules sport is similar to the traditional *malha* game that is very popular in the region. This is the ideal location to spend a few days in a relaxed and unspoiled environment in close contact with nature.



## THROUGH THE CAVALO DO SORRAIA RESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

### MOORHEN (GALLINULA CHLOROPUS)

This is a cosmopolitan bird that can be found all around the world. It can be found in various types of wetlands, such as weirs, marshes, river banks and even city lakes. Easy to spot and measuring some 37 cm in length, it is easily recognisable thanks to its dark plumage, white stripe on its side and intense red beak, with a yellow tip on the adults. It has greenish legs and long toes, allowing it to walk on the aquatic vegetation. It feeds on small aquatic invertebrates, but it mostly eats a broad variety of vegetation.



### BEE-EATER (MEROPS APIASTER)

This is one of the most colourful European birds. The underside of its body is blue-green and its back has several tones that include brown, orange, green and blue. Its throat is yellow and it has a well-defined black stripe over its eye. Bee-eaters are migratory, arriving in the spring and returning to Africa at the end of the summer. They are very sociable birds that usually live in colonies although they are also known to nest by themselves. Bee-eaters are ground-nesting birds. The female lays between two and six eggs which are incubated by both the male and the female. They are common throughout the entire region south of the Tagus River, usually near bodies of water.

### CASA DOS PATUDOS

A legacy left behind by republican José Relvas, Casa dos Patudos is currently a prime example of Portuguese heritage and is considered by specialists to be the most important municipal museum in the country. Various architectural periods are evident in its appearance. Inaugurated as a museum in 1960, it houses pieces of great artistic refinement. Its vast and eclectic collection includes paintings by names such as Master Francisco Henriques, Josefa de Óbidos, Columbano and Malhoa, along with sculpture, ceramics and decorative arts created by some of the leading Portuguese artists of the time.



# AZAMBUJA



Locality served by the A1 motorway, with a central bus station and a train station in the centre of the town. Just outside the greater Lisbon area, Azambuja is a municipality with noticeably rural characteristics, ideally located, with excellent points of access and extraordinary natural and environmental conditions that make it a particularly attractive municipality to visit. The municipality offers great topographic and scenic diversity, consisting of the residential centres, locations and villages that make up its seven civil parishes, where an interesting dichotomy has been established, linking its peoples to the Tagus River and to the land. With its vast heritage, the Alto Concelho region offers the monumental town of Manique do Intendente where, in addition to various monuments, we find the unfinished church-palace, a unique example of this type of architecture in Portugal, commissioned by an individual from the private sector. From the prehistoric period, we have the fortified town of Castro de Vila Nova de São Pedro, classified as a monument of national interest. A land of modest and welcoming people, its cuisine is also an asset; highlights include cheese and Maçussa bread, which should definitely be enjoyed along with a good wine, also produced in the region.

## CASTRO DE VILA NOVA DE SÃO PEDRO

PR 2  
AZB



### LOCATION

Vila Nova de São Pedro



### TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT

Rua das Escolas - Junta de Freguesia de Vila Nova de São Pedro



### GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES

39.209335, -8.843206



### AIRPORTS

Lisbon: 51 km | Oporto: 271 km | Faro: 292 km



ALL YEAR

RECOMMENDED SEASON

116 m

ACCUMULATED CLIMB

115 m

ACCUMULATED DESCENT

104 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

28 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR

TRAIL TYPE

EASY

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

7.3 km

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE DURATION

AZAMBUJA >>

This itinerary takes place in the surroundings of a fortified town considered to be a treasure of Portuguese archaeology and one of the oldest of its kind in Europe. Numerous artefacts have been found here, including ritual cups, idols and adornments, ceramics and other pieces of incalculable value to archaeology, now held by the Museu Arqueológico do Carmo (Carmo Archaeology Museum). On the ground, we can see the main walled area of the town and various structures, including remains of the rest of the lines of walls that you can explore if you are interested. This has always been territory sought after for its fertile soil. In the more recent past, Vila Nova, together with the localities of Maçussa and Alcoentinho (currently Manique do Intendente), formed one of the largest parishes of the region. Under the crusades decree it was taxed an amount of 400 pounds annually at the start of the 13th century during the reign of D. Dinis, "the Farmer." This king created free fairs, granted various towns privileges and exemptions and sought to get the entire population interested in farming the land, facilitating its distribution.

At the start of the trail, parking is easy and there is a café.

Starting at the small garden at the centre of the locality and with the clock tower on your left, cross the road and practically in front, you have the unpaved Amoreira Street. Walk some 300 metres and turn right, beginning a stretch of 800 metres, which ends on an asphalt road. On this descent, 150 metres ahead, on your left side, you can see a spring. These old springs excavated in the limestone allowed the small local vegetable gardens to be irrigated, the basis of subsistence farming. The entire descent takes place in an ensconced valley and ends at the Maçussa Brook.

Once you reach the asphalt road, turn right and start a short climb of 500 metres until you reach a drinking fountain on your right side with a picnic park and a public **washhouse**. Here, take the dirt road to your left and continue along the Almoester Valley for some 1,400 metres. Flat section where the rich covering of vegetation supports considerable biodiversity. The landscape is divided into vegetable gardens and well-preserved cork oak groves with the occasional flock of sheep and goats grazing amid the scrub and a few vineyards. The sound of singing birds is always in the background and the various species of trees and bushes deserve our admiration. These include the **hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*) which, depending on its size, is considered a bush by some people and a tree by others. In spring it sprouts white flowers and later on in the year edible red fruit grows on it.

When you reach a crossroads of rural roads, turn right and start climbing up to the hamlet of Torre de Penalva. This part of the route runs along a waterline where, on the left, we have a dense gallery of diverse riverside vegetation; on the opposite side, we see a cork oak grove, followed by open fields and some brushwood.

Some 800 metres ahead, you will find a road to your left; however, keep going straight ahead for 200 metres more, turning left on to a narrow road that ends near **Torre de Penalva**. When you leave this area, follow the asphalt road and 70 metres ahead, on your right side, you will see the Torre drinking fountain. Get back on to the road and go straight ahead, not turning on the first street, but rather taking the next road on your right, then passing a crossroads and continuing straight on for another 300 metres, where you will find a sign relating to the fort.



Here, turn right on to the dirt road, continuing straight ahead for some 400 metres until it peters out into three undefined sections. Choose the one on the right and just a few hundred metres ahead you will see the hillside where the monument is located.

**Castro de Vila Nova de São Pedro** is located on the highest point of the region, as these types of buildings are almost always located on the tops of mountains that act as natural defences and help with tactical control, thanks to a complete panoramic view over the surrounding fields. Nearby you have the Almoester River, a tributary of the Maior River and the latter a tributary of the Tagus River, which was likely the main communication line. This fortified settlement dating from the Chalcolithic period saw four phases of occupation: first, it was an open settlement; then the first wall was built, later the

second line of defence was constructed and still later a new wall was built.

Go back the same way until you reach the asphalt road and here continue straight on for some 200 metres, turning on the first road to the right. When you pass the church, turn right and go down the street for some 20 metres; here, on your right, you will see **Casa João Moreira and the Miradouro (lookout)**, offering great views of the local landscape. While on the street facing forward to the lookout, follow the street to your left for about 100 metres; when it forks, take the left-hand one and keep going for about another 200 metres. Here, the main road of the town forks and you should take the left one for about 150 metres, then turning left, and at the end of the street turn right. About 100 metres farther on, you will find the garden, the starting point of this itinerary.

## CASTRO DE VILA NOVA DE SÃO PEDRO HIGHLIGHTS

### WASH HOUSE

Tank or place where clothes were washed with a special stone for beating and scrubbing the clothes. Built during the second half of the 20th century, initially without any type of roof, this solidly constructed space sporting three round arches, has a forecourt on the outside and two tanks and eight stones inside. Located at the western entrance of the town, it offers a view of the Almoester Valley, Manique do Intendente and the ancient ruins of the church of the medieval parish of São Pedro de Arrifana, as mentioned in the "Parish Memoirs" of 1758. Outside we find a fountain with several tables, inviting us to sit down and take a break.



### HAWTHORN (CRATAEGUS MONOGYNA)

The Almoester River Valley is well-preserved with a landscape exhibiting traces of human activity where vegetable gardens and vineyards blend in harmoniously with the native flora. Proof of this is the presence of this small tree that can live for as long as 500 years. This is an important species given that there are more than 140 species of insects associated with this tree. The hawthorn is present throughout the Iberian Peninsula. Its red berry (haw) is edible and is used in certain countries to make jams and alcoholic beverages. Seeds of the haw have been found in prehistoric settlements. It is thought that people ate them frequently.



## CASTRO DE VILA NOVA DE SÃO PEDRO

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### TORRE DE PENALVA

Medieval structure located at the top of the hill in the locality of Torre de Penalva. It is said that this is the first house to have been built here and its name comes from the tower (Torre) and the rocky outcroppings of white limestone visible on the opposite side of the valley and which, to the local people, apparently resemble a white feather (Pena Alva, in Portuguese). According to local residents this valley was known as the "Valley of the Mares." Under the ruins, there is a spring that used to spark the imagination of children, while also supplying a brandy distillery, vestiges of which can still be seen.

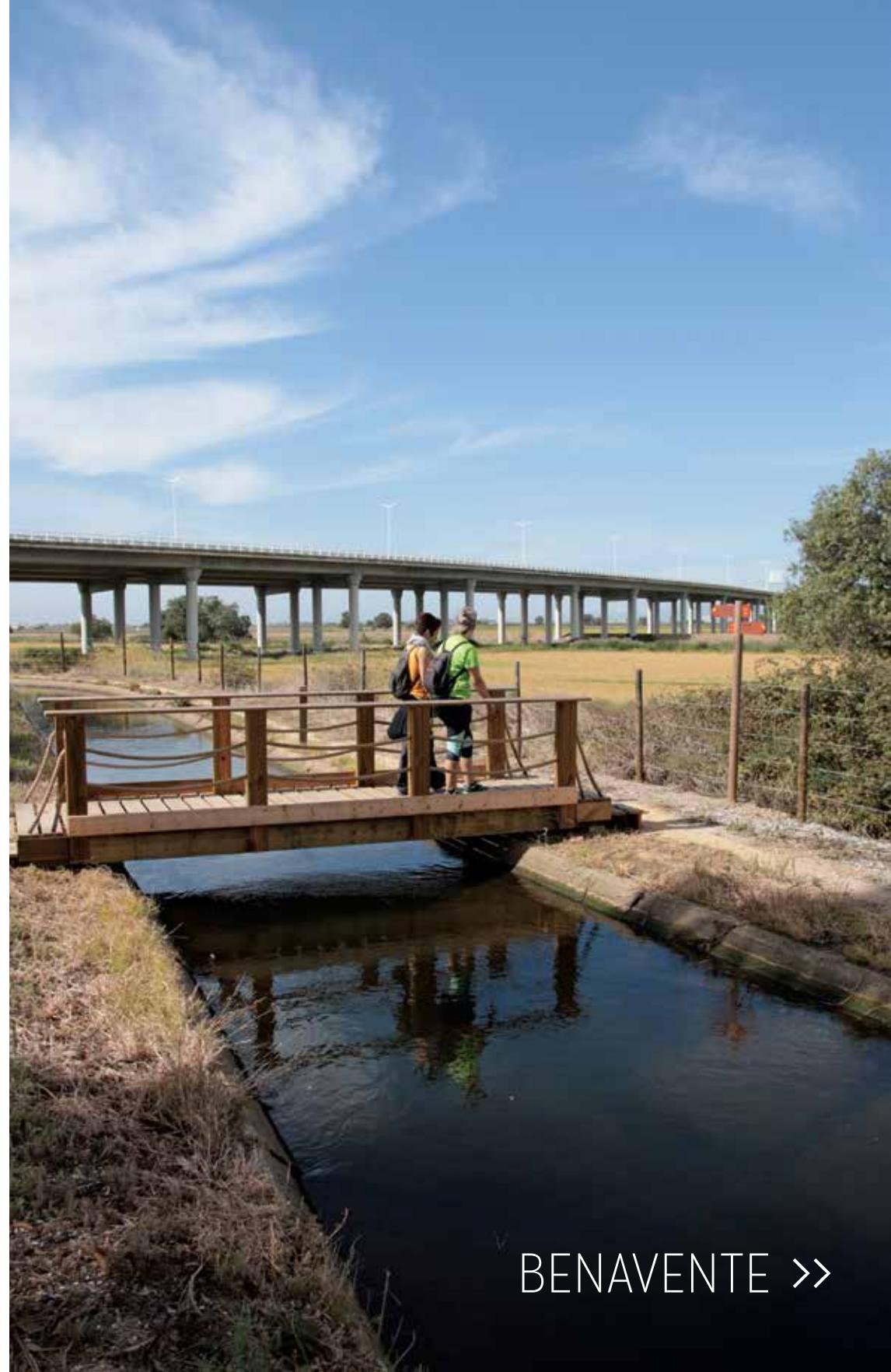


#### CASTRO DE VILA NOVA DE SÃO PEDRO

Classified as a Monument of National Interest since 1971, it was important to the lives of the prehistoric rural societies. Geologically speaking, it is located within a rocky ridge at a height of 100 metres. The geostrategic location of this Chalcolithic settlement on the outskirts gives it good natural defence conditions, as shown by its various lines of walls. Discovered in 1936, it is one of the most-excavated archaeological sites in Portugal. Chronologically it covers the Final Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze ages (3500 B.C.E. – 1500 B.C.E.).

#### CASA JOÃO MOREIRA AND LOOKOUT

This self-taught man of culture dedicated his life to researching and studying the history, culture and social aspects of Vila Nova de São Pedro. The Moreira family building is currently owned by the municipality. It is a typical single-level building with an admirable garden overlooking the Almoester Valley. Next to this house, which represents local history and culture, there is a small lookout with a panoramic view over the monumental Pina Manique Church-Palace, an unfinished work by Chief of Police Diogo Inácio Pina Manique. We can see the silhouette of Montejunto Mountain on the horizon.



BENAVENTE >>

# BENAVENTE



Locality served by the A10, A13 and A1 motorways with central trucking station. In 1199 the establishment of colonists on the south shore of the Tagus River created a hamlet that received a charter in 1200 from D. Paio, Master of the Order of Calatrava and confirmed in 1218 by King D. Sancho I. Located in the extensive Tagus floodplains, it is known for its reputable bull breeders and stud farms, not to mention its typical courageous *campino* herdsmen, who bring the traditional festivities to life with their brightly-coloured vestments. In terms of its cuisine, it is well known for its *Cozido Bravo à Ribatejana* (a hearty dish of boiled meats and vegetables), *Torrizado* (a bread dish similar to bruschetta), *Açorda de Sável* (a type of bread soup with shad), *Migas* (another type of bread dish) served with spare ribs or salt cod, *Ensapado de enguias* (Eel stew, served over slices of rustic bread), *Bolo Padre* (a dessert dish) and dishes featuring the Carolino long-grain variety of rice from the Ribatejo floodplain. It is also known for its agriculture, especially its Carolino long-grain rice. A natural treasure of the municipality, it is part of the Tagus Estuary, considered one of the most important wetlands of Europe, providing shelter for thousands of birds that come here every year to escape the harsh winters of northern Europe.

## LEZÍRIAS ROUTE

PR 1  
BNV



**LOCATION**  
Benavente

**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Jardim do Calvário / Cruz do Calvário

**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
38.984470, -8.813076

**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon 56 km | Oporto: 292 km | Faro: 268 km

**RECOMMENDED SEASON**  
ALL YEAR  
In winter there is a possibility of interdiction due to flooded areas

82 m	81 m	20 m	-2 m	CIRCULAR	EASY	19.2 km	5 h
ACCUMULATED CLIMB	ACCUMULATED DESCENT	MAXIMUM ALTITUDE	MINIMUM ALTITUDE	TRAIL TYPE	DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	LENGTH	APPROXIMATE DURATION

Marked mostly by the waters of the Sorraia and Almansor rivers, this trail cuts across traditional and ancient routes through the floodplains, letting you discover the area's rich natural and rural heritage against a diverse and dynamic backdrop dotted by urban centres, such as Benavente and Samora Correia.

This circular route can begin from Benavente or Samora Correia. In addition to the full trail, you can also do two alternative shorter itineraries. The first circular one begins in Benavente and covers a total of nine kilometres. The second circular one begins in Samora Correia and is 13 kilometres long. Whichever you choose, simply follow the indications on the terrain. You can also do a small segment that is two kilometres long, beginning near the Parque Ribeirinho de Benavente and crossing the Sorraia River over a footbridge until you reach Vala Nova and returning to the starting point.

The idea is to follow the route in its entirety, taking the circular option starting in Benavente. The trail begins at Parque Ribeirinho of the Jardim do Calvário (Riverside Park of the Calvário Garden). This location offers easy parking and has cafeteria and restaurant services in the historical centre where, near the town hall, you can take a look at the local pillory. It was built in 1516, when the new Charter was attributed to Benavente by King D. Manuel I and classified as a building of public interest. In the square you will find one of the highlights of this trail, namely the **Cruzeiro do Calvário**, which has been classified as building of public interest. Standing in the square with your back to the monument take the street to your right and go all the way down Rua das Acácias. Some 500 metres ahead you will find the national road that crosses the locality; keep going straight ahead on the pavement, going around the car park area. About 400 metres ahead, turn right on to Rua Ladeira dos Carrascos. Keep going for about 200 metres, passing a crossroads, and once you reach a fork in the road take the left-hand fork all the way along Rua Monte da Saúde for 1,500 metres. This street leads to the countryside. You will gradually see fewer houses, and the ones that you do see will be more scattered and surrounded by their vegetable plots and gardens, and then by some farmland. Once you have finished the walk, go along the shoulder of the asphalt road, watching out for traffic. This section leading to the start of the dirt road is about two kilometres long. For the first kilometre, the road crosses a dispersed cork oak grove, with a stone

pine forest on the opposite side, while the second kilometre goes along a section of the A10 motorway. Once you pass the viaduct, at the junction at the end of the descent, turn left, following the final part on asphalt for another 500 metres.

At the end of the farmland and at the start of the next forest area, turn on to the first dirt road on your right. Open and close the gate or use the walkway next to the electricity pole. Go straight ahead for some 200 metres, turn left next to an agricultural warehouse and go down to the irrigation canal and turn left again. Keep going straight ahead on the path that runs along this hydro-agricultural project for one kilometre. This is where you will have your first contact with the vast flat fields that are typical of this route. Here you may be able to see some **black-winged kites** (*Elanus caeruleus*), which like to hunt in the open fields near the cork oak grove. When the canal ends near the national road, turn right and follow the dirt road through the rice paddies, 1,400 metres ahead. When the dirt road once again approaches the national road, keep going straight ahead and turn right, now going along the Almansor River and always keeping the rice paddies on your right-hand side. Keep going down the road for one kilometre and when you reach one of the floodgates that distribute water to the rice paddies, keep going straight ahead, but now over the earth embankment. After about 1,500 metres, you will reach the end of this segment that runs alongside the river.

Here you will have the option of visiting Samora Correia. A mere 800 metres ahead you will be able to tour the historical centre where there are various restaurants to choose from. If you decide to do the tour, at this point turn left and cross the bridge, keep going for some 200 metres and then turn on to the first asphalt road on your right; 500 metres ahead you will reach the houses of the **Companhia das Lezírias** and the local garden.

In Samora Correia you will find the Almansor River, its last tributary, flowing into the Tagus River. Over time, it has played a vital role for the region and according to historical records, Romans and Arabs used it as a communication line; it was navigable until the start of the 20th century, with significant river traffic for carrying agricultural and forest products. Along the river you can often see grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) or white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*).

After returning to the previous point, and after once again crossing the bridge over the Almansor



River, go past the gate that is ahead of you on a side passage and go over the embankment for some 900 metres. While you are here, take advantage to engage in your first contact with the Sorraia River, which flows for over 150 kilometres. It is the result of the juncture of the Sor and Raia brooks, before receiving water from the Erra, Divôr and Juliano brooks, and passes through Coruche and Benavente.

Keep going straight ahead over the dyke along the river for some three kilometres. While on this elevated segment, take the opportunity to admire the view of the vast rice fields that make the municipality of Benavente one of the largest producers of Carolino rice in Portugal. At the end of the road you will once again find the Sorraia Canal, an important part of the irrigation grid for the entire Sorraia Valley. Here, turn left and keep going for three kilometres, always on the path that runs alongside the canal. You will be going underneath the viaduct and shortly thereafter you will find a wooden bridge, which you should ignore because it is part of the shorter alternative route. Keep going straight ahead along the canal and, after you pass a small tunnel, look out for the **fighting bulls** which are usually there in an area of

open fields. After this, the path becomes narrower, going through a tunnel of dense vegetation where many birds find shelter, brightening up your walk with their singing.

At the end of these three kilometres, you will find a road that crosses the irrigation canal. Keep going straight ahead and after some 100 metres leave the canal, turn left and follow the dirt road, keeping the pine forest on your right and the farmland on your left. In this area you can see the beautiful **black-winged kite**, a species that, on the European continent, can only be found in southern Portugal and Spain. After about 400 metres, once you re-encounter the renowned Sorraia Canal, continue on the left side on a sandy road, which after 200 metres becomes a narrow path that crosses a small wood. After crossing the footbridge, turn left and stay on the path that goes around the entire agricultural field. Some 200 metres farther on, leave the path and continue along the embankment for 600 metres, once again with a section of the Sorraia River on your left side. After passing a small cluster of vegetable gardens, go straight ahead and after 300 metres you will be back to the departure point.

## LEZÍRIAS ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

### CRUZEIRO DO CALVÁRIO

Classified as a Building of Public Interest, it is located in the square known as Rocio do Moinho de Vento. It was built in 1644, four years after the Restoration of National Independence, at the initiative of a local brotherhood. This is a relatively common large devotional crucifix consisting of a base and Latin cross on a rectangular pedestal with five steps, protected by a walled parvis, which adds to its monumental character, raising the profile of this calvary in terms of its historical-cultural significance in the Benavente riverside region, near the banks of the Sorraia River.



### CASAS DA COMPANHIA DAS LEZÍRIAS

Established in 1836 and nationalised in 1975, this fully publicly-owned company owns the largest agricultural, farming and forestry operation in Portugal. Wine, rice, livestock, olive groves, cork, and forestry products are produced or operated by this company directly or by its tenants. This neighbourhood, located in Samora Correia, was created to meet the housing needs of the company's workers. Painted yellow and clustered together like a village, they are all single-storey houses with gabled roof. On the pavement alongside the houses there are numerous flowers that add colour to the location and bring smiles to the faces of passers-by.

### RICE PADDIES

Rice only became known in Europe after Alexander the Great's expedition to India. The Moors brought it to the Iberian Peninsula during their conquest in 711, but it was during the reign of King D. Dinis that the first written references regarding rice farming appeared, and it was only the rich who could afford it. In the 18th century, production incentives were offered in the regions of the main estuaries and they reached the Tagus River at the start of the 19th century. Portugal has over 30,000 hectares of rice crops, producing 150,000 tonnes annually, mostly of the Carolino type, and the municipality of Benavente is one of its main producers.



## LEZÍRIAS ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS



### WILD BULL (BOS TAURUS)

This species is a descendant of the primitive aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), one of the most commonly portrayed animals in Palaeolithic art, as seen in the Lascaux and Altamira caves or in the rock art of the Côa Valley. The current wild bull has a varied morphology with different-coloured hair, although black is the most common. The well-developed horns come in various forms, thickness, colour and length. The wild bull is bred by stockbreeders, always in the open air in large groves and floodplains, helping to preserve the eco-system and the biodiversity of the species of fauna and flora that live or grow there.

### BLACK-WINGED KITE (ELANUS CAERULEUS)

This is a small bird of prey that is not very common. Usually seen alone or in pairs, it has a whitish breast and dark wings. If you are close enough, you can see its red eyes. Its favourite habitat for hunting is open fields with dispersed trees or cork oak or holm oak groves that have clearings with grain fields and pasture in the vicinity. It captures mostly insects, small rodents, reptiles and birds. When it hunts it tends to hover over the fields locating its prey. In Portugal, it is easier to spot it in the Ribatejo and Alentejo regions.



# CARTAXO



Locality served by the A1 motorway, with a railway station three kilometres from the city centre. Cartaxo is a riverside municipality influenced by the Tagus River. Wine is the trademark of this region where the rural meets the urban and the two merge. During the three months of winter fishing families would travel from Vieira de Leiria to the Tagus River to fish for shad, while at the beginning of summer they would return home to fish in the sea. This led to them becoming known as *avieiros* – “Tagus vagabonds,” as Alves Redol called them – one of the most interesting migrations that Portugal has ever seen. These fishermen also brought with them different ways of dressing and a different lifestyle that was foreign to the people of Ribatejo, who were mistrustful of them. All of these peculiarities have impacted the municipality, creating a rich mixture of cultures and traditions.

## ALONGSIDE THE TAGUS

PR 1  
CTX



**LOCATION**  
Porto de Muge



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
square next to the Rainha Dona Amélia Bridge



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.106994, -8.738627



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 66 km | Oporto: 253 km | Faro: 307 km



**RECOMMENDED SEASON**

33 m

ACCUMULATED CLIMB

36 m

ACCUMULATED DESCENT

11 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

3 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

LINEAR

TRAIL TYPE

EASY

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

14,6 km  
ROUND TRIP

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE DURATION

A linear itinerary along the banks of the largest Iberian river. The Tagus rises in Spain in the Albarraçin Mountains in the Aragon region and flows into the Atlantic 1,000 kilometres farther on. Its hydrographical basin is the third largest on the peninsula, surpassed only by the Douro and Ebris rivers. According to Silius Italicus, a Roman poet, Tagus was the name of an Iberian king who was cruelly assassinated by Hasdrubal, commander of the Carthaginian army in Hispania. In Portugal, the river has various tributaries: on the left bank, the Sever, Sorraia and Almansôr rivers; and on the right bank, the Erges, Ponsul, Ocreza, Zêzere, Alviela and Maior rivers. Since the early days of his existence, man has felt the need to live near rivers because they were important means of communication, a source of food and they supplied water to the local populations. Along this trail we can see three distinct residential clusters.

The trail begins in the town of Porto de Muge, on the dyke near the **Rainha Dona Amélia Bridge** and heads downstream, always parallel to the river, passing the villages of Valada and Reguengo, ending at the *Avieira* community of Palhota.

The dyke is a work of hydraulic engineering that serves to hold back the water during the river's frequent floods. This part was nicknamed *Tapada* (covering) by the people, seeing as it covered the passage of the water. This riverside trail is also known as the “Tapada Route.” For the first part of the route, always walk along the dyke for two kilometres; some parts are paved and others go through the vegetation. When you come to a fence blocking the way, go around on the right, following the dirt road for 200 metres. Once you pass the dyke cross the road and once again take the path over the dyke, continuing for 900 metres until you reach the village of Valada.

On this part of the route, you may be able to spot some **ospreys** (*Pandion haliaetus*); these birds mainly feed on fish that they are able to catch from the waters of the river while in flight. On the horizon you can see the steeple of the Igreja Matriz (Main Church) of **Valada**, the original construction dates back to the 13th century, the year 1211 to be precise, during the reign of King D. Afonso II. It was built in honour of Our Lady of the Expectation, the patron saint, and its interior contains a nave with a wooden ceiling and a baptismal font from the 1500s. The sacristy contains an image of Our Lady of the Expectation. The altarpiece is in the Renaissance style and consists of four paintings dedicated to the Annunciation, Visitation, Adoration of the Angels and Presentation in the Temple.

Keep going straight ahead along the dyke for 600 metres, crossing the entire village. On your left side you have the riverfront and on the opposite side you have the built-up part of the village. When you come to a cobblestone road that crosses the dyke, turn right and then left, going along the shoulder of the road for 500 metres until you come across a dirt road on your left. Here, get back on to the path along the dyke, always going straight ahead for another 1,400 metres; when you reach the village of Reguengo, the road will fork into two asphalted roads. Go straight ahead for another 100 metres, cross the road and then go down an access ramp on to a street that follows the main road, very narrow in this section.

At the end of the street that takes you alongside the traditional houses, some 200 metres ahead, climb a set of stairs, cross the road and the building in front and keep going straight ahead on the dirt road. After about 1,500 metres you will reach the hamlet of Palhota, famed for its typical colourful houses, known as the Avieira Houses.



The village was established by families from Vieira de Leiria, who came here in search of a livelihood. This movement was initially only seasonal but then, over the 20th century, families began settling along the banks of the Tagus. They adapted their ocean boats to river boats and the vessels took on the name **bateira**. Here, both men and women worked in fishery. The women were responsible for rowing and steering the boat, while the men took care of the nets, launching and collecting the gear.

This hamlet was previously established on a sandbank of the Tagus River, which was known as the Mouchão das Casas Altas, and is one of the

most important legacies of human presence near the great river.

In all, there are no more than 15 or so houses in the cluster, set out in two parallel rows along the Tagus and separated by a dirt road known as the Rua Principal. These houses impart a powerful image of architectural identity on the Avieira culture, a testament to a way of life that is going extinct.

Conclude the visit by touring the dock, enjoy the shade of the willow trees, the view of the river and prepare to make your return via the same itinerary that brought you here.

## ALONGSIDE THE TAGUS HIGHLIGHTS

### RAINHA DONA AMÉLIA BRIDGE

The Rainha D. Amélia Bridge is an old Portuguese railway bridge designed by Gustave Eiffel and inaugurated on 14 January 1904 in the presence of King D. Carlos, during the opening of the Vendas Novas line to the public, between Setil on the Northern line and Vendas Novas on the Alentejo line. The platform is supported by pillars measuring ten metres above the water level, in order to stay above the flood levels reported in 1876, which led water levels to rise some five metres. When a new railway bridge was built in 1980, this old bridge was converted for road traffic, connecting the municipalities of Cartaxo and Salvaterra de Magos.



### OSPREY (PANDION HALIAETUS)

At a distance, this eagle looks like a black and white seagull, due to the way it flies. It is a migratory species with solitary habits and in Portugal it is essentially a winter visitor. This species almost always nests near water. It catches freshwater or saltwater fish, which allows it to frequent rivers, dams, estuaries and coastlines. It normally nests in trees but in the Mediterranean region it has always preferred cliffs or small rocky islands. Different regions of the country gave it different names, "guincho" perhaps being the most common, and it is suspected that this is likely the origin of the name of the well-known Guincho Beach.



## ALONGSIDE THE TAGUS HIGHLIGHTS

### ALDEIA DE VALADA

This country village is located among the vast floodplains and just a few metres from the Tagus, its entire riverfront protected from the flooding river by a dyke known as the "tapada". It is one of the oldest localities in the municipality and, according to historians, the Romans were the first to farm the fields of Valada; however, it was under the Moors' rule that the first documents referencing its rich fields appeared. The cuisine reflects the presence of both elements, and dishes include meat from the fields or eels fished from the river.



### CASA AVIEIRA

These houses were built on the river banks and are also known as "palafitas" because they rise above the water. They were made of wood and supported by tree trunks, but from the 1960s onward the primitive shacks gave way to buildings of greater durability, which have lasted until today. Traditionally, the houses are rectangular, single level and have a gabled roof. The boats were kept under the house. It is said that Alves Redol, the great Portuguese writer and author of *Avieiros*, the literary work that immortalised the so-called "river gypsies," actually lived in this village.

### BATEIRA AVIEIRA

This is a small riverboat measuring six to seven metres long and a metre and a half wide with a flat bottom suited to navigating the waters of the river; it is registered with the National Inventory of Intangible Heritage. Various types of wood were used to build the boats, but it was always very dry wood, mainly stone pine or maritime pine, although sometimes quince tree wood, olive tree wood, cork oak and ash would be used. The final overall size could vary according to the order, but the balance between the remainder of the proportions would always be in line with the traditional know-how of the builder. Today, these vessels are more than mere fishing boats; they are a symbol of the riverside communities of the Tagus Avieiros.



# CHAMUSCA



Locality served by the A23 motorway, with a central bus station. Its status was upgraded to municipality in 1561 under the regency of D. Catarina and it is the largest municipality in the region. It is here that the river widens and the great floodplains begin. Standing out amid the white houses are several churches and the views of the floodplains from the beautiful hills are among the most breathtaking in Portugal. Its streets are lined with both humble rural homes and stately manors that have survived the passing of time. The wines produced in the Queen's lands were famous and greatly appreciated in her Court. This is why, when the Marquis of Pombal ordered the vines of Ribatejo removed, those of Chamusca were spared. You should also visit the picturesque riverside village of Arripiado or the Almourol lookout with a view of our only castle located on an island in the Tagus.

## FROM THE HEATH TO THE BANKS OF THE TAGUS

**PR 1  
CHM**



- LOCATION**  
Chamusca
- TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Center of Chamusca - Jardim do Coreto
- GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.357458, -8.481264
- AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 108 km | Oporto: 228 km | Faro: 323 km

**ALL YEAR**  
RECOMMENDED SEASON

137 m	137 m	132 m	15 m	CIRCULAR	EASY	10 km	3 h
ACCUMULATED CLIMB	ACCUMULATED DESCENT	MAXIMUM ALTITUDE	MINIMUM ALTITUDE	TRAIL TYPE	DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	LENGTH	APPROXIMATE DURATION

CHAMUSCA >>



Beginning at the Jardim do Coreto (the garden with the bandstand) located in the centre, start discovering the history of this town, the heaths of Ribatejo and the banks of the Tagus River. Thanks to its figure-of-eight shape, you have a number of options when you do this walk. There is the full version option that we describe here, or one that focuses on the heaths or yet another that lets you do a short, flat walk visiting only the riverside fields. It is easy to park at the starting point and there is a café too.

With the bandstand on your right side, keep going straight ahead, crossing the garden and beginning to climb Marquês de Carvalho Street. Go along this entire street and always keep going straight ahead for one kilometre until you reach the outskirts of the town centre, ignoring the various streets you will see as you go. At the end of the asphalt section you will come to the start of a dirt road that goes to the field. Here you will find the beginning of a section that is one kilometre long and goes along a well-preserved grove dotted with stone pines. You can see several types of animals and plants along the way, including **French lavender** (*Lavandula stoechas*), a purple, aromatic plant that is very much appreciated by both people and bees.

At the end of the grove, you will see a patch of eucalyptus trees on your left. Keep going straight ahead for another 900 metres and when the road suddenly divides into various dirt roads, take the first right. Keep climbing, always going along this main road and ignoring all minor access points that you will see along the way. For some 500 metres you will see open countryside with brush on your left while on your right the patch of eucalyptus trees continues. Farther ahead you will once again have the eucalyptus trees on both sides of the road for another 500 metres.

When the road forks, keep right, following the main one along the ridge. This is the highest part of the trail, offering a panoramic view that reaches as far as Santarém and the mountains to the north of the

Tagus River, which accounts for its name of Cabeça Alta (high peak). Along this section you will once again see the beautiful fields of the native heath in the form of a sparse cluster of cork oaks, olive trees and fig trees, dotted with large clearings and several areas of scrub, used by animal herds and bees as a food source. You will also notice small vineyards dotting the landscape, especially at the end of this section. Some 1,500 metres ahead you will once again come across an asphalt road as the trail returns to an urban setting. Follow this street for 300 metres and when you reach the fork, go right.

This is where the downhill part of the trail begins, taking us to the river. Go down the street for 200 metres, keeping left when the road forks. Continue straight ahead for 300 metres until you reach the Senhora do Pranto lookout, where an amazing view awaits. This is one of the most beautiful panoramic views you will ever see of the Tagus floodplains. The landscape before you stretches from the rich riverside lands – among the most fertile in Europe – to the heath on the way to the Alentejo region, predominantly occupied by forests. In addition to a large section of the riverfront and the mountain ridges on the other shore, we can easily see the landscape impacted by human activity, with different types of land usage and agricultural activity, creating a mixture of colours that range from the yellow of the sunflower to the gold of the vineyards, or the fleshy red of the tomato plants. However, it is the green of the corn and other crops that dominates in this patchwork landscape.

Here you can admire the **Ermita de Nossa Senhora do Pranto** church. Facing its facade, go along the street to your left, go down the stairs and then turn left. Follow this street for about 100 metres and then right after the bend turn right until you reach the São Francisco lookout. Admire the facade of the church bearing the same name, commissioned by the Third Order of Penitence in 1741, and which took fifty years to build. Go down the stairs beside the lookout

and turn right, following José Taso Street, which ends at Jardim do Coreto (Bandstand Garden).

If you wish, you can now continue on the second part of the trail, which now goes along the riverfront. Facing the bandstand, go along the left side, passing the square of the Igreja Matriz (Main Church). Take some time to admire the sixteenth-century Manueline-style portico before turning left and going all the way to the end of the street, where you will find the square and the **Igreja da Misericórdia** (Church of Mercy). This church was built in the seventeenth century, and this is where the Fogaréus (torchlight) procession is held on the evening of Good Thursday. Cross the national road and go down the street facing the facade of the church; at the end, turn left and at the end of this street turn right, then once again left. Now, keep going straight ahead and after about 100 metres, at the fork, take the road on your right for some 500 metres until you reach the dyke. Here, turn right and

keep going for one kilometre along the **Tapadão**, the name given by the locals to this line of defence that holds back the Tagus floodwaters. Take the time to admire the view of white houses that harmoniously extend in terraces along the slope: from here you can see the lookouts you passed by. Halfway through this section, which coincides with a locally maintained trail, on your left you have access to the **Porto das Mulheres**, an area for leisure activities alongside the river, where there used to be a dock that facilitated the river crossing from one bank to the other. Returning to the dyke, keep going until the end and turn right, then keep going straight ahead for 500 metres until you are once again on the national road that crosses the entire town. There is very little visibility here so you have to be careful crossing the road. Follow the street straight ahead, take the second street on the right and then go straight ahead for some 100 metres; this will bring you back to the starting point.

## FROM THE HEATH TO THE BANKS OF THE TAGUS HIGHLIGHTS

### FRENCH LAVENDER (*LAVANDULA STOECHAS*)

Lavender belongs to the genus *Lavandula*, a group of floriferous plants that can be annual or evergreen. They are small bushes that can reach a height of 60 centimetres, with evergreen leaves and purple flowers, and they produce an abundance of nectar that makes for high-quality honey. Lavender is also used as an aromatic herb on its own or as an ingredient in the so-called herbes de Provence. In addition to its spontaneous form, it is planted for commercial purposes for extracting essential oils for use as an antiseptic, in aromatherapy and in the cosmetics industry.



### ERMIDA DE NOSSA SENHORA DO PRANTO

This small late seventeenth-century church has a simple structure, yet it is one of the must-see places in Chamusca. In its courtyard, there is a large crucifix and a lookout offering a superb view of Chamusca, the floodplain and the Tagus River. The nave is decorated with two eighteenth-century tiled panels, depicting scenes from the life of Baby Jesus. In the S. José (St Joseph) chapel, the walls are entirely clad with six tiled panels depicting scenes from the life of Saint Joseph. The main altar is clad with gold leaf and holds the image of Nossa Senhora do Pranto.

## FROM THE HEATH TO THE BANKS OF THE TAGUS HIGHLIGHTS

### MISERICÓRDIA CHURCH

Commissioned in 1621, this church was completed in 1630 and the facade as we know it today dates from the 18th century. It boasts gold leaf and tiles from the 18th century. The body of the church has four circular arches and the nave is clad with ashlar containing tiles from the 18th century. The throne-shaped main altar, for the exhibition of the Blessed Sacrament, is in gold leaf from the same era, with an image of the crucified Christ. Under the main altar there is a glass "urn" containing an image of the Dead Christ. Particularly worthy of note among the many images are those of Saint Francis, Saint Anthony and Our Lady of Sorrows believed to be the work of French sculptor Claude Laprade.



### TAPADÃO

The many dykes of the Tagus Valley, known here as tapada, are vital infrastructures that regulate the flow of water in the river. These riverside plains have always been subject to major flooding when the river overflows its banks in harsher winters. These water-governing structures prevent flooding, erosion of farmland and, most importantly of all, they safeguard people and property. They are structures that have taken on supplementary functions as pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths, thereby creating new leisure circuits.



### PORTO DAS MULHERES (PORT OF THE WOMEN)

At one time, before the railways and road transport existed, this was an important river port that was used for travel between the two shores using vessels called barcos d'água acima. This is the name given to the vessels that were used to travel up the Tagus River. They carried horticultural products, cork, wine and straw, along with people and sometimes animals. It was the main port of Chamusca due to its proximity to the centre of town and it was here that the women did their laundry, which accounts for its name. Until the past century, *Avieiros* lived here. From here, the town is like a nativity scene and extends towards the surrounding hills.



CORUCHE >>

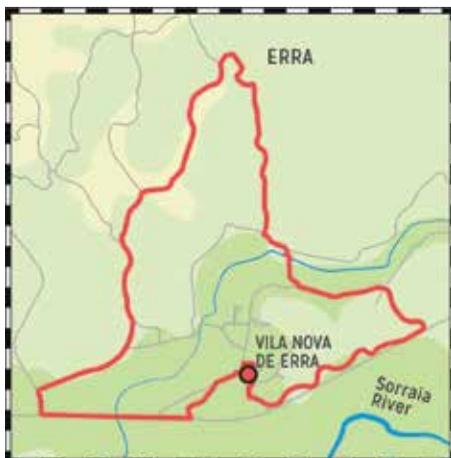
# CORUCHE



Locality served by the A13 motorway and having a central bus station. Coruche is located on the south bank of the Tagus River, on the border with the Alentejo; it is the largest municipality of the Lezíria floodplain region and the tenth largest in Portugal. There is evidence of the presence of people throughout the entire valley of the Sorraia River, from the Palaeolithic era to the Romans and Moors. For all of these civilisations, the Sorraia River was always important as a line of communication that was used to send and receive goods from various points of the empires. The first charter of the town of Coruche was granted by King D. Afonso Henriques on 26 May 1182. This vast region of the Sorraia Valley is still very active today in terms of agriculture and forestry. Its vast cork oak groves make the municipality the leading producer of cork in the world. Take the opportunity to go for a walk along the river, visiting the Municipal Museum and exploring historical town centre.

## ROUTES FROM THE VALLEY TO THE GROVE

PR 3  
CCH



**LOCATION**  
Vila Nova de Erra



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Public garden of Vila Nova de Erra



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.000642, -8.447794



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 79 km | Oporto: 285 km | Faro: 275 km



ALL YEAR

**RECOMMENDED SEASON**

152 m

ACCUMULATED CLIMB

151 m

ACCUMULATED DESCENT

108 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

18 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR

TRAIL TYPE

EASY

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

9.7 km

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE DURATION

This itinerary spans from the valley of the Sorraia River to the municipality's vast cork oak forests, a noteworthy example of renewal and sustainable farming that allows Coruche to call itself the World Capital of Cork. Approximately half of the municipality consists of a mixed forest of cork oak and stone pine. The trees are an excellent source of high quality products such as wood, cork and pine nuts, so their economic worth is high. But they are valuable from an environmental and ecological point of view too because of the wealth of fauna and flora found here.

The trail is located in Vila Nova de Erra, a small town situated eight kilometres from Coruche. At the starting point, parking your car is easy and there is a café nearby.

Starting from the garden, go down the street for some 20 metres and turn left; go along São Francisco Street for some 60 metres, turning right and following the street that takes you out of the hamlet. Follow the asphalt road for about 140 metres and turn left on the first dirt road; continue for some 250 metres until you reach the fork in the road, where you take the left road. Continue for about another 100 metres, passing over the irrigation canal where you will find an asphalt road. Turn right and go along the shoulder of the road facing oncoming traffic for one kilometre; turn right, following another asphalt road for another 150 metres. In this area it is usually possible to see **black kites (Milvus migrans)**.

This is where the longest section of the trail begins, on a dirt road and always gaining altitude. Keep going straight ahead for some 700 metres and when the road forks, take the left-hand fork and keep going straight ahead for another 800 metres. Now take the right-hand fork and keep going for another 400 metres. Turn right now and keep going straight ahead on the main road for about two kilometres, ignoring all the small access points along the way.

When the road forks, take the left-hand fork and then, 100 metres farther on, turn right; for the next 300 metres, at each of the next three forks in the road, always take the right-hand fork. This area hosts a good sized **grove** where you can observe numerous types of animals, including the **great spotted woodpecker (Dendrocopos major)**.

In these forests, man and animals have lived peacefully side by side for centuries. Today, you can still pick mushrooms and asparagus that grow here, cut firewood, collect honey from the flowers that feed the bees and collect acorns from the oak trees to feed livestock.

After you pass a charcoal merchant's, on your left side, keep going straight ahead and at the next junction, turn left along the main road. About 100 metres farther on, turn right, and then always keep going straight ahead along this road. After some 300 metres, you will reach the highest point of the trail, which will offer you beautiful panoramic views of the groves and part of the valley of the Sorraia River.

Here you will start the descent to Vale da Erra, where a brook flows. You now have to cross 700 metres of rocky ground on which you are to keep going straight ahead on the largest path; when you reach a junction with a sandy road, turn left, and after going for some 150 metres, turn right along a narrow path to the brook. On your left, there is a path that takes you to a suspension bridge. Take some time to rest and enjoy the location surrounded by a splendid and dense gallery forest. Keep going until you reach an asphalt road and turn left; a few metres ahead you will reach a villa with a cork oak tree integrated into the facade. This interesting detail reveals the owner's respect for nature and the law.

In Portugal, cork oaks are a protected species and by law it is forbidden to cut them down. Keep going and once you reach the end of the asphalt, continue



until you reach a fork in the road, choosing the one on your right. In this shady area you may find **foxgloves** (*Digitalis purpurea*) and on the part where the road has been excavated you can see large cork oaks, some of them with their roots exposed, allowing their entire root system to be analysed. These leafy and majestic trees can reach a height of 25 metres and live as long as 300 years. Most of the mature cork oaks in Portugal today are the result of natural regeneration. However, the perpetuation of the species via this process has been compromised in many places.

At the end of the descent you will find an asphalt road where you will turn right, going along the shoulder of the road for about 100 metres until reaching the irrigation canal of the Sorraia Valley agricultural

water re-usage system. Managed by the Association of Irrigators and Beneficiaries of Vale do Sorraia, this system was created in 1951 and is over 100 kilometres long, irrigating an area of over 16,000 hectares.

Follow the canal along the left side, staying alongside it for one kilometre. On this section, which passes several vegetable gardens, you may see **common yellow swallowtails** (*Papilio machaon*). When the canal crosses an asphalt road, turn right and begin the climb back up to the town. After some 150 metres, at the start of the built-up area, turn on to the street on your right and pass by the front of the church. Next, take the first street on your right, followed by the one on your left. From here, one more right turn will bring you back to the starting point.

## ROUTES FROM THE VALLEY TO THE GROVE HIGHLIGHTS

### BLACK KITE (MILVUS MIGRANS)

This is a common bird of prey that is easy to spot because it usually hunts along roads, as well as appearing near bodies of water and in less dense forests, namely cork oak and holly oak groves. It has a forked tail, brown plumage and long wings that are darker on the top side than on the underside. It can reach a length of 58 cm and have a wingspan of 155 cm. Its range is worldwide and it can be found in temperate, sub-tropical and tropical areas of Europe and Australasia. Its diet consists of a large variety of insects and vertebrates.



### CORK OAK GROVE

The cork oak grove is a Mediterranean eco-system that is the result of human manipulation. Cork oak groves are found throughout the Alentejo region and boast rich biodiversity, where more than 24 species of reptiles and amphibians are present, 37 species of mammals and 160 species of birds. The native forests of cork oaks grow only in the Mediterranean region, Algeria and Morocco. Portugal is the country with the largest area of cork oaks in the world, home to some 33% of the world's cork oak area, as a result of which it is the world's leading cork exporter. Cork oaks are legally protected and it is illegal to cut them down.



## ROUTES FROM THE VALLEY TO THE GROVE HIGHLIGHTS

### GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (DENTROCOPOS MAJOR)

Its harsh call or drumming on tree trunks are generally the first signs of its presence. It can be found all over the country and frequents wooded areas, preferring cork oak or holly oak groves, mature stone pine groves or riverside scrub areas, staying away from areas with few trees, as is the case with the central plains of the Baixo Alentejo. An odd feature is its long tongue, which it uses to extract insects and larvae from inside tree trunks. When it is drilling the trunk it wraps its tongue around its head, acting as a shock absorber.



### FOXGLOVE (DIGITALIS PURPUREA)

The Portuguese name for the foxglove is "dedaleira" (dedal means thimble) and it comes from the fact that its flowers resemble a thimble. In Portuguese, it is also known as "digitalina", "erva-dedal" and "abeloura". This species is native to Europe and it is a toxic biennial or evergreen herbaceous plant of short duration that usually exists on the outlying regions of forest clearings or brush areas. It can grow to a height of one metre. It blooms in the spring and summer. The flowers bloom in eye-catching elongated clusters at the tips and each flower is tubular and drooping. They are very sought-after by insects, especially bees that climb directly into the tube to obtain nectar.

### COMMON YELLOW SWALLOWTAIL (PAPILIO MACHAON)

This is one of the most common species and considered one of the prettiest of Portugal's 135 species of daytime butterflies. It can be found all over Portugal, as well as in the rest of Europe, North Africa and Asia. Its wingspan ranges between six and eight centimetres; the top side of the butterfly is yellow with black stripes and a red spot surrounded by blue on its posterior wings, while the underside is paler. In the Mediterranean region it breeds three generations per year, flying from March to October.



# GOLEGÃ



Locality served by the A23 motorway, with the Mato de Miranda train station just 10 kilometres away. This municipality is located on the right bank of the Tagus River; equestrian activities are its trademark. Golegã is known nationally and internationally as the Horse Capital. Its fertile fields where most of the Paul do Boquilobo Nature Reserve is located have always attracted people who are dedicated to agricultural and livestock farming. Another must-see site is Casa-Estúdio Carlos Relvas. Dedicated to photography in Portugal, this space, unlike any other anywhere else in the world, serves as a monument to the precursors of photography, that new field that is considered both scientific and technological. Next, the town where José Saramago, the Nobel Prize-winner for Literature was born. In Azinhaga village you will find his House-Museum, an extension of the José Saramago Foundation.

## PAUL DO BOQUILOBO NATURE RESERVE

PR 1  
GLG



**LOCATION**  
Mato de Miranda



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
R. João Veiga – near the train station



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.367587, -8.553670



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 130 km | Oporto: 220 km | Faro: 331 km



**GRUPS > 9**  
not permitted unaccompanied



**RECOMMENDED SEASON**  
In winter there is a possibility of interdiction due to flooded areas We advise against visiting on days when hunting is permitted - Thu, Sundays and holidays between 15 Aug e 28 Feb.

67 m	67 m	53 m	14 m	CIRCULAR	EASY	9.9 km	3 h
ACCUMULATED CLIMB	ACCUMULATED DESCENT	MAXIMUM ALTITUDE	MINIMUM ALTITUDE	TRAIL TYPE	DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	LENGTH	APPROXIMATE DURATION

GOLEGÃ >>



What is unique about the Paul do Boquilobo Biosphere Reserve trail is that its starting point can be reached by train. All regional trains stop at the Mato de Miranda station. For safety reasons, do not cross the tracks because the fast trains do not stop here. There is a level crossing near the station. There is easy parking and restaurant service onsite.

In order to safeguard the tranquillity of the species that seek refuge within the protected area, walk quietly and do not announce your presence, so that you have a better chance of observing the animal life.

This itinerary covers well-preserved areas of the cork oak groves, farmland and the parts of the Nature Reserve located in the municipality of Golegã, returning to the starting point along a section parallel to the railway line.

The start is less than 100 metres from the station square. Here, keep going for some 200 metres along the national road in the direction of the manned level crossing; next, turn right on the dirt road that runs parallel to the railway line; about 200 metres ahead, turn on to the first path you see on your left and keep going for some 500 metres. After passing a cork oak grove, turn right and keep going straight ahead, always with the grove and the eucalyptus trees on your left and a vast agricultural field on your right. After about 400 metres, the road forks; take the left-hand fork and then you will begin to have an open field on your right, with eucalyptus trees on the opposite side. Keep going straight ahead and about 500 metres farther on the patch of eucalyptus trees will end.

This is the highest point of the trail, which on days of good visibility allows for a panoramic view of the Tagus plains and towns located on the

opposite side of the river. From here the trail starts to descend, going across some 200 metres of Ribatejo heath, wide open, rocky terrain, with scrub and rich in biodiversity, containing various types of bushes, such as **curled-leaved rock rose** (*Cistus crispus*), plants, bulbs and weeds that support various forms of life. Two hundred metres after starting the descent keep left at the fork in the road and for some 300 metres you will be immersed in a dense and perfectly balanced cork oak grove. There are many species of animals that live here and it is like an oasis in the middle of fields where intensive farming is predominant.

Keep on going for about another 150 metres and when the road forks, take the right-hand fork. You will have farmland on your left and after walking for some 500 metres and entering a small patch of towering cork oaks, turn left and keep going for another 1,500 metres parallel to the railway line. You will find an underpass that takes you underneath the railway line and into the **Nature Reserve**. On the left of the gate, which is always closed, there is a narrow passage that can only be used by pedestrians. Inside this protected area, the trail is circular and brings you back to the same entry point.

The itinerary goes along the interpretation path exclusively; no other routes are permitted. This space requires extra care in order to try to minimise any impact and be able to observe as many animals as possible.

Unaccompanied groups of more than nine people are not permitted. We advise against visiting the Paul do Boquilobo Nature Reserve on days when hunting is permitted to safeguard the tranquillity of the species that seek refuge there.

Paul do Boquilobo is the largest aquatic eco-system representative of interior wetlands, which used to be common throughout Portugal, but which have seen significant decline, particularly due to drainage for farming. Although there is significant biodiversity in terms of fauna in general, birds are its main asset and the reason for it being classified a Nature Reserve.

The trail follows a section of the Almonda River which rises in the Aire Mountain Range and flows into the right bank of the Tagus River, creating a flooded area that is known as the "paul" and is flooded on a seasonal basis. The first 1,400 metres take you alongside a dense patch of gallery forest, made up mostly of willows, ash and poplars, while the ground is carpeted in *Ranunculus*, small yellow or

white flowers. You will easily spot **yellow irises** (*Iris pseudacorus*) here. There are 16 recorded species of fish in the paul, 11 reptile species, 13 amphibian, 27 mammal, including the **fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*) and over 200 species of birds, including the **nuthatch**. At the end of this section, between the paul and the open terrain on your left, you will find a fence along the way. Keep left and after a slight climb you will begin along section in a dispersed cork oak grove that, after about 1,000 metres, returns to the road on which you entered. Turn right and, after the underpass beneath the railway line, turn left along the same path you used when you arrived. The distance to the beginning of the trail is about 2,800 metres, always straight ahead alongside the railway line on a road that takes you back to the starting point.

## PAUL DO BOQUILOBO NATURE RESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

### CURL-LEAVED ROCK ROSE (CISTUS CRISPUS)

Belonging to the Cistaceae family, this is an aromatic evergreen bush with numerous branches; it grows to a height of 25 centimetres. Found here in the well-preserved cork oak grove, it is also common in areas of scrub and unfarmed terrain. A species that is characteristic of the Western Mediterranean, it exists in Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Morocco, but in Italy it is only found in Sicily. Present in all of Portugal, except for the Trás-os-Montes region, it prefers clay soils, especially those that are decalcified or siliceous and wet in winter. The usual flowering season goes from April to June.



### PAUL DO BOQUILOBO NATURE RESERVE

In 1981, Paul do Boquilobo Nature Reserve was considered a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. This was the first Portuguese area to be included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, having been recognised as a sample that is representative of a terrestrial eco-system where there is an attempt to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with sustainable development. In 1996, it was considered a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Since 1999, because of its importance to avifauna, it has also been classified as a Special Protection Area (Natura 2000 Network).

## PAUL DO BOQUILOBO NATURE RESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

### YELLOW IRIS (IRIS PSEUDACORUS)

Also known as the yellow flag or water flag, this plant belonging to the Iridaceae family can be found along the Portuguese mainland, excepting the interior of the Alentejo and Algarve regions. Depending on the region, the flowering period takes place between May and August. It has several yellow flowers that consist of three large drooping sepals, narrow petals and three stamens hidden in three stigmatic parts. Boiling its roots with iron turnings produces a dye that is used to tan hides to obtain the colour black. This plant is able to accumulate heavy metals and is often used to improve the quality of polluted waters.



### RED FOX (VULPES VULPES)

Thanks to childhood fairy tales, everyone is familiar with this animal with its thin, elongated muzzle, reddish-brown fur, fuzzy tail and perked-up ears always alert to its surroundings. An omnivorous mammal of medium stature, the red fox can be found all over the northern hemisphere, from North America to Eurasia and somewhat in North Africa. It can cover a distance of 10 kilometres per day in search of food and defending its territory. Although it has nocturnal habits, it can easily be seen during the day in not-so-busy areas.



### NUTHATCH (SITTA EUROPAEA)

Measuring 14 centimetres long and with a wingspan of 25 cm, the nuthatch has a greyish back, a black mask around the eyes and the underside of its body is cream coloured. Its beak is straight and strong and allows it to catch insects that are hidden in wood. It eats seeds, fruit and small invertebrates, and it is important in combating forest pests. Nuthatches are very active and are always moving from tree to tree. In Portugal, they are very common and can be found throughout the country. Their favourite habitat is deciduous forests, chestnut forests, oak forests and, especially, cork oak groves and holly oak forests.



RIO MAIOR >>

# RIO MAIOR



Served by the A15 motorway and by the IC2 expressway, it has a central bus station and the Caldas da Rainha train station is 22 km away, while the Santarém station is 33 km away. It is a town you pass through when heading south or going from the interior to the coast and it was also a place where various peoples settled and brought their cultures with them. Archaeological digs have revealed prehistoric artefacts, but they have also revealed a significant Roman and Moorish presence, reflecting the depth of the connections between both civilisations, which are so different and so distant from each other in time and which impacted the territory so deeply. A land of valleys and hills, offering landscapes of both mountains and plains in the Ribatejo region, its main points of reference include the Maior River, which is a tributary of the Tagus, the Candeeiros Mountains and the Fonte da Bica salt mines, classified as a Property of Public Interest. In the 15th century, these sites were so important that King D. Afonso V owned five plots of land here. It offers visitors various options in terms of sports, cuisine, culture and contact with its rich natural heritage.

## SERRAS DE AIRE E CANDEEIROS NATURE PARK

PR 4  
RMR



**LOCATION**  
Aldeia de Chãos



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Car park Cooperativa Terra Chã



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.417998, -8.920365



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisboa: 81 km | Porto: 233 km | Faro: 321 km



ALL YEAR

RECOMMENDED  
SEASON

215 m

ACCUMULATED  
CLIMB

215 m

ACCUMULATED  
DESCENT

473 m

MAXIMUM  
ALTITUDE

270 m

MINIMUM  
ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR

TRAIL TYPE

DIFFICULT

DEGREE OF  
DIFFICULTY

4.5 km

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE  
DURATION

The mountains of Aire and Candeeiros are the most important repository of limestone formations in Portugal and this is the primary reason for being classified as a Nature Park. Karstic morphology, natural vegetation, a network of underground waterways, unique cave-dwelling fauna and intense activity surrounding stone extraction are all aspects that its classification attempts to preserve and govern. Because of its altitude, the region's climate is characterised by a peculiar transition between Mediterranean and Atlantic conditions. It is therefore humid with mild temperatures and water is very scarce in the summer.

This trail known by the name of De Chãos à gruta das Alcobertas (From Chãos to the Alcobertas cave) is situated in the area around Chãos, a small hamlet belonging to the civil parish of Alcobertas and located in the southern part of the Candeeiros Mountains, on a small plateau a few metres from the top of the mountain. Its name comes from the fact that its land is good for farming (chã, in Portuguese, meaning plateau). Despite the passing of time it is still possible to see the property divided by stone walls, and spot some cisterns and threshing floors vital to the life of these rural communities. Because of its location, the landscape stretches out as far as the eye can see.

The trail begins at the head office of Associação Terra Chã (Terra Chã Association). Here parking your car is easy, and there are cafés and restaurants where good regional cuisine is available. Departing from the starting point, go toward the main road of the village and after about 100 metres, where the asphalt begins, turn left. This is a pedestrian path that runs between typical stone walls. These walls are used to separate the properties and were mostly made of stones removed from the land. The so called "de-stoning" was necessary in order to

clean up the land and facilitate farming. Because it is a mountainous region, the walls are also useful for breaking the dominant winds, thus protecting the crops. Some 300 metres ahead, you will find yourself in one of the village streets. Go along the road and you will see the first point of interest on your right: a group of buildings with **traditional architecture** that allows us to see how this rural community lives.

In addition to the house, its shed and annexes, the water storage cistern is worthy of mention. Because it is a limestone area with no surface water, all of the rainwater coming from the roof eaves was channelled by a trough made of inverted shingles that would channel the precious liquid to a cistern that would supply the house. The threshing floor was a broad space used to dry and thresh grains, but it was also used on days of festivities so people could gather to socialise, dance and sing. At the entrance to this well-preserved cluster, you can also see a **dinosaur footprint**.

Some 50 metres from this location, the road forks. Take the left-hand fork and pay attention because in about 100 metres on your left you will see a narrow path in an entrance through the stone wall. Here you will begin your climb up to the top of the Candeeiros Mountain. The Vale da Lagoa footpath was given this name because it leads to a water point at the top of the mountain. It is a path with some 3,000 metres of rocky terrain that requires special attention. During the climb, take some time to rest and admire the view of the village of Chãos and the surroundings. When you reach the top, you will find a wide dirt road that is used to maintain the wind farm that has been installed here. Here, turn right and 150 metres ahead, on your left side you will see the lake that gives the path its name. On days of good visibility you can see



the Atlantic Ocean, most of the west coast and the Berlengas Islands. Here, you can hear the melodic call of the **crested lark** (*Galerida cristata*) and watch it as it soars high up in the air. On the opposite side of the lake, you have the start of the path that leads to the Alcobertas Cave. There are high groups of stones located very visibly in the landscape. They are used by shepherds for shelter, a space where only one man sitting down can fit, with an entrance turned toward the opposite side of the dominant winds, to provide shelter during storms.

The plants that grow here are important not only as a source of food for the herds of goats that graze here, but are also of economic and scientific value because many of the plants of the Nature Park have medicinal or aromatic qualities. Among them, giving colour to the landscape and awakening our sense of smell is **rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), which grows spontaneously all over the mountain.

## SERRAS DE AIRE E CANDEEIROS NATURE PARK HIGHLIGHTS

### POPULAR ARCHITECTURE

Adjacent to the single-storey houses you will see other structures that are fundamental to subsistence. Cisterns were vital for storing the water needed for a family's daily use. Also important was a small, round reservoir known as the "cova do bagaço", dug into the ground not too deeply with a wall surrounding it that was used to store organic material that was used to feed animals and fertilise the soil. The threshing floors were flat surfaces covered with mortar or slabs which were used to thresh and dry grains and hay, but also as a stage for festivities.



### DINOSAUR FOOTPRINT

On the stone floor we can see the footprint of a dinosaur that arrived here when stones were transported here to restore traditional walls. Some 175 million years ago, Europe was connected to North America and formed the supercontinent known as Pangea. During the Jurassic period, this was a shallow coastal area, with warm waters and abundant coral and vegetation where sauropods – herbivore dinosaurs – would graze, leaving their footprints in the limestone mud found at the bottom of the sea lakes as they passed.



Return to the path and follow along for some 500 metres until it ends at a dirt road. Turn right and 400 metres ahead you will reach the **Alcobertas Cave**. Here there is a lookout that offers a view of the vast horizons that reach as far as the Tagus tertiary basin and Montejunto Mountains or the neighbouring villages of Chãos, Casais Monizes and Alcobertas. The ground at the lookout is painted in various colours that are almost indecipherable, but in fact they represent the trail that you can follow inside the cave and its various rooms. Go down the stairs to the lower level of the lookout and here you can begin the descent along a steep and narrow path about 500 metres long, which ends in a dirt road that takes you back to the town.

After some 500 metres you will see the first group of houses and the asphalt road. Now all you have to do is walk for some 800 metres, always on the main road that crosses the entire town, until you are back at the starting point.

## SERRAS DE AIRE E CANDEEIROS NATURE PARK HIGHLIGHTS

### CRESTED LARK (GALERIDA CRISTATA)

A bird with a discreet plumage, ground habits and melodious and varied song, common in Europe, Africa and Asia. Easy to distinguish due to its crest, it has a long, curved beak and white marking above its eye. The upper part of its body is spotted with brown and yellowish brown, while its breast and abdomen are lighter in colour. Its reproductive season goes from March to June and it can breed various broods per year. It likes to frequent open fields where it feeds on the ground on seeds and leaves, although it also eats some invertebrates.



### ROSEMARY (ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS)

A bush that is typical of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa. Common in limestone soils, it is found at an altitude of 0 to 1,500 metres. It has woody branches and can grow to a height of two metres. It has bluish flowers and its nectar is appreciated by bees for making honey. Because of its characteristic aroma it is also referred to in Portuguese as the *erva da alegria* (happiness herb) because its essential oils are good for the production of neurotransmitters responsible for well-being. The Romans called it *rosmarinus*, which in Latin means dew of the sea.



### ALCOBERTAS CAVE

Located in the Candeeiros Mountains, it has been occupied by humans for some 5,000 years, datable vestiges having been found from the Final Neolithic/Chalcolithic. Extending horizontally for some 210 metres, it consists of four rooms and in some places it is 9 metres high. You can visit the cave in groups by making an appointment at Cooperativa Terra Chã. On the second Sunday of each month there is an Interpretative Visit to the cave that requires prior registration by phone (+351 967224406 / +351 918 739 153) or e-mail ([geral@cooperativaterracha.pt](mailto:geral@cooperativaterracha.pt)).



## SALVATERRA DE MAGOS



Locality served by the A13 motorway and having a central bus station. The origins of the municipality of Salvaterra de Magos are very old, seeing as this is a fertile region with various waterways and various prehistoric and Roman vestiges. One must-see is the Falcoaria Real de Salvaterra de Magos, a hallmark of falconry in Portugal and which was put on the list of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2016. This building, unlike any other in the Iberian Peninsula, is closely related to the Casa de Campo da Coroa which, in the 13th century, made this town a centre for social and artistic life of the Portuguese court. The beauty of the town and the floodplain is a magnet for tourism, thanks to the river dock, Doce Beach, the Magos Dam, used for sports fishing and nautical sports, and the typical fishing village of Escaroupim.

### ESCAROUPIM NATIONAL FOREST

PR 1  
SMG



**LOCATION**  
Escaroupim



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Largo dos Avieiros - near the Tagus River



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.066673, -8.756951



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 62 km | Oporto: 289 km | Faro: 274 km



**RECOMMENDED SEASON**  
ALL YEAR

63 m

ACCUMULATED CLIMB

64 m

ACCUMULATED DESCENT

34 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

7 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR

TRAIL TYPE

EASY

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

8.5 km

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE DURATION

SALVATERRA DE MAGOS >>



This trail lets you discover two of the region's hallmarks. The fishing village of Escaroupim is part of our forest heritage represented in the National Forest. On this trail it is easy to park your car and restaurant service is readily available.

This itinerary begins near the banks of the Tagus River and affords an extensive view of the water, Garças Island and the village of Valada located on the other shore. Take some time to get to know this fishing village with its houses and boats painted in bright colours.

Start the walk by leaving the riverfront behind and going along the asphalt road that crosses through the cluster of houses for about 300 metres; when you reach the junction at the edge of town, turn left and keep going for another 700 metres until you reach the end of the asphalt road. Turn left here and about 20 metres along this dirt road, you will find a small wooden bridge on your right-hand side. Here you have the beginning of the section inside the National Forest.

This place is constantly under surveillance and it is expressly forbidden to smoke or light fires here. The forest is divided into plots that are separated by narrow paths or broad firebreaks. For your safety, always stay on the marked paths and obey the signs.

This forest, initially known as the Pinhal de Escarópim (Escarópim Pine Forest), was administered by the Royal Hunting Establishment until 7 April 1836, when it was incorporated into the General Administration of the Kingdom's Forests. Since then it has been owned by the State. The original clusters of maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) and stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), were converted into eucalyptus clusters starting in 1907 and, during World War II, they

became an important source of fuel for the railway locomotives that passed just a few kilometres away across the Rainha D. Amelia Railway Bridge.

After crossing the wooden bridge, follow the path in a straight line for 400 metres until you reach a sandy road. Here, at the end of the stone pine cluster, the Arboreto begins. From the Latin arboretum, it is an area that functions as a botanical garden with a collection of scientifically documented and ordered trees. Here you will find 125 of the more than 700 species of eucalyptus that exist in the world. Tall trees with an active, pleasant and balsamic scent, they are known for their significant regeneration and diverse morphology. In general, they are used as raw material for the pulp and wood industry and also for their essential oils for the pharmaceutical and perfume industries. An interesting fact is that Lisbon Zoo's koalas are fed with leaves from this place. Keep going straight ahead and enter this little-known world.

Here, the trail consists of four straight segments that, at the end, lead to a wide road. The first segment is 300 metres long and has the characteristic intense citric scent of the *Eucalyptus citriodora*, which because of its high citronella content is of interest to the perfume industry, as it is extracted and used in soaps and perfumes or in outdoor candles.

Next, turn right and go along for 100 metres, turn left and go along for another 100 metres where you will find the ***Eucalyptus cinerea***, which has the unique characteristic of having leaves in even numbers. When a stem has an even number of leaflets on it, this is referred to as paripinnate. Next is an unmistakable species due to its imposing size, namely the ***Eucalyptus saligna***, a vigorous species that can reach a height of 50 metres. Here, turn left and keep

going straight ahead for 200 metres; at the end, on the right side, you can see some trees with thick and wrinkly bark very similar to the cork of cork oaks. They are also eucalyptus trees. During their evolutionary process, the *urophylla*, *robusta* and *botryoides* species developed this bark to protect themselves from fires and significant temperature ranges.

Cross the road and keep going straight ahead for 1,900 metres, with a cluster of pine trees on your right in various phases of growth, while on the left you have various open fields used for agricultural testing. After passing the research centre, keep going for another 300 metres, immersed in a dense cluster of maritime pine some 30 years old and then turn left. Continue for about 500 metres, turning left

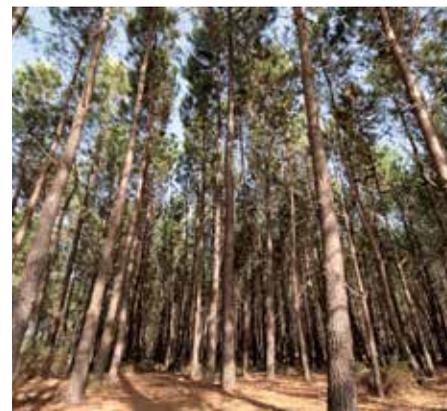
again; 300 metres farther on turn right and keep going for another 300 metres, ending here, in the middle of young pine trees, the observation of the various species that are studied at this research site.

At the end of the pine cluster, turn left and keep going ahead for 1,300 metres, keeping the forest on your left and the Muge Brook, which flows into the Tagus near Escaroupim, on your right. When you reach the campsite, take the time to enter and admire the monumental stone pine trees that are over 300 years old and are part of the primitive forest of the region. As you leave the park, turn right and keep going straight ahead for another 500 metres; this will bring you to the start of the asphalt road that takes you back to the starting point.

## ESCAROUPIM NATIONAL FOREST HIGHLIGHTS

### POPULAR ARCHITECTURE

These houses are part of the Escaroupim Museological Nucleus, reproducing the original constructions in terms of their form and rich colours. Built on the banks of the Tagus, these fishermen's houses, known as "avieira houses", are made of wood and rest on pillar foundations, to help prevent flooding in the event of high water levels in the river. Normally painted in vibrant colours, they are accessed by a stairway. They are small and normally have a kitchen and one or two bedrooms, plus a living room, above which they also have a space used for storing fishing material.



### THE NATIONAL FORESTS

The national forests belong to the State's private domain and they are for public usage in defence of the proper governance of waters, valuing the arid plains and benefitting the climate, or preserving and preventing erosion of soil and the maritime coast. The Escaroupim National Forest covers a total area of 438 hectares and it is populated over a surface of 346 hectares with stone pine, maritime pine and eucalyptus. Used for scientific research, an arboretum consisting of 125 species of eucalyptus was planted in 1953, one of the most complete in Europe.

## ESCAROUPIM NATIONAL FOREST HIGHLIGHTS

### EUCALIPTUS CINEREA

Some species of eucalyptus are of floricultural interest due to their scenic and floristic value, as is the case with this species. In addition to the ornamental value of many species, the eucalyptus is a melliferous plant that is used to make the well-known eucalyptus honey. The occurrence of various eucalyptus species with different flowering seasons means that the bees have sustenance throughout the year. The isolated essential oils of the eucalyptus have characteristic aromas, according to the particular species. Depending on their composition and end use, these oils are classified into three types: medicinal, perfume industry and industrial.



### EUCALIPTUS SALIGNA

This species comes from Australia, specifically the state of New South Wales, where they make up large forests. It was introduced into Portugal in the mid-19th century for ornamental purposes. It is a very tall tree that can grow to a height of between 30 and 55 metres, and its trunk can have a diameter of more than two metres. The wood of this species is very dense and textured. It is relatively easy to work with and it is used in the construction of buildings and boats. It is often used for floors and furniture because of its dark honey colour. These trees can live for more than 200 years.



### PINHAL DO REI

The English translation for the name of this forest is King's Pine Forest. Large amounts of wood from the tall trees that made up this native forest were transported along the river from here. Because of the characteristics of the wood and depending on the form of the enormous branches, the logs were used for shipbuilding, particularly the framework and essential braces of the structures of the hulls of the ships and caravels. Lots of wood that came from here was also used for the support stakes of the houses of the Baixa Pombalina area of Lisbon. Because this is an area that has groundwater, pinewood was essential because it does not rot when submerged, maintaining the solidity of the constructions.



SANTARÉM >>

# SANTARÉM



Locality served by the A1 and A13 motorways, with a central bus station and a railway station that is only two kilometres from the centre, where all the trains on the North Line stop. Known as the "Capital of Gothic," it has a significant monumental heritage that includes various national monuments. Santarém grew on a high plateau above the Tagus River, with two centres along the river, Ribeira de Santarém and Alfange. Walking through the historical city centre, with its narrow and winding streets typical of a city that developed within walls, is like travelling back through the country's history and finding a point of interest around every corner. The cultural landscape of the Tagus River, floodplain, riverside centres and plateau boasts an interesting diversity. The city is also famous for its National Gastronomy Festival, which has been held since 1981, as well as for its National Agricultural Fair. Created in 1953, the fair is considered to be the largest livestock and agricultural fair in the country.

## FROM THE SANTARÉM PLATEAU TO THE TAGUS RIVER

PR 2  
STR



**LOCATION**  
Santarém



**TRAIL DEPARTURE POINT**  
Jardim da República (Republic Garden)



**GPS-WGS84 COORDINATES**  
39.238493, -8.685847



**AIRPORTS**  
Lisbon: 80 km | Oporto: 245 km | Faro: 307 km



ALL YEAR

**RECOMMENDED SEASON**

139 m

ACCUMULATED CLIMB

139 m

ACCUMULATED DESCENT

107 m

MAXIMUM ALTITUDE

9 m

MINIMUM ALTITUDE

CIRCULAR

TRAIL TYPE

MEDIUM

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

6.2 km

LENGTH

3 h

APPROXIMATE DURATION

This trail helps you discover the thousand-year-old relationship between the landscape and the life of this historic city.

At the starting point, located at Jardim da República, there is easy parking and several establishments offering cafeteria and restaurant service. Be sure to visit the municipal market, located next to the garden; its ceramic tiles will take you back in time through the landscapes and the lives of the people depicted here in their daily routines.

Starting at the bandstand located in the middle of the garden and with the car park on your left, go straight ahead, crossing the entire garden, until you reach the churchyard of the old **São Francisco Convent**. Its church, classified as a National Monument, is considered to be the most beautiful manifestation of Gothic art in Portugal prior to the construction of the Batalha Monastery. The most obvious analogies would appear to be works commissioned by the former rulers of Aragon, which is now part of modern-day Spain. Facing the entry portico, go down the stairs on your right and immediately turn left; then keep going straight ahead for some 400 metres. On your right, you can see the Santa Clara Church, classified as a National Monument; a few metres ahead, turn right and go straight down the wide staircase that ends at the Santa Clara road. Go down to the Santarém Brook. This is an old road that is now asphalted; traffic is one way uphill, so extra care is needed. After some 400 metres, when you begin to see the houses on both sides of the road, take the first right, going down a staircase that ends next to the Santa Cruz Square, facing the Santa Cruz Church, which is classified as a National Monument. Cross the road to your left; do not take the street in front of you but, rather, Santa Cruz Street. Keep going and, once you have safely crossed the railway line, take the first left, where there used to be an old door in this part of city wall. Now take the next right and then left again, and go all the way to the end of Direita de Palhais Street until you reach the square and the fountain of the same name, and the Alcorce medieval bridge. This entire area is known as Santa Iria da Ribeira de Santarém and it is very old, with two parishes that date back to the late 12th century. At the end of the street, turn right, cross the road and turn right

once again; continue straight ahead, keeping the gallery forest on your left and the houses on your left. Here you can see the **Sardinian warbler** (*Sylvia melanocephala*), one of the many species of birds that find shelter and food in this area. After you pass the bandstand and the sports grounds, where the houses come to an end, you will have access to the river banks and you will be able to see the monument depicting Santa Iria, reconstructed in 1644. Turn right and immediately right again. Keep going straight ahead, crossing the entire square. At the end, turn left and left again, and then cross the railway line. Once you have crossed the railway line, turn left and keep going straight ahead along this street that runs parallel to the railway line. Once you reach the Santa Iria Church with its Gothic traits, keep going straight ahead up the street until you reach Calvário Street. Here you will begin a narrow segment of 600 metres that goes under the D. Luís Bridge; from this point you can admire views of the river and the gallery forest. The bridge was built between 1876 and 1881, and it was the first road connection between the north and south of the country.

Once you reach Alfange, take the first right and begin the climb up to the plateau and the city. After some 100 metres, climb the stairs on your right, which lead to the churchyard of São João Evangelista Church. Go along the left side of the church and continue going up for another 100 metres, turning right. Here begins a section of 700 metres where you should continue straight ahead until you get inside the walls of the castle. The first 300 metres are along a paved ledge half-way up the hill that offers you the first views of the fields and the river and its banks; the rest of the way goes along a footpath on a steep slope, the last few metres of which are over the medieval paving stones. This section coincides with the ancient Way of Saint James.

After passing the Santiago door, keep going forward and enter the garden. Take the time to rest and explore the many nooks and crannies or simply enjoy the magnificent panoramic view of the Tagus floodplain from the **Portas do Sol lookout**. As you leave the garden, go along 5 de Outubro Avenue straight ahead and, after about 200 metres, turn left and descend the Travessa da Judiaria; at the end, look to your left to see the old bulwark of the wall and take



the street on your right that goes along the side of the Graça Church, classified as a National Monument. When the street forks, take the left-hand fork.

When you reach **Largo Pedro Álvares Cabral**, keep going along Braamcamp Freire Street. In front of the Anselmo Braamcamp Freire House-Museum, take a moment to admire the view of Vale de Torres from the lookout. About 150 metres farther on, turn right and go up the Milagre Stairs until you reach the square where you will find the Santo Estevão Church, National Monument and sanctuary, known for the miracle that took place in the 13th century. Here, turn right on to Miguel Bombarda Street and keep going until you reach a crossroads known as “canto da cruz” (corner of the cross). Turn right here and go along 1º de Dezembro Street for about 100 metres. Half-way down the street you will pass the Misericórdia Church, classified as a National Monument. At the end, keep to the left of the Nossa Senhora de Marvila Church, classified as a National Monument and dating back to the 12th century. This church is known as the “catedral do azulejo seiscentista” (seventeenth-century tile cathedral) because of its magnificent tiling. Turn right immediately after the church and then left, 100 metres farther on. Here, you are next to the Torre das Cabaças and the Church of S. João

de Alporão, classified as a National Monument. Keep going until the end of Passos Manuel Street and you will find a nook to your left where the Carmo Stairs are situated. Once you reach the end of the stairs, you will see an indication on the paving pertaining to the location of the old Atamarma Door that connected the walkway and the valley of the same name to the Ribeira built-up area. Keep going straight uphill, always with the houses on your left and the city walls on your right. Keep following the curves of the wall for about 250 metres along Luís de Camões Street, and then pause to take in the view from the lookout. Keep going until you come to the fork in the road and, on the way down, take a detour to Fonte das Figueiras, a Gothic fountain that is a unique national monument, along the Figueiras walkway. Take care while crossing the National Road. Go back the same way, climb to your left and some metres ahead, go up the stairs of Travessa das Figueiras. At the end, turn right and then immediately left. You have reached **Praça Sá da Bandeira**, the largest square in Santarém where the main shopping streets branch out from the historical city centre. With the Sé cathedral in front of you, exit the square via the street on your right, passing by the Church of Nossa Senhora da Piedade, cross the road and you will be back at your starting point.

## FROM THE SANTARÉM PLATEAU TO THE TAGUS RIVER HIGHLIGHTS

### SÃO FRANCISCO CONVENT

Established in 1242 by the Franciscan Order, this convent is austere in nature, which is quite common for this mendicant Order, its church being a good example of this. The group of buildings was successively expanded over the centuries with high-quality decorative elements, such as the Renaissance arch of the Santa Ana Chapel or the rood screen, which led to it becoming the royal pantheon of King D. Fernando in the 14th century. Its facade has a Gothic portal with horseshoe arches and ornate capitals. The church and the cloisters were classified as a National Monument in 1917. The churchyard and Jardim da República garden, where the queen used to take walks, were restored in 2010.



### SARDINIAN WARBLER (SYLVIA MELANOCEPHALA)

Easy to spot, this bird is 13 cm long and the males and females have different plumage. The male has a black head with a red orbital ring and its upper part in tones of grey. The female is similar, but with tones of brown and her underside is white with grey sides. The difference in colours between the sexes is known as sexual dimorphism. Present on the Iberian Peninsula, Mediterranean islands, North Africa and the Canary Islands, the Sardinian warbler can be seen in wooded areas, orchards, oak groves, hedges and marshlands. In this area, it is most common near the Tagus River and gallery forests.

### PORTAS DO SOL LOOKOUT

Considered to be the parlour of the city of Santarém, the garden is located in the old fortress or Moorish castle. Surrounded by the old medieval wall, it affords a panoramic view of the Tagus River, the Santarém Brook, the Ribatejo floodplain, farmland, and the urban centres of Almeirim and Alpiarça, located on the left bank of the river. Here you will find vestiges of various eras and the Urbi Scallabis - Centro de Interpretação (USCI) interpretation centre will help you find out about the evolution of the city's history. Next to the entrance to the garden, you will find the Santa Maria da Alcáçova Church, built by the Knights Templar in the second half of the 12th century, after Santarém was conquered from the Moors.



## FROM THE SANTARÉM PLATEAU TO THE TAGUS RIVER HIGHLIGHTS



### GRAÇA CHURCH AND PEDRO ÁLVARES CABRAL SQUARE

A National Monument, Santo Agostinho Church, also known as the Graça Church, is a Gothic-style monument that was built by the Augustinians of Lisbon, who came to the city in 1376. The main facade is in flamboyant Gothic, with a scenographic portal topped by an enormous rosacea. Its interior has a tripartite apse and the naves are in mendicant Gothic. Here you will find the tombs of Pedro Álvares Cabral, discoverer of Brazil, and D. Pedro de Meneses, first governor of Ceuta. In the square, there is a statue that honours the great navigator and the Casa do Brasil.

### SÁ DA BANDEIRA SQUARE

One of the city's busiest squares, it boasts several types of religious architecture. The Nossa Senhora da Conceição Church and Cathedral dominate this space. Built as a Jesuit College in the 17th century, it became a seminary when the Jesuits were expelled from Portugal by the Marquis of Pombal. This building houses the diocesan museum. At one of the entrances to the square, you will find the Church of Nossa Senhora da Piedade, built as a token of thanks for the Portuguese victory in the Restoration wars. It has an unusual octagonal dome. In the centre, you will find the statue of the Marquis of Sá da Bandeira, founder of the Army School and present-day Military Academy.



## USEFUL INFORMATION

You can find updated information in several languages regarding legal formalities related to entering, driving and staying in Portugal at [www.visitportugal.com](http://www.visitportugal.com).

### NATIONAL OR REGIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

SOS	+ 351 112	Poison Hotline	+ 351 217 950 143
Forest fires	+ 351 117	Police	+ 351 243 322 022
24-hour Health Line	+ 351 808 24 24 24	National Rep. Guard	+ 351 243 304 500 / 243 300 070
Santarém Dist. Hospital:	+ 351 243 300 200 / 243 300 861	National Republican Guard SEPNA	+ 351 213 217 000

### LOCAL PHONE NUMBERS

#### ALMEIRIM

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 570 690
Health Centre	+ 351 243 594 350
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 594 107
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 592 122

#### ALPIARÇA

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 558 659
Health Centre	+ 351 243 557 485
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 556 000
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 558 122

#### AZAMBUJA

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 263 418 841
Health Centre	+ 351 263 407 617
Tourism Office	+ 351 263 400 476
Fire Brigade	+ 351 263 480 133

#### BENAVENTE

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 263 518 220
Health Centre	+ 351 263 516 775
Tourism Office	+ 351 263 655 202
Fire Brigade	+ 351 263 519 790

#### CARTAXO

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 703 190
Health Centre	+ 351 243 700 650
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 700 273
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 700 800

#### CHAMUSCA

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 249 769 030
Health Centre	+ 351 249 769 170

Tourism Office	+ 351 249 761 513
Fire Brigade	+ 351 249 769 220

#### CORUCHE

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 611 240
Health Centre	+ 351 243 610 500
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 610 828
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 610 260

#### GOLEGÃ

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 249 979 030
Health Centre	+ 351 249 979 180
Tourism Office	+ 351 249 979 002
Fire Brigade	+ 351 249 979 070

#### RIO MAIOR

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 999 500
Health Centre	+ 351 243 999 200
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 991 121
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 999 510

#### SALVATERRA DE MAGOS

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 263 504 118
Health Centre	+ 351 263 500 470
Tourism Office	+ 351 263 509 520
Fire Brigade	+ 351 263 504 463

#### SANTARÉM

GNR / PSP (POLICE)	+ 351 243 300 091
Health Centre	+ 351 243 303 231
Tourism Office	+ 351 243 304 437
Fire Brigade	+ 351 243 377 900



## NATURAL.PT - LIVING HERITAGE —

Natural.PT is a Portuguese brand connected to classified areas and to the values associated with them. Associated with the uniqueness and environmental and cultural value of mainland Portugal's classified areas, the brand Natural.PT aims to comprehensively promote the territory, products and services offered in the protected areas and their surroundings, and which share with them the values and principles of sustainability and the enhancement of nature and endogenous resources. The Natural.PT brand is the property of the Institute for the Conservation of Nature and the Forests. Discover the Protected Areas and find Natural.PT members at [www.natural.pt](http://www.natural.pt)

## APOIO —





# RiBA TEJO



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ENTIDADE REGIONAL DE TURISMO