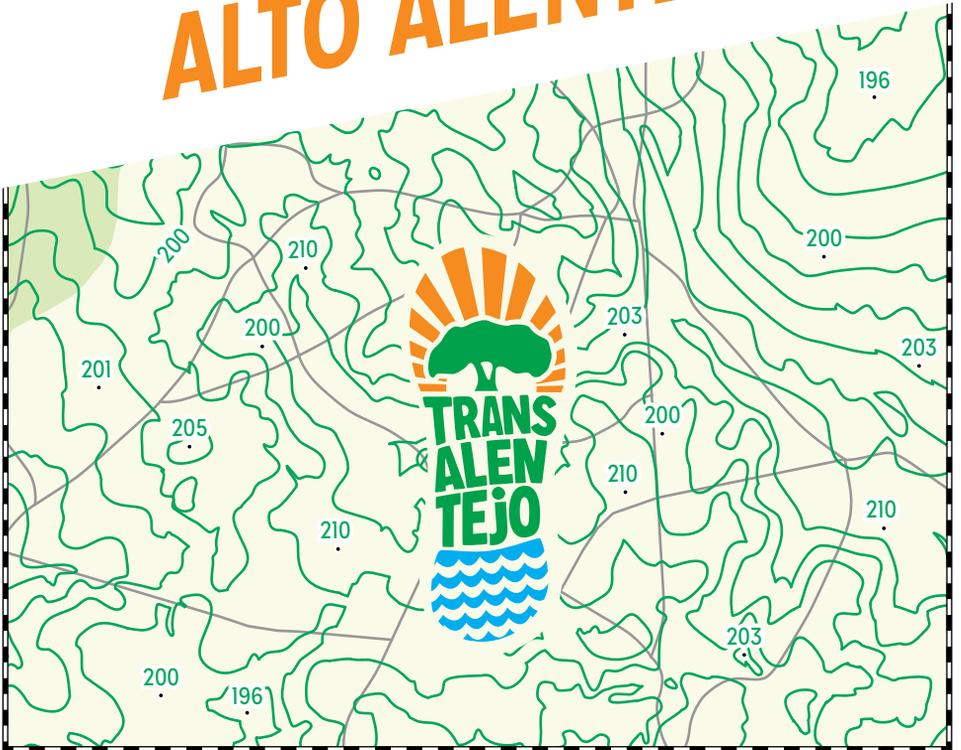


PORTUGAL

ALENTEJO TRANSALENTEJO WALKING TRAILS ALTO ALENTEJO



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TRANSALENTEJO
WALKING
TRAILS
ALTO ALENTEJO



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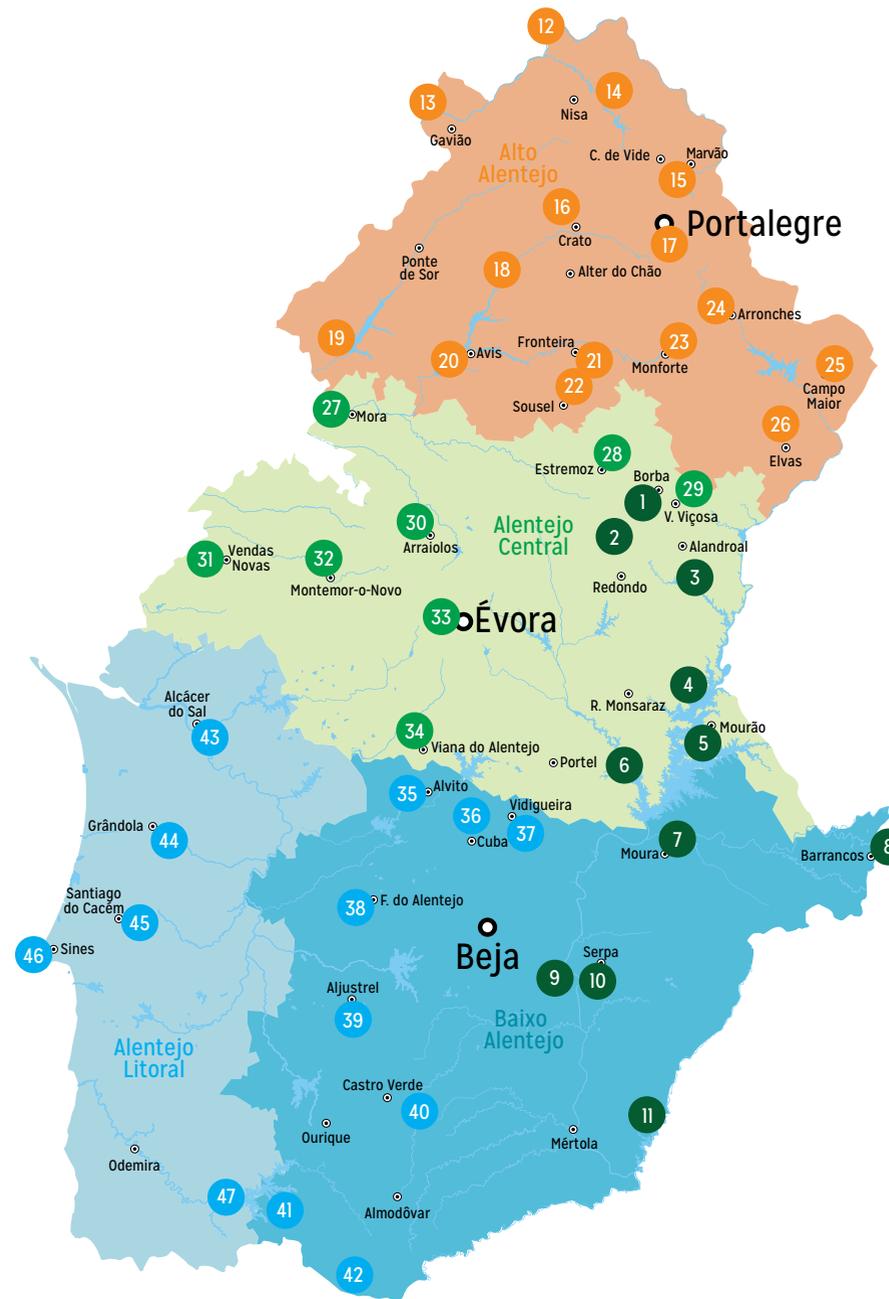


CONTEXT

Located in southern Portugal, the Alentejo is a vast territory covering an area of approximately one third of the country's mainland. This is a region of diverse landscapes where you will encounter different types of terrain and vegetation and a vast array of natural and cultural heritage. The cities, towns, villages and rural spaces in the Alentejo are well-preserved and authentic. As a result, the region is a favourite destination for all those who enjoy walking as a leisure pursuit.



REGIONAL LOCATION



KEY TO THE MAP

Alqueva

- 1 The Fantastic Serra D'Ossa
- 2 Hermits of the Serra D'Ossa
- 3 Conquest of Terena
- 4 Writings in Stone and Lime
- 5 Across the Living Heritage of Mourão
- 6 From Almeira to Alqueva With the Lake at Your Feet
- 7 Rout of Água de Moura
- 8 From Serra Colorada to Cerro do Calvário
- 9 Watermills and Fortresses of Guadiana
- 10 Trail of Azenha da Ordem (Watermill)
- 11 Arround the Cork Plantation (Montado)

Alto Alentejo

- 12 Conhal Gold Mine Trail
- 13 Tagus River Valley Slopes
- 14 Fantastic Landscapes of Póvoa e Meadas
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- 17 Senhor dos Afritos Pilgrimage Route
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Alentejo Central

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- 28 Monumental Estremoz
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- 32 Montemor Olive Orchards and Oak Groves
- 33 From Évora to Alto de São Bento
- 34 Pilgrimage Route to Nossa Senhora de Aires

Baixo Alentejo e Litoral

- 35 Memories of the Mills of Alvito
- 36 In the Age-old Vineyards of Vila Alva
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- 45 Santiago Between Farms and Oak Groves
- 46 The Sines Coast
- 47 From Santa Clara to The Dam

USEFUL AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Turismo do Alentejo, ERT:
Tel.: +351 284 313 540
geral@turismodoalentejo-ert.pt
www.visitalentejo.pt
www.portuguesetrails.com

Alentejo Promotion Office
Tel.: +351 269 498 680
info@turismodoalentejo.pt
www.visitalentejo.com

SOS Emergency and Rescue: 112
SOS Forests and Fires: 117
SOS Environment and Nature:
808 200 520 sepna@gnr.pt

DESCRIPTION

The TransAlentejo Network presents the systematised organisation of a selected set of walking routes throughout the Alentejo, perfectly structured and signposted, chosen from among the several such routes in each municipality's territory. The choice of one route per municipality showcases the best that this territory has to offer in terms of landscape, natural values and heritage, creating a network of the best regional offerings for walking enthusiasts. Each of these routes is part of the respective Municipal Walking Route Network that can be discovered through each municipality's promotional platforms. The structuring and publication of the TransAlentejo Walking Routes began in 2014, with 11 municipalities in the territories of the Great Alqueva Lake, in the first of a set of four guide books, covering the 47 municipalities in the Alentejo Region:

- TransAlentejo Alqueva
- TransAlentejo Alto Alentejo (Upper Alentejo)
- TransAlentejo Alentejo Central (Central Alentejo)
- TransAlentejo Baixo Alentejo e Alentejo Litoral (Lower Alentejo and Alentejo Coast)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The TransAlentejo Guide contains plenty of support information about each of the trails presented in it.

- The guide features a detailed description of each route together with a summary of five points of interest that you will find along the route.
- A map of each route has been provided by the Army Geospatial Information Centre, showing the outline of the route and identifying all of the points of interest.
- The signposts and other indications on each route are compliant with the markings ratified by the Portuguese

These guides and routes are intended solely for the purposes of tourists and individuals walking for personal enjoyment, on their own or in the company of family and/or friends, taking advantage of the different trails that have been properly studied, mapped and signposted. For professional use or organised tourist walks, this guide serves as a starting point for the exploration of a territory that has much to offer participants in your group programmes. More details can be obtained by contacting the Alentejo Regional Tourism Board, Municipal Tourism Departments or some of the many different tourism recreational companies, tour operators and accommodations throughout the Alentejo. They will be delighted to provide you with all of the best offerings for anyone who enjoys walking as a leisure pursuit. Competitive sporting events, races, bicycle tours, motor vehicle outings or other sporting or recreational events are not permitted on the marked walking routes published in this guide unless proper authorisation has been obtained from the landowners and the competent authorities.

Camping and Mountaineering Federation, as shown in the diagram.

- The online presentation contains comprehensive information about each route, with fact sheets provided on various viewing platforms, full support texts and external links for more information.
- The routes should always be walked in the direction indicated and which corresponds to the order of the points of interest.
- Signposting on the trails is two-way but this is solely to ensure your safe return in the event that you have to turn back.

SIGNAGE



Right way

®



Wrong way

®



Turn left

®



Turn right

®

CONDUCT AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Walk in a group. If you do decide to go alone, leave details of your planned route either at your accommodation or at the local fire station or GNR/PSP police station before setting out. Do not forget to let them know that you have returned safely.
- Check the most recent updates on the route's information panel or other places where local information is available, such as the local tourist office, council offices or police station.
- Pay close attention to places marked as hunting reserves and to the dates of the hunting season. Do not go walking when hunting events are taking place.
- If you are going on an organised walk, always obey the guides' instructions.
- Do not use the walking routes for running, cycling or driving in motorised vehicles.
- Choose the region where the route is located to stay in, have meals and go shopping. Meet and mingle with the local residents.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear. Take sufficient food and water with you for the whole day, as well as a means of communication and a personal first aid kit.
- Listen to your body. If you are tired, very hot or cold, have a fever or an allergic reaction, are thirsty, hungry or uncomfortable for any reason, stop immediately and try to make your way to safety. If you have to, do not

- hesitate to call for help or assistance.
- Stay on the marked trails and be respectful of private and public property. If you open any gates or raise any barriers along the way, be sure to close or lower them again behind you.
- Do not gather samples of minerals or plants and try to avoid disturbing wildlife and livestock by keeping as far away from them as possible.
- If you take your dog with you, it should always have a collar and you should keep it on the lead whenever you are going through built-up areas, farms or places with livestock. Make sure your pet does not disturb other walkers or local residents.
- Take care in places where there could potentially be danger. If in doubt, turn back.
- Be particularly cautious when crossing streams, bridges, roads, streets and railway lines.
- Be respectful of the natural surroundings. Avoid wearing garish colours and making unnecessary noise.
- Keep all your rubbish with you until you find an appropriate bin to put it into.
- Do not light fires or use naked flames for any reason. Avoid smoking. If you must smoke, do so only in places where it is absolutely safe to do so.



CONHAL GOLD MINE TRAIL

MONTE DO ARNEIRO (SANTANA), NISA

This is an indescribably beautiful area distinguished by the waters of the important River Tagus that marks its banks in geomorphological and historical terms like nowhere else. The imposing quartz crest of Portas de Ródão, carved out by the force of the waters, is a favourite setting for film-shooting. The landscape is marked by thousands of years of human occupation and cone-shaped piles of boulders along the banks bear witness to the gold panning that took place in the river.

Start your walk at the Conchal Interpretation Centre in Arneiro and go along country paths until you reach Serrinha, where you can get to the geodesic dome. Explore the summit, from which you can admire the junipers and stop at a natural viewpoint affording a view over the River Tagus, the Ilha das Virtudes and Ilha do Cabecinho Islands, the mouth of the Ribeira do Vale Stream and Portas de Ródão. Head back downhill on nature trails until you reach the Ribeira do Vale Stream, which you can cross on a suspension bridge. You can also visit the Ilha do Cabecinho by means of a suspension bridge, which brings you back to the original trail. Continue along the bank, following

the River Tagus upstream on the old donkey track, go past a fishermen's shelter and keep going till you reach Pêgo das Portas. From here you can see the famous Portas de Ródão and you may also spot some members of the griffon vulture colony on the wing. Continue along the country path leading to the site, pass through the archaeological space and keep going as far as Castelejo, right in the middle of Conchal do Arneiro, vestiges of ancient gold prospecting sites in Roman times. Return to the original path and head south towards Arneiro, always along easy country paths. In Arneiro, you can take a look at the communal ovens and the Main Church.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR9
NIS

Route: Conchal Gold Mine Trail

Location: Monte do Arneiro (Santana), Nisa

Distance: 8.5Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 264m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 75m Max 211m

Approximate duration: 3h to 4h

Level of difficulty: Low

Type of surface: Country paths, walking trails

Start and finish:

Conchal, Arneiro and Nisa Interpretation Centre

Geographical coordinates:

N39°36'57" W07°42'18"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area

Useful Contacts: Nisa Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 245 410 000;

Email: turismo@cm-nisa.pt

APP Trilho da Mina de Ouro do Conchal.

NOT TO BE MISSED

CONHAL DO ARNEIRO

A vast park of boulders in various sizes, occupying more than 90 hectares delimited by the Arneiro Stream, the left bank of the River Tagus and the Serra das Talhadas uplands. This area shows signs of past mining activity in secondary seams of gold located in the rivers. The activity reached its peak during Roman times but is believed to have continued, albeit on a smaller scale, in the subsequent periods. The cone-shaped piles of boulders – called "conhos" and removed from the washing channels by hand – can reach a height of five metres and are the most obvious indication of the mining activity that went on here.



PORTAS DE RÓDÃO NATURAL MONUMENT

Portas de Ródão are a geological formation near Vila Velha de Ródão, to the north, and the village of Arneiro, to the south; they are the result of the intersection of the hard quartz terrain of the Serra das Talhadas with the course of the River Tagus. The valley narrows here, with steep walls on either side rising to a height of 170 metres. They remind you of two "doors", one to the north in the district of Castelo Branco and the other to the south in the municipality of Nisa.



CONHAL GOLD MINE TRAIL

NOT TO BE MISSED

GRIFFON VULTURES

Portugal's biggest colony of griffon vultures is to be found in Portas de Ródão. These are highly sociable birds and gather in large groups to rest, nest and feed. They can fly at speeds of up to 35 km/h and travel as far as 150 km from their nests in their search for food. Adult birds are about a metre long, have a wingspan of about 2.6 metres and weigh between seven and nine kilogrammes. Normally silent, they can be noisy when they are in their nests or around a carcass.



RIVER TEJO

The River Tagus is the longest river in the Iberian Peninsula. It rises in Spanish uplands of Albarraçin, at a height of 1,593 metres, and flows a distance of 1,007 km to reach the Atlantic Ocean in the municipality of Oeiras, forming an estuary in Lisbon. Its drainage basin covers an area of 80,600 km².



TAGUS RIVER VALLEY SLOPES

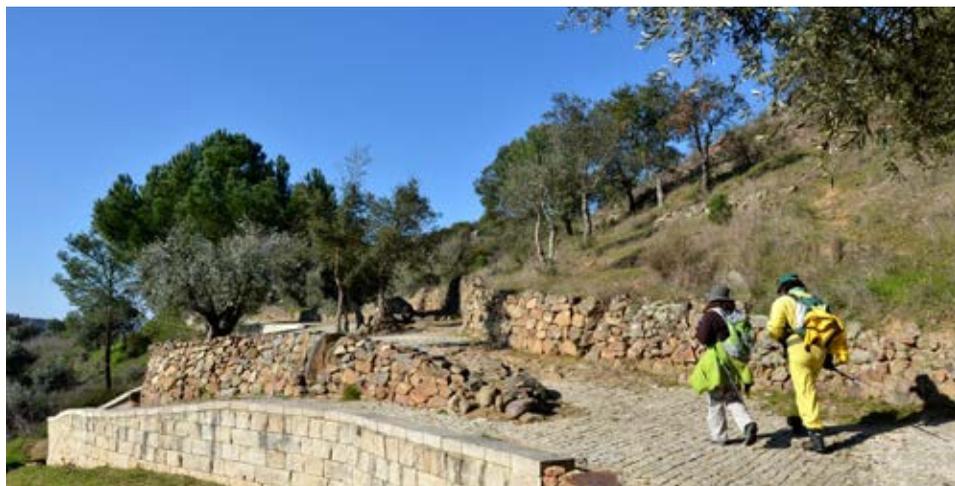
BELVER, GAVIÃO

This is the part of the Alentejo region located to the north of the River Tagus. In mediaeval times, the area was defended by Belver Castle. These were the Lands of Guidintesta, given over to the Order of the Hospital, which built a replica of Jerusalem's Belvoir Fortress here. The river marks a trail through nature teeming with life; here, too, are megalithic remains, historical defensive structures, ancient but now submerged river and sulphurous spas, and a huge, dammed reflecting pool, bounded by a romantic walkway.

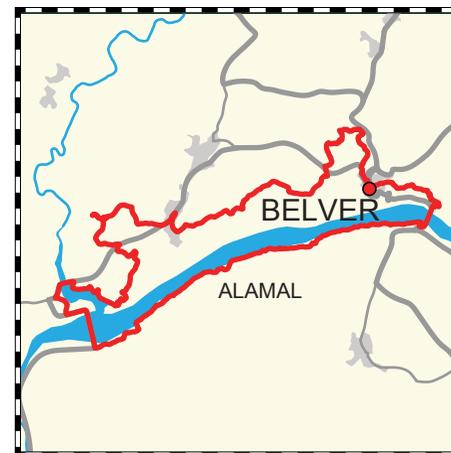
A thrilling trail through magnificent landscapes, affording views over both banks of the River Tagus. This is a route which features many foot trails in natural surroundings, with various uphill and downhill stretches through areas of virtually untouched nature, with a number of obstacles to be tackled and a wooden walkway alongside the river. Starting at the Igreja Matriz (Main Church), leave Belver by heading down Rua da Fontinha towards the old Fraga Olive Press, along the old irrigation channel, and cross over the Belver Stream using the suspension bridge. Follow the trails between the walls until you reach the road. Turn left and then immediately right, after a few metres, and take a country track between ancient olive groves and small crop fields until you reach Torre Fundeira. Leave the hamlet along the paved road and, after passing the stream, turn right towards the mound where you will find the Penedo Gordo Dolmen, a splendid megalithic monument. From here on, start your descent to the River Tagus. The incline is fairly shallow to begin with but becomes

steeper after Cabeço do Pintalgaio, where there is a natural stairway that requires extra caution. Go on to Ortiga Beach, always alongside the river channel, cross over the railway line and go past the old residential neighbourhood until you reach the deck atop the Belver Dam wall.

Once you have crossed, turn left and follow the natural trail that takes you upstream along the left bank of the river. Pass the ruins of the now-submerged Fadagosa de Belver Spa and keep following the splendidly beautiful trail all the way to the Alamal River Beach. From here, take the man-made wooden walkway along the river bank. Go up to the road, cross over the road bridge to the other bank and climb the stairway immediately on your right at the end of the bridge, next to the Belver Tapestry Museum. When you reach the top of the stairs, take the well-marked trail that turns into a contemporary art exhibition all along the walls lining the route, and always amid splendid scenery. Rua Fonte Velha leads you into Rua Cândido dos Reis, which brings you back to the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1
GAV

Route: Tagus River Valley Slopes

Location: Belver, Gavião

Distance: 16Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 615m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 40m Max 188m

Approximate duration: 4h to 5h

Level of difficulty: Medium +

Type of surface: Nature trails and urban walks, wooden walkway

Start and finish:

Largo Luis de Camões, Belver

Geographical coordinates:

N39°29'39" W07°57'32"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area

Useful Contacts: Gavião Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 241 631 210; E-mail: turismo@cm-gaviao.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

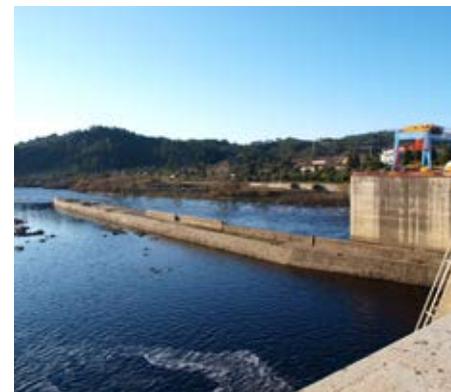
BELVER CASTLE

Considered one of the most complete examples of mediaeval Portuguese military architecture, the castle stands alone atop a granite hill. D. Sancho I, Portugal's second king, gifted the lands of Guidintesta to the Military Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, with the implicit understanding that a castle would be built which would be named Belver and be a replica of the Belvoir Fortress next to the River Jordan in Palestine. The castle served as the base for the settlement and defence of the surrounding territory, fundamental for the Portuguese geopolitical strategy to conquer the southern lands from the Moors.



BELVER DAM

The dam is part of the national hydrological plan for major works, which began in late 1940s. Inaugurated in 1952, it rises to a height of 30 metres above the natural ground level, and the crest is 328 metres long. The installed capacity for the generation of electricity is 80.7 MW. While the main purpose of the dam is the production of electricity, it has created a fabulous reservoir where visitors can enjoy fishing and other leisure activities. When the reservoir filled up, it submerged the old towpaths along the river banks, as well as the abandoned facilities of the Belver Spa.



TAGUS RIVER VALLEY SLOPES NOT TO BE MISSED

PENEDO GORDO DOLMEN

This megalithic monument was used for funerary purposes during the Chalcolithic period, in the third millennium before Christ. It is in very good condition and has an elongated, multi-sided chamber, with nine stone blocks and an access corridor of approximately three metres. Although there is no capstone, some traces of the stone slab that would have formed it are visible. Dolmens are funerary monuments from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. The dead were placed in the foetal position along with offerings that they would need in their "other life".



ALAMAL WALKWAY

A man-made structure in wood, approximately two kilometres in length, built alongside the River Tagus between Alamal Beach and the Belver road bridge. It was built to provide safe access between the two places for walkers and cyclists out enjoying the natural surroundings.



BELVER TAPESTRY MUSEUM

Housed in the former Natividade Nunes da Silva factory, the museum opened in November 2016. The history of the Natividade Nunes da Silva factory, which operated for almost sixty years, was strongly marked by female entrepreneurship, in the figure of its mistress. The primary function of this space is to preserve the memory of this artisanal weaving facility and safeguard one of the region's characteristic skills.



FANTASTIC LANDSCAPES OF PÓVOA E MEADAS

PÓVOA E MEADAS, CASTELO DE VIDE

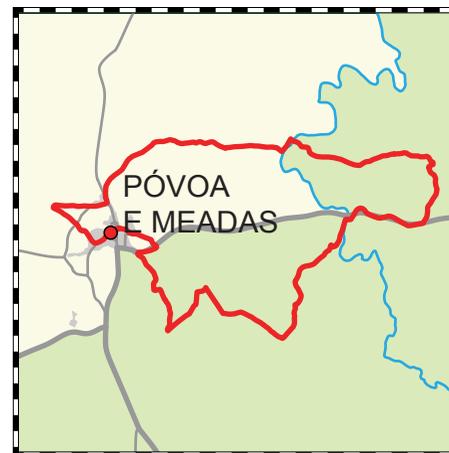
The fields of Póvoa e Meadas portray an image of utter serenity and bucolic peacefulness. The paths between walls mark the traces of passage of many centuries of travellers who, having found refuge and shelter here, have settled and turned lands of harsh but attractive granite outcrops into fertile fields. Oak forests, old-growth holm oaks and farm animals provide the ideal company for walkers along the incomparably beautiful route.

This is a route for those who enjoy landscapes that challenge the senses. Leading you along leafy lanes between walls and along woodland trails and shortcuts, the route provides an opportunity to admire nature in all of its splendour and appreciate how skilfully it can be tamed by people. Set off from the pretty public garden in Póvoa e Meadas and follow the narrow alleyways until you are right beneath the villas, going around the clock tower, where the tiled panels have captured scenes of local life in bygone days for eternity. Leave the town, passing the traditional fountain and the place where the old olive press used to be. Keep going along country paths between walls, watching out for the old milestones left by the Romans. The route takes you back into town again before finally coming back out to a scenario of seemingly endless fields. Watch out for the sharp turn to the left and, farther on, the 90° bend to the right that leads you into the most untouched

part of the route, where the oak groves appear between rounded outcrops of granite. After going through a small grove of eucalyptus trees, you will be able to see the São João Stream which you cross by taking the sturdy Engineer Duarte Pacheco Bridge, built in concrete in 1940. From here, you begin a gentle uphill climb along ancient paths that take you past country farms, their land enclosed by walls which have collapsed in many places. The encounter with the Old Bridge of Póvoa e Meadas and the crossing of it is one of the high points of the route, which you should follow to the left, alongside the fence, and leave by way of the gate. From here, the path continues uphill between walls until you reach the town at the point where the schools are located. Turn right here, go past the bull ring and veer to the left. Cross the road and keep going until you arrive back at the town centre.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



NOT TO BE MISSED

VILLAGE OF PÓVOA E MEADAS

A civil parish whose origins date from a distant past, Póvoa e Meadas was founded by the Knights Templar in the late thirteenth century as a land to be settled, hence the name ("povoamento" in Portuguese means "settlement"). In the sixteenth century, with a new charter from D. Manuel, the village of Meadas was added, resulting in the present-day name of Póvoa e (and) Meadas. Located 12 kilometres from the seat of the municipality of Castelo de Vide, this is the municipality's only rural civil parish. An important dam is located on its territory; it has been producing electricity since 1928, providing the village with lighting that was an innovation at the time.



PR6
CVD

Route: Fantastic Landscapes of Póvoa e Meadas

Location: Póvoa e Meadas, Castelo de Vide

Distance: 13,2Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 209m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 256m Max 369m

Approximate duration: 3h to 4h

Level of difficulty: Medium

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:

Póvoa e Meadas Garden, northernmost tip

Geographical coordinates:

N39°30'42" W07°31'09"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area.

Useful Contacts: Castelo de Vide Tourist Office;

Tel.: +351 245 908 227;

E-mail: turismo@cm-castelo-vid.pt



MILESTONES

Milestones placed along Roman roads were in the form of a column with a rectangular or rounded base. They varied in height, with the biggest ones being around 60 cm in diameter and weighing around two tonnes. Nowadays, the milestones help archaeologists and historians estimate the routes taken by the old Roman roads, so they have become valuable historical records.

FANTASTIC LANDSCAPES OF PÓVOA E MEADAS NOT TO BE MISSED

PYRENEAN OAK

The Pyrenean oak is a deciduous tree that can grow to as high as 25 metres. It has a very characteristic appearance, with a thick and attractive trunk and lots of branches. Its leaves are very dark green and the flowers can be male or female. It has a large rounded top. This tree is used for logging and the wood is also used in carpentry, civil construction, furniture-making, joinery and cooperage.



GRANITE OUTCROPS

Granite balls, of which sometimes only the tops can be seen poking through the earth, are domes of large pockets of magma that have cooled inside the earth, having failed to pierce the overlying terrain, usually limestone or ancient schist. Over time, erosion has caused these layers to disappear, leaving the harder granite visible. Due to the easing of the surface pressure, cracks tend to open and widen as water flows through, giving rise to sets of blocks that break apart and form unique stony scenarios.



PÓVOA E MEADAS OLD BRIDGE

This is a solidly-built stone bridge with five flattened arches. It has a narrow, single-lane deck and ends in a sharp bend at the western side. Currently serving no practical purpose, it marks the country space in an emblematic way, bringing to mind other times, other types of transport and other paces of life.



THE FABULOUS APARTADURA DAM

APARTADURA DAM, MARVÃO

This mountainous territory in the heart of the Serra de São Mamede Nature Park is home to a vast lake framed by green and rocky uplands. The resulting scenery is not only unique but also hard to imagine. Atop its rock, Marvão is visible in the distance and the landscape is dotted by little villages and scattered hamlets that have grown up alongside streams, fertile valleys and forests of chestnut trees. They are a feast for the eyes and soul of anyone who wanders here at leisure.

Set off from next to the dam wall on the right bank, next to the top discharger, and take the access road leading to the hamlet of Rasa. The name harks back to the Arabic "al-Raschah" which means apple tree or, generically, orchard. Don't turn towards Rasa but keep going straight on until you reach the first dirt track turning off on the right and begin the climb between trees and bushes. Pass the eucalyptus wood and when you reach municipal road EMI307 turn right, heading downhill towards Reveladas. Turn right at the very first house and keep going between the walls in the little cluster of houses until you reach municipal road EMI040. Turn right here and start the slow uphill

climb. From here you can admire magnificent views of the Apartadura Reservoir, looking like an authentic mountain lake, and, off on the horizon, the town of Marvão, standing atop its protective rock. Half-way up you will find the Quinta do Barriero with the fabulous Maria Leal da Costa Sculpture Park. Return to the road and keep climbing until you reach a forest path on the right that takes you down into the valley. This dirt track winds its way down to the bank of the reservoir. On the way, you will pass Monte Roxo and then keep going through the eucalyptus trees until you reach the road leading to the dam wall on the left bank. Go over the dam wall back to the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR6
MRV

Route: The Fabulous Apartadura Dam

Location: Apartadura Dam, Marvão

Distance: 8,5Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 303m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 552m Max 723m

Approximate duration: 2h to 3h

Level of difficulty: Medium

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:

The right bank of the Apartadura Dam

Geographical coordinates:

N39°21'00" W07°22'54"

Where to park: Open space for parking at the site.

Useful Contacts: Marvão Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 245 909 131; Email: turismo@cm-marvao.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

APARTADURA DAM AND RESERVOIR

Located on the Reveladas Stream, the dam and reservoir supply the territory of Marvão and surrounding municipalities with water for agricultural and domestic purposes, serving some 35,000 inhabitants. The dam was inaugurated in 1993 and is located inside the Serra de São Mamede Nature Park, contributing to the development of typical mountain lake habitats. With a capacity of seven million cubic metres, the area of the basin is 8.5 km² and it is approximately 8 km long by 4 km wide. Taking into account the need to keep the water pure, only non-motorised nautical sports are permitted and even these must be properly licensed.



EUCALYPTUS FOREST

The eucalyptus is a leafy tree originally from Australia and which was introduced into Portugal in the late nineteenth century to drain wetlands and for decorative purposes. Its capacity for fast growth and timber production has made it very important for the paper pulp manufacturing industry. Frowned upon by many, the eucalyptus offers many benefits, including its considerable capacity to trap carbon dioxide and the fracturing effect that it has on normally impermeable soils.

THE FABULOUS APARTADURA DAM NOT TO BE MISSED

SCULPTURE PARK OF MARIA LEAL DA COSTA NA QUINTA DO BARRIEIRO

Maria Leal da Costa has been exhibiting her works at the Sculpture Park in Quinta do Barriero since 1994. From an early age, her many visits to exhibitions, museums and galleries stirred her liking for the arts. She works to themes and takes her inspiration from literature, prose and poetry by writers such as Tolentino Mendonça, Gonçalo M. Tavares, Camões, Sophia de Mello Breyner, Cecília Meireles and Fernando Pessoa, to name but a few. Her preferred materials are stone, iron and bronze, which she may combine or use separately to craft large or small pieces. Her reencounter with nature has been another source of inspiration for her work, which is why she uses this place as an exhibiting space. She is the artist who created tactile sculptures, such as the Belém Tower, the Town of Marvão and the Roman City, for blind people to enjoy.



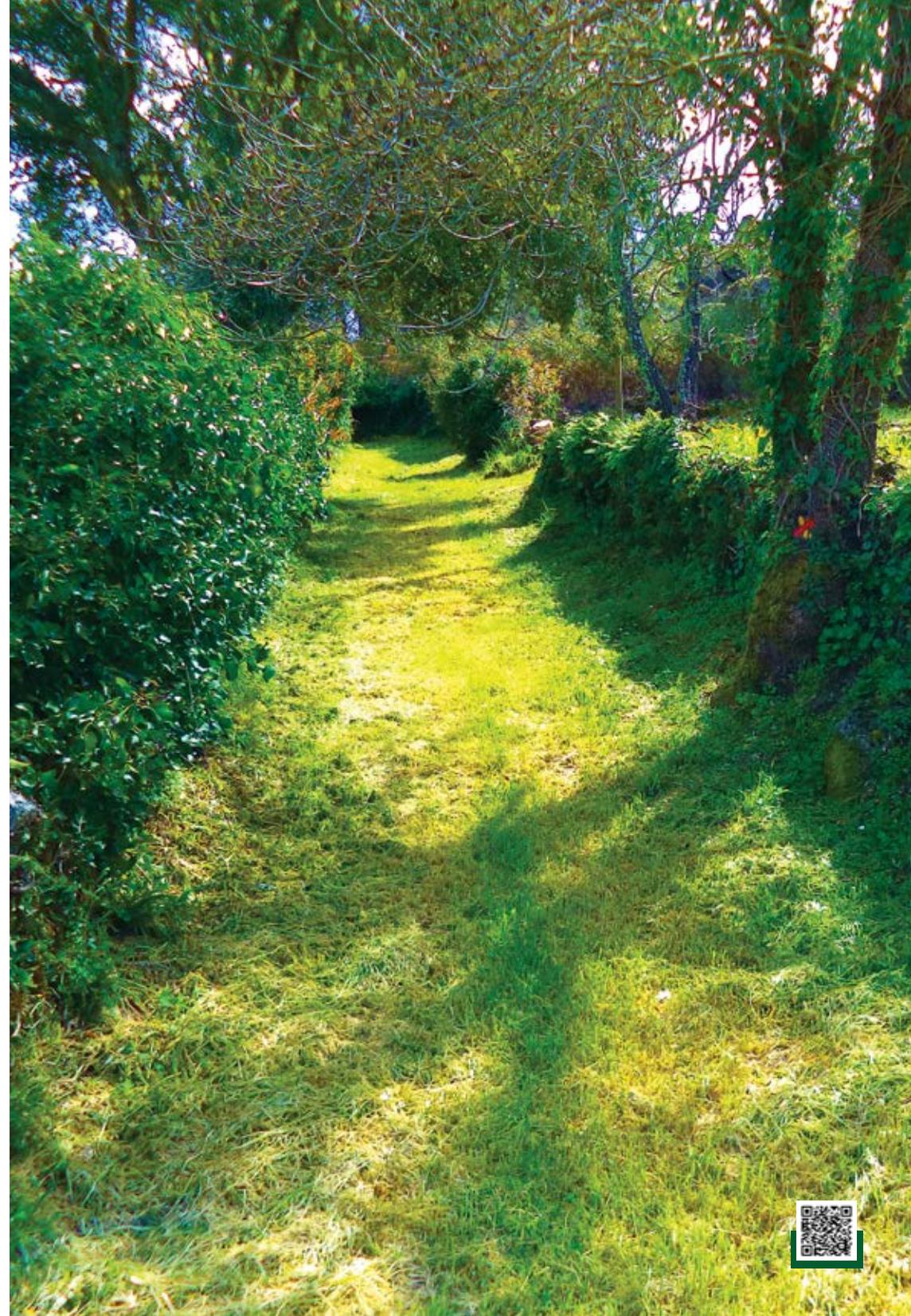
TOWN AND CASTLE OF MARVÃO

The castle stands to the north of the town, on the highest point of a quartzite rock, dominating everything around it. It retains a restored network of walls and watchtowers that surround the central square. The entire town of Marvão is located inside walls that connect to those of the castle. Marvão was founded during the time of Muslim rule, as a practically impregnable site. It was conquered by King D. Afonso Henrique and changed hands on several occasions during the Christian reconquest. The town of Marvão boasts rare beauty due to its geographical location, its history and the excellent conservation and upkeep of its walled historical centre.



SERRA DE SÃO MAMEDE NATURE PARK

Located in the Serra de São Mamede, uplands that lie at the Alentejo's north-eastern border, the nature park covers an area of about 56,000 hectares spread across four municipalities. It was created in 1989 for the purpose of protecting the nature of a very special territory and harmonising conservationist principles with the age-old lifestyles and experiences of the local populations. The mountain habitats foster the development of forestry models where oak and chestnut trees abound, creating forests that are not only very beautiful but also hugely rich from an environmental point of view. The forests and the many rocky escarpments provide excellent spots for animals and birds to take shelter and reproduce.



FLOR DA ROSA HISTORICAL ROUTE

FLOR DA ROSA, CRATO

A vast territory was the headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller, now known as the Order of Malta, lands belonging to the Álvares Pereira family, to which the history of Portugal owes so much. Between legends of deadly loves in Flor da Rosa and secular defences in the Castles, we have fertile lands that have been peopled with scattered settlements since prehistoric times. Today, this is marvellous countryside for walking; you can feel the energy from those bygone days, in landscapes that have already borne witness to so many fabulous civilisations.

The considerable length of this route means that it is suited to those who enjoy long-distance walking. But the distances seem to be made shorter due to the beautiful scenery and the tranquillity of the endless horizon. Leave Flor da Rosa by going through the built-up part of the town towards the old lanes which, in bygone days, led to the many fountains that supplied the people with water and served as a meeting point for water carriers, washerwomen, lovers and smugglers. The path meanders between old walls, small vegetable gardens and old-growth olive orchards until reaching the southern part of the town of Crato that it encircles before heading northwards along the same type of country paths. There is a smell of burnt wood in the air from the charcoal ovens that burn constantly to produce this combustible

black gold. The route is quite visible, always along country paths, sometimes between long stretches of vineyards, sometimes in eucalyptus groves and sometimes in the open country, where you will often see cows grazing. The final destination is the Aldeia da (village of) Mata. It was once a settlement in the middle of the scrubland, hence its name ("mata" in Portuguese means "scrubland"). On arrival, you may like to finish your walk in the village centre or you may prefer to continue on a bit farther; taking an old track between walls and, coming to the EN363 road, keep to your right on to the property where you can see the Tapadão Dolmen, a very valuable relic from the megalithic. Make your way back to the Aldeia da Mata on foot, where the walk ends.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



NOT TO BE MISSED

MONASTERY OF SANTA MARIA DE FLOR DA ROSA

Founded in 1356 by D. Álvaro Pereira, Prior of Crato, the Flor da Rosa Monastery is one of the most original and intriguing buildings in Portuguese Gothic style. Even today, its monumentality is fascinating due, as is well-known, to the history of its own construction, which began as a simple fortification consisting of walls and a tower, inspired by the defensive structures of the Knights Hospitaller. Alterations and improvements carried out over the centuries have transformed this space into a museum and lodging facility replete with history and charm.



PR1
CRT

Route: Flor da Rosa Historical Route

Location: Flor da Rosa, Crato

Distance: 20,8Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 426m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 196m Max 300m

Approximate duration: 5h to 6h

Level of difficulty: High

Type of surface: Country paths

Start:

Rua do Mosteiro, entrance to Flor da Rosa Castle

Finish:

Anta do Tapadão - After visit return to Aldeia da Mata.

Geographical coordinates:

N39°18'21" W07°38'53"

Where to park: Open space for parking at the site.

Useful Contacts: Crato Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 245 997 341; E-mail: turismo@cm-crato.pt



TOWN OF CRATO

Taken from the Moors in 1160 by D. Afonso Henriques' forces, the town and its extensive lands were donated by King D. Sancho I to the Knights Hospitaller, on the condition that they would develop and fortify it. Starting in the fourteenth century, Crato became one of the most important towns in the Alentejo, both in military and religious terms, with the change in name from Priorate of Portugal to Priorate of Crato. When you walk around inside the town you will come across various houses that are significant both historically and architecturally, alongside typically modest dwellings belonging to farm workers. There is also an important collection of religious heritage and civil works for public use.

FLOR DA ROSA HISTORICAL ROUTE

NOT TO BE MISSED

HISTORICAL AND RURAL FOUNTAINS

Water has always been a supremely important resource for the lives of the populations but it was not until the Enlightenment reforms introduced by the Marquis of Pombal in the eighteenth century that it began to be publicly distributed on a wide scale. The first rural and urban water fountains date from this time and were improved and modified throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often with public washhouses and drinking troughs for animals being placed alongside them.



ALDEIA DA MATA

An extremely old and historically important settlement, the village guards the secrets of many civilisations. The oldest evidence relates to the Roman Lage do Ouro ("gold slab") Necropolis, where the graves date from the first to the fifth centuries. Later, the settlement became known as Mata de Alfeijolas, a name that indicates how important the forest was when the land here was ruled by the Order of Malta.

TAPADÃO DOLMEN

The Tapadão Dolmen, also known as the Dolmen of the Village of Mata, dates from the third millennium before Christ and is one of the best-known in Portugal. It comprises seven upright granite stones of identical height but different shapes; the capstone still exists, a single, rounded and irregularly-shaped granite slab. Dolmens are funerary monuments from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. The dead were placed in the foetal position along with offerings that they would need in their "other life". The construction, now above ground, had been covered over with earth, creating a man-made underground cave in the form of a female abdomen.



SENHOR DOS AFLITOS PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

PORTALEGRE

Legend has it that a cross was placed at a remote site to signal an inglorious death or a highly successful miracle. The cross would give rise to the cult devoted to the Lord of the Afflicted and his powers to heal body and soul. A church, which would later become a sanctuary, was built at the site. The people of Portalegre traditionally go to the site on the first Sunday in May, in a festive pilgrimage that serves as the basis for a walking route through lovely rural landscapes of oak forests and grazing land.

And the fact that it is a pilgrimage route means that it holds enormous historical symbolism. Since this is a point-to-point route, you need to ensure that you have a means of getting back to the starting point afterwards. You can either walk back the same way or drive, since there is road access to the Sanctuary of Senhor dos Aflitos. The starting point for this route is the waste ground outside Portalegre Bull Ring. Take the dirt path between the oak trees and the granite outcrops. At the second crossroads of country paths, you can turn off to the left, on a side route of about

five kilometres out and back, to see the Campino Dam. Once you return to the main trail, keep left if you did the extra bit or go straight ahead, if you opted not to go the dam. Keep going until you reach Monte da Vinha and go and take a look at the Zé dos Cães Dam and the many intricate pieces of engineering involved in holding back and transporting the water. Go back to the main trail again, pass to the right of the hamlet and keep going up the gentle hill, between areas of oak forest and scrubland, until you reach the Sanctuary of Senhor dos Aflitos on the top. This is where the route ends.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



NOT TO BE MISSED

PORTALEGRE BULL RING

Portalegre's bull ring – its official name is José Elias Martins Bull Ring – was inaugurated in 1936. It was built on an estate called Herdade da Misericórdia, located on the outskirts of Portalegre on property belonging to one of the Alto (Upper) Alentejo's biggest agricultural landowners, José Elias Martins, hence the name. To this day it remains private property. The opening bullfight took place on 8 June 1936 in the presence of civilian and military authorities.



PR9
PTG

Route: Senhor dos Aflitos Pilgrimage Route

Location: Portalegre Bull Ring

Distance: 15Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 200m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 270m Max 336m

Approximate duration: 4h to 5h

Level of difficulty: Medium

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:

Waste ground outside Portalegre Bull Ring

Geographical coordinates:

N39°15'50" W07°26'44"

Where to park: Open space for parking at the site.

Useful Contacts: Portalegre Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 245 307 445; E-Mail:

turismo@cm-portalegre.pt



CORK AND HOLM OAK GROVE

The oak groves are a man-made ecosystem typical of the Alentejo. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.

SENHOR DOS AFLITOS PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

NOT TO BE MISSED

MONTE DA VINHA, MONTE DE ENTRE RIBEIRAS, MONTE DO CAMPINO AND CASAS NOVAS

Agricultural estates earning income from crop-growing and livestock, and containing hamlets built in the late nineteenth century, which in view of the characteristics of the buildings common to all, and to the fact that they bear the initials JM, are believed to be the responsibility of the Elias Martins family, in particular the charitable farmer, José Elias Martins (1886-1966), Commander of the Order of Merit.



SANCTUARY OF SENHOR DOS AFLITOS

Located in the civil parish of Fortios, the Sanctuary of Senhor Jesus dos Aflitos has been the primary centre of worship and pilgrimage in this region since the mid-eighteenth century. The chapel, which dates back to before 1720 and was restored in 1870, contains an interesting set of 52 votive offerings. The festivities in honour of Senhor Jesus dos Aflitos are held here annually, always on the first Sunday in May, and are attended by large numbers of pilgrims from all over the country. According to Father Bonifácio Bernardo, "...a certain man was murdered there. A simple cross, without an image, was placed there in his memory, but was stolen. To replace it, noblewoman D. Mariana de Valadares commissioned another cross to be placed there, with a painted image of the crucified Lord; this cross was originally kept in a niche; various worshippers appeared who, through prayer and their faith, were blessed in sickness or when they were in danger and the cult rapidly spread throughout the entire region".



SEDA CASTLE ROUTE

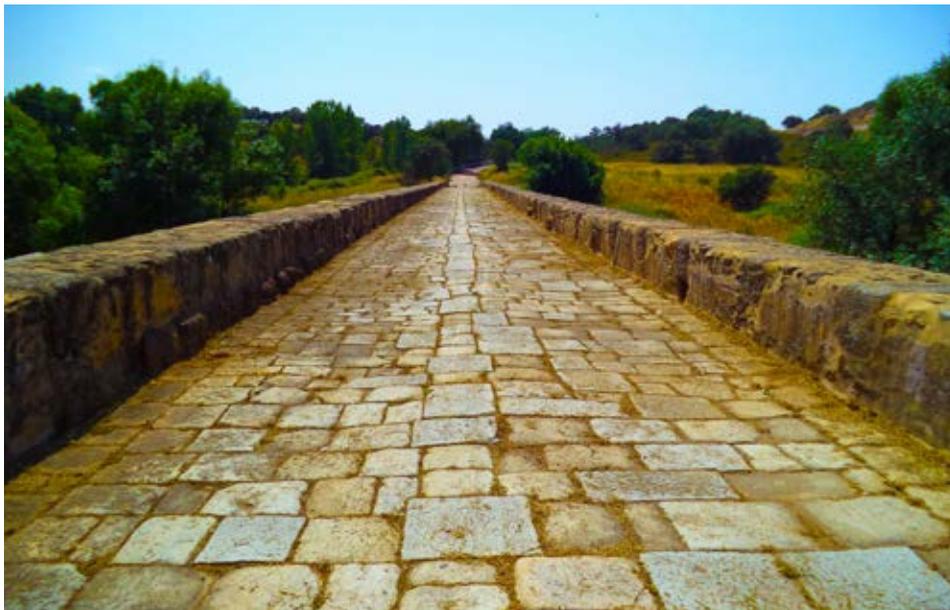
SEDA, ALTER DO CHÃO

Arriving in the town of Seda is like plunging into the best of worlds, with stunning landscapes and historical heritage around every corner. A former advance defence structure, with its hilltop castle dominating the landscape, the town's whitewashed houses now stand along the crest of the hill and are surrounded by fields of rare beauty along the Seda Stream. The magnificent Vila Formosa Roman Bridge straddles the stream.

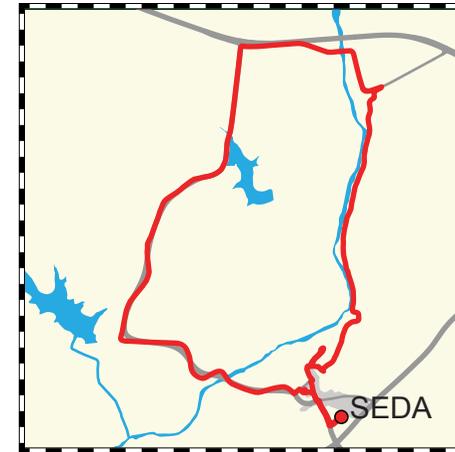
This outing affords moments of rare beauty as you walk along the banks of the Seda Stream and admire the vineyards stretching for as far as the eye can see. After a short urban section at the start, the whole of the rest of the route takes you along easy-to-access country paths and roads amid sublime scenery.

Leave Rua 1º de Maio and turn right, go up Rua do Poço and continue along past the whitewashed houses of the town of Seda. Take Rua Cândido dos Reis then Rua 5 de Outubro and finally Rua do Castelo. After admiring the scenery from the viewpoint, where the highpoint of the ruined Seda Castle used to be, go downhill a little along the already-existing path and turn left down the little stairway to the stream. Take the country path and heading downhill, turning left on a sharp bend at the first turn-off. Keep going along the country path, which begins to follow the left bank of the Seda Stream a bit

farther on, until you reach the old paved road. Go past the picnic park to the Vila Formosa Roman Bridge, cross the bridge and keep going along the disused paved road. When you reach the Vila Formosa road, turn left, pausing to admire the delightful Alentejo hamlets, the mirror-like waters of the reservoirs formed by the agricultural dams, and the vineyards and olive orchards stretching into infinity. On the distant horizon, the sight of the town of Seda stirs walkers' emotions. Cross the Seda Stream again, this time by the modest road bridge and, when you reach the hamlet, take the first road on the left and then turn right. This brings you to the Igreja Matriz (Main Church). Go down to your left until you get to Rua Cândido dos Reis and then keep going, back to Poço Novo, where you started your walk.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2
ALT

Route: Seda Castle Route

Location: Seda, Alter do Chão

Distance: 10,4Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 245m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 132m Max 197m

Approximate duration: 3h to 4h

Level of difficulty: Low

Type of surface: Country paths and secondary roads

Start and finish:

The gardens at the Seda Swimming Pool Complex

Geographical coordinates:

N39°11'19" W07°47'08"

Where to park: Public car park at the site

Useful Contacts: Alter do Chão Tourist Board;
Tel.: +351 245 610 004; E-mail: cultura@cm-alter-chao.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

SEDA CASTLE

An original Roman defensive stronghold through to the end of Muslim domination with the designation "Arminho", vestiges of the mediaeval walls have survived to the present day, scattered on the hillside. Some form part of the slope's retaining structure whereas others are practically ruined. In between yards, the remnants of a few turrets that once connected the various walls. Administered by the Military Order of Aviz, it was this walled enclosure, which was never a castle, that protected the mediaeval hamlet and which, today, corresponds to the original centre of the town of Seda.



SEDA STREAM

This is a big stream that flows for more than 50 kilometres. Rising in the Serra de São Mamede, it is joined by many small tributaries along the way. There is a huge reservoir where the river is dammed by the Maranhão Dam. From there, it flows as far as the Tera Stream, which it joins, giving rise to the River Raia. The fact that the stream flows through fairly flat land means that it commonly bursts its banks, leading to the development of various riverine ecosystems boasting considerable ecological diversity.

SEDA CASTLE ROUTE NOT TO BE MISSED

VILA FORMOSA ROMAN BRIDGE

This monumental Roman bridge was built in the late first century DC. The horizontal cobblestoned deck is 117 metres long and 6.7 metres wide, and the maximum height is 8.4 metres. The bridge comprises six round arches, each containing 33 identically-sized voussoirs and having a diameter of 8.95 metres. The support consists of robust pillars resting on sturdy foundations and the deck features a well-designed system of niche-shaped eyelets and nozzles to enable safe water outflow in the event of a flood. Serving as a road bridge over the Seda Stream for some 2,000 years, up until the start of this century, it was also part of the route of the EN245 national road. It was classed as a national monument in 1910 and is now closed to traffic.



ALENTEJO MONTES (HAMLETS)

These hamlets are the direct descendants of the rural type of Roman villa. Privately-owned, they are home to several families whose mutual connection is usually work-related. There is always a grander main house belonging to the owner and his or her family, houses for the resident workers and accommodation for any casual workers or visitors. Support structures for crop-growing and livestock are perfectly integrated into the space, as are workshops, transformation and storage facilities, and, sometimes, social structures such as a school, church and police station. They are normally located on high ground with plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and afford excellent visibility over their dependent farmlands.



CHURCH OF NOSSA SENHORA DO ESPINHEIRO

This church began life as a small chapel on a hill outside the town walls, possibly on the site where an Islamic mosque once stood. In the early sixteenth century, it was handed over to the Military Order of Aviz to defend and take care of it. There has been a prior in residence ever since. Based on a description from the mid-eighteenth century, the layout of the current church is the same as it was then, the rich interior replete with Baroque-style altars and decorations.



DISCOVERING MONTARGIL

MONTARGIL, PONTE DE SÔR

The huge lake of the Montargil Reservoir marks the landscape from the various viewpoints and high points around Montargil, looking like a never-ending watery mirror. The configuration of the route lets you start with a panoramic urban circuit which takes you past the city centre's most important monuments, followed by a nature-trail section; this latter takes you through varied forest landscapes with sublime scenery of wide open spaces, always with the lake as backdrop.

Leave the Montargil Cultural Centre car park heading towards the Church of São Sebastião and go down the street called Rua Manuel Falcão de Sousa. Pass the viewpoint next to the Santa Casa da Misericórdia and, farther down, stop at the viewpoint and drink in the gorgeous panoramic view over the Montargil Reservoir. After the bend, head uphill to your left along Rua Capitães de Abril. When you get to the top, pay a side visit to the Chapel of Santo António. Turn left on to Rua das Amoreiras and go past the old steam-powered olive press, which dates from 1945. When you get to Rua da Misericórdia, turn right towards the parish church, which has an interesting wrought iron side window. Before this, pay a quick visit to the Igreja da Misericórdia (Church of Mercy). Go past the left-hand side of the church towards the Afonsas Garden, walk round the Largo do Rossio Square and go up Rua 25 de Abril. Cross the Praça da Restauração Square, where you will find the pillory, turn right on to Rua do Comércio and go all the way to the end. Then continue along Rua Luís de Camões, where the starting point of the route is located,

and go past Montargil Cultural Centre. Go past the roundabout and keep straight on along Rua Dom Fernando. When the road forks, keep left along Rua Joaquim Manuel Fernandes. About 400 metres after the last houses, turn left along Rua da Serra, a dirt road. Go up to the geodesic dome where you will find a number of antennas and admire the vastness of the landscape, with the hamlet of Montargil standing out and the reflective waters of the vast reservoir in the background. This is a typical forest route, with eucalyptus, pine, cork and holm oak trees marking the landscape alongside it. As you descend, the woodland around you noticeably gives way to small vegetable gardens with fruit, olive and fig trees. Make your way into the urban space along Rua Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage; when you reach the small green plaque, turn right and then left along Avenida da Liberdade and Rua Movimento das Forças Armadas until you reach Rua Dom Fernando. Turn right, cross over the roundabout and take Rua Luís de Camões back to the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2
PSR

Route: Discovering Montargil
Location: Montargil, Ponte de Sor
Distance: 7,4Km
Accumulated gaps in meters: 201m
Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 138m Max 230m
Approximate duration: 2h to 3h
Level of difficulty: Low
Type of surface: Urban and forest paths
Start and finish: Montargil Cultural Centre
Geographical coordinates: N39°04'41" W08°10'21"
Where to park: Car parking available at the site
Useful Contacts: Ponte de Sor Tourist Board; Tel.: +351 242 291 580; E-mail: turismo@cm-pontedesor.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

MONTARGIL RESERVOIR

The Montargil Dam belongs to the drainage basin of the River Tagus and is located on the Sôr Stream. It has a capacity of 164.3 hm³ with a flooded area of 1,646 hectares. Its maximum discharge capacity is 765 m³/s. Standing 36 metres high, the crest is some 427 metres long, with a landfill capacity of 858,000 m³. It is equipped with an electricity generator fitted with a Francis turbine that produces an annual average of around 5.9 Gwh of power. The dam's reservoir is a very popular site for water sports, sports fishing and other nature activities, such as birdwatching.



CHURCH OF SÃO SEBASTIÃO

The church is mentioned in the 1758 Parish Memoirs, which it probably pre-dates. It is located in the square named after it, on higher ground to the west, in the so-called Outeiro area. It is dedicated to São Sebastião (Saint Sebastian), a Roman soldier who lived in the third century DC. Devotion to this saint was brought to the Iberian Peninsula under Roman influence.



DISCOVERING MONTARGIL

NOT TO BE MISSED

CHAPEL OF SANTO ANTÓNIO

The chapel comprises two sections, with a circular chancel and a single, rectangular nave, which may have been adapted from an earlier vestibule open to the outside. Inside, you can admire a Baroque-style carved wooden retable, gilded in fine gold, dating from the late eighteenth century. Legend has it that girls of marriageable age would try, with blindfolded eyes, to insert the key into the door of the chapel. The number of times it took them to succeed were said to be the number of years they would have to wait to be married.



MONTARGIL PARISH CHURCH

The current building dates back, at least, to the late sixteenth century, although major work was carried out on it in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Its floor plan is that of a Latin cross and it has a single nave. Of note inside, from an artistic point of view, is the Senhor dos Passos Chapel, in rocaille style. The patron saint of this temple is Santo Ildefonso (Saint Ildefonso), Archbishop of Toledo. A granite cross stands in the square to the side of the church; it was put here to commemorate the holy year of 1950. And a seventeenth-century wrought iron window stands out on the wall of the sacristy. There used to be a prison to the rear of the present-day church. It was deactivated in the early twentieth century and annexed to the church.



MONTARGIL CULTURAL CENTRE

A major development hub for Montargil, the cultural centre was created through the rehabilitation and renovation of the former Casa do Povo (community centre) building. The resulting multipurpose space is used for all sorts of events and activities, including performing arts, film screenings, support rooms, exhibitions and a tourist information office. As well as all of this, the exhibition room and the auditorium afford incredible views over the Montargil Reservoir.



MARANHÃO DE AVIS RESERVOIR

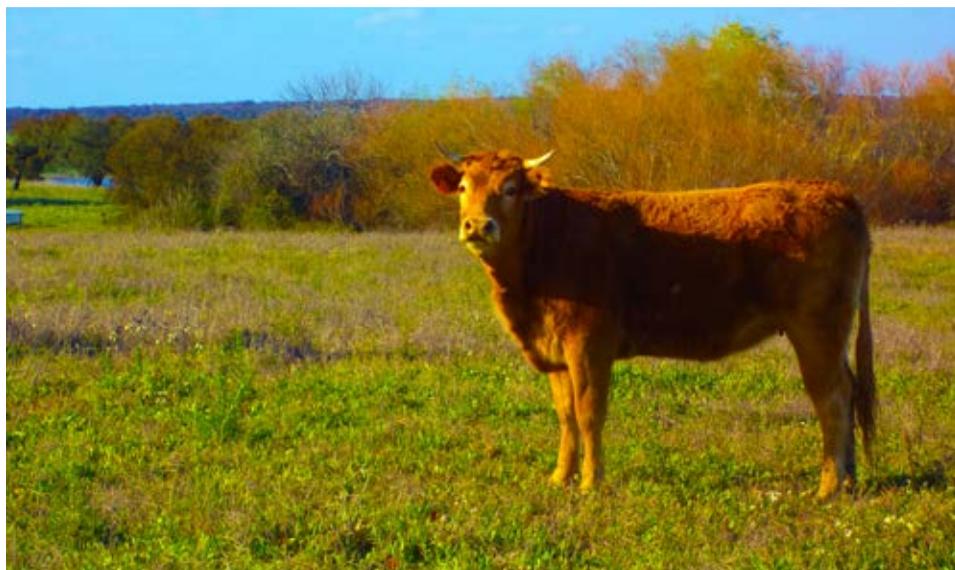
MARANHÃO DAM, AVIS

In Avis, we have the perfect combination of nature and culture, an expansive reservoir with long stretches of calm and relaxing waters, and a landscape replete with fields of cork and holm oak, old-growth olive trees and grazing land for as far as the eye can see. History has been a part of this land for millennia but the high point came with the establishment of the headquarters of the Order of Avis in this territory. This was the house to which King John I of Portugal belonged. Such was his success and acclaim that he became known as the king "of Fond Memory".

Walking along the banks of the Maranhão Reservoir requires little physical effort but is immensely rewarding emotionally. The route follows the contours of the terrain around the banks of the lake. At every turn, there is a new feast for the eyes, with the water as backdrop and the land dotted with the area's typical cork and holm oak trees. Every step is a scenic experience, where the horizon is marked by the distance and the sparkling white of the town of Avis. Start by taking a long dirt track between little vegetable gardens and groves of ancient olive trees. Turn right and then left along a country path until you almost reach the bank of the reservoir. When you reach

the bottom of the hill, turn left and follow the stream all the way to the Carapeta leisure area, a prime spot for sports fishing.

Here you will find a lake with abundant birdlife and an old fountain, also called Carapeta, which is a reference to the blossom of the rock-rose (*Cistus ladanifer*). From here, the trail meanders along the rugged banks of the reservoir until it brings you to a peninsula jutting out into the water and from which the horizon seems to extend almost to infinity. After drinking in all of this magnificent scenery, it will be time to turn back, making your way along the same path that brought you here.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1
AVS

Route: Maranhão de Avis Reservoir

Location: Maranhão Dam, Avis

Distance: 7,1Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 83m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 127m Max 158m

Approximate duration: 2h to 3h

Level of difficulty: Low

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:
Lugar do Pisão, Avis

Geographical coordinates:
N39°01'39" W07°55'40"

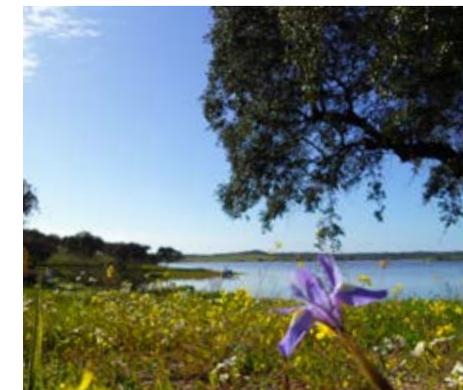
Where to park: Near the houses, taking care not to inconvenience residents

Useful Contacts: Avis Tourist Board;
Tel.: 242 412 024; E-mail: turismo@cm-avis.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

MARANHÃO RESERVOIR

This is a man-made lake which resulted from the construction of the Maranhão Dam in the late 1950s, as part of the national hydrological plan. It is located on the River Seda, occupying an area of 1,960 hectares and having a storage capacity of some 200 million cubic metres, held in by a wall standing roughly 50 metres tall and with a crest of 240 metres. It is equipped with an electricity generator that produces an annual average of around 13.1 Gwh. The lake is an extremely popular leisure site, in particular for the activities of fishing and rowing training.



ROWING COURSE

The Maranhão Reservoir has three long, wide arms that have made it possible to have an excellent course for the sport of rowing. Used for both training and competitions, the destination has become a firm favourite with a number of teams and international squads from various countries.



MARANHÃO DE AVIS RESERVOIR

NOT TO BE MISSED

VILA DE AVIS

The current locality is replete with the history of human settlement going back thousands of years to prehistoric times, as can be seen from the megalithic heritage in the surrounding area. The Romans settled in the area and the Moors also left an important civilizational legacy. In the early days of the Christian reconquest, it was probably conquered and then later handed over to the Military Order of Avis, which established its headquarters here. Standing out among the Order's important masters, is the man who would later become King John I of Portugal, the acclaimed sovereign who fought to fend off the Castilian armies seeking to capture Lusitanian territory.



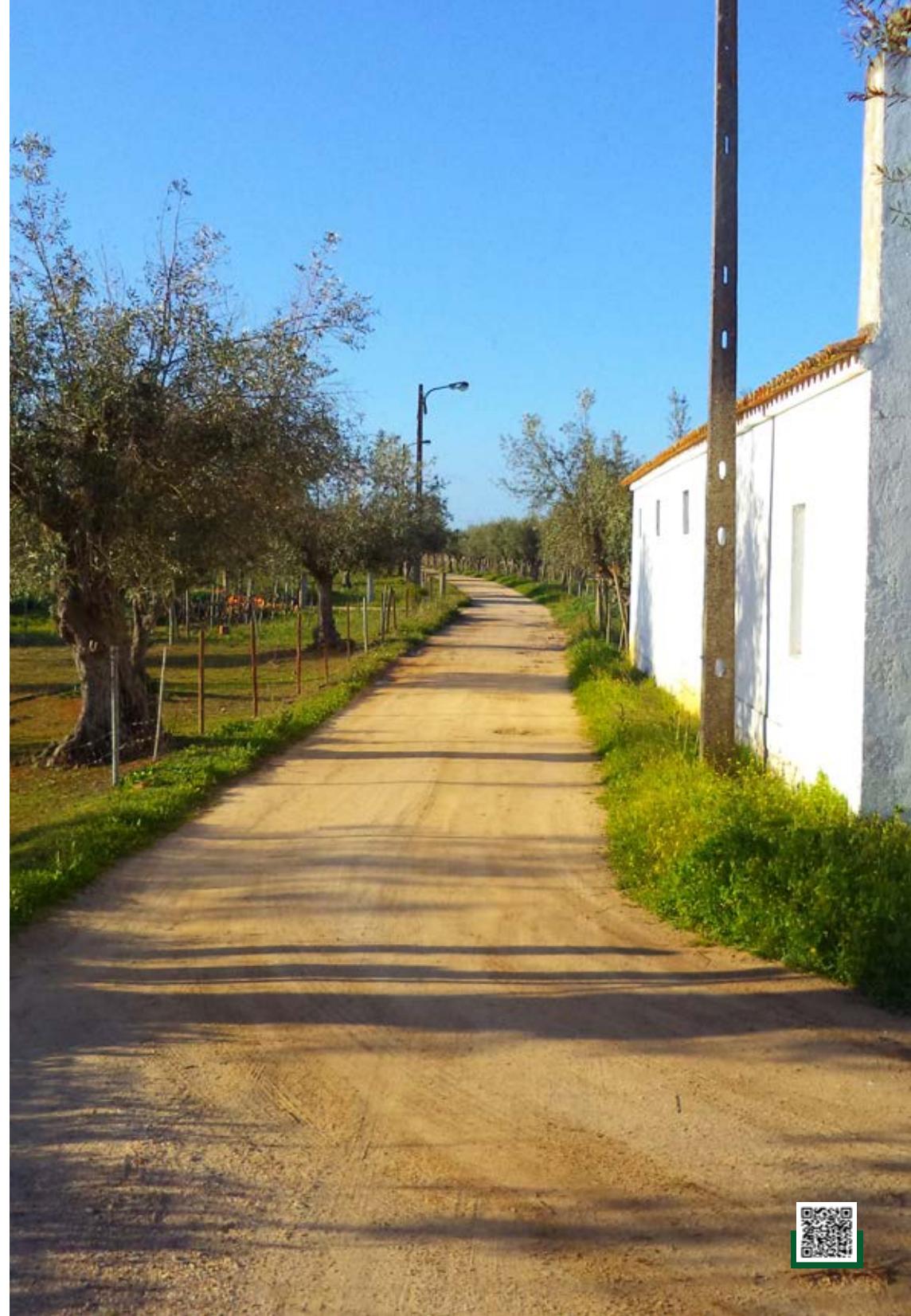
CORK OAK GROVE

Oak groves, a man-made ecosystem, are characteristic of this territory. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.



TRADITIONAL OLIVE GROVE

A traditional olive orchard is an extensive plantation of olive trees; in many cases, these will have been farmed for hundreds of years using age-old practices to grow the trees and harvest the olives. These olives are always of superior quality; after they are crushed in the press, the resulting olive oil is always high in quality, often with quite distinct characteristics in terms of aroma and flavour.



EXPLORING THE RIBEIRA GRANDE

FRONTEIRA

When you leave Fronteira heading towards Nossa Senhora da Vila Velha, you get one of the best understandings of the region's history, as you see how beneficial this hill was for standing guard over and defending the crossing of the Ribeira Grande (Big Stream). As you go along the stream, you can feel the effects of the abundant nature teeming with life and see how humans have taken advantage of the resources offered by this same nature. The fields stretching endlessly before you are dotted with whitewashed houses on the horizon. It is charming beyond measure.

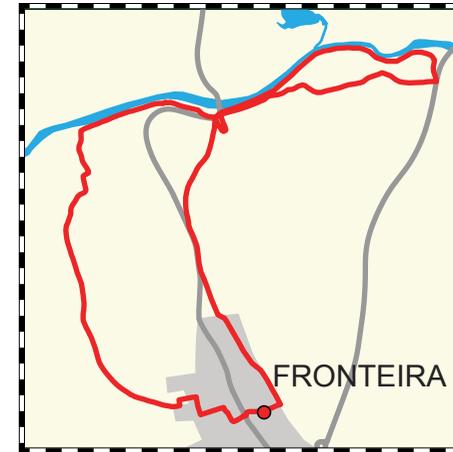
A peaceful outing through endless fields is punctuated by the living presence of the Ribeira Grande with its weirs that were previously used as mill ponds and are today important in terms of their biodiversity. This is a short-distance route with all manner of diverse natural scenarios along the way.

After you go through the built-up area of Fronteira, you get to the Ribeira Grande by means of a modern and comfortable pedestrian walkway. From here you can see the historic Church of Nossa Senhora da Vila Velha, perched on its hilltop. When you reach the road bridge, take the country path on your right and head upstream on the left bank. Half-way along the route, go uphill through a lovely oak grove until you reach the road. Turn left here and, without crossing the stream, immediately turn on to the nature trail. This takes you past some old ruins before bringing you back along the left bank

of the stream; the nature trail gradually gives way to a footpath. Take a look at the weir, a veritable sanctuary for wildlife and an incredibly beautiful spot, and then continue along the bank of the stream until you reach the road bridge. Go through the leisure area next to the restaurant. Go past the old watermill and through the greenery of the gallery forest until you reach what is left of another old weir. From here you start going uphill on a country path. Watch out for the first turn-off on the right; take that and then immediately turn left, continuing uphill along almost abandoned paths between croplands and olive orchards on the way into the town. Enter Fronteira along Rua de São Miguel and take a look at the ruins of the Espírito Santo (Holy Spirit) Church, now the cemetery wall. Then take the Travessa do Hospital to the Main Church and historical centre of Fronteira, bringing you back to the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



NOT TO BE MISSED

FRONTEIRA VILLAGE

The vestiges of human occupation in the area corresponding to the current municipality of Fronteira date far back into the past – over 10,000 years. Various megalithic monuments bear witness to this, including some 30 dolmens in the Megalithic Necropolis of Herdade Grande and the engraved rocks at Herdade dos Pintos. Tradition has it that the town of Fronteira was probably built, in the first instance, on the hill named after “the old town”, where there is said to have been a watchtower in Roman times. The founding of the town of Fronteira is attributed to King D. Dinis, who built the castle here. Some ruined vestiges of the castle have survived to the present day.



PR1
FTR

Route: Exploring the Ribeira Grande

Location: Fronteira

Distance: 7,3Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 154m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 170m Max 259m

Approximate duration: 2h to 3h

Level of difficulty: Medium -

Type of surface: Country and city paths, wooden walkway, walking trails

Start and finish:

Praça do Município, Fronteira

Geographical coordinates:

N39°03'24" W07°38'51"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area.

Useful Contacts: Fronteira Tourist Office;

Tel.: +351 245 604 023;

E-mail: posto.turismo@cm-fronteira.pt



CLOCK TOWER

Built in 1618 on the site of an earlier tower that was demolished in 1613, this is a square granite tower, embellished on the corners by four pinnacles and closed with a pyramid lined with blue and white tiles. It may have been rebuilt on the site of an older tower that served to defend the door in the walled enclosure. Bell towers, and later clock towers, are public works of a civilian nature that served to mark the rhythm of people's lives, as well as alerting them in the case of attacks or catastrophes. They were also used as counterparts to the towers of religious buildings during times when anti-religious feelings were running high.

EXPLORING THE RIBEIRA GRANDE

NOT TO BE MISSED

HILL AND CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE OLD TOWN

There has been a chapel dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Vila Velha de Fronteira on a hill near the town since the thirteenth century. Legend has it that this is place chosen by the first people to settle in Fronteira as their home and, indeed, the fact that there are grain stores dug out of the rock attests to human presence in the mediaeval period. The site affords a magnificent view over the Ribeira Grande and beyond to the northern reaches of the territory. However, it probably served only as a defensive watchtower, under the divine protection of Marian worship, in a temple that has undergone various modifications over time.



RIVER GRANDE

This is an important stream that rises in the uplands of the Serra de São Mamede and is known by various names along its course until it flows into Raia Stream, giving rise to the River Sorraia, a tributary of the River Tagus. The stream flows permanently throughout the year and its habitats, of enormous environmental value, provide shelter for many species of riverine fauna and flora. The energy of its waters has traditionally been harnessed through the construction of water mills to grind grain and, nowadays excellent river beaches can be found alongside the weirs.



WATER MILLS

Water mills are mills used to grind grain and are driven by the force of the river water passing through them. These are complex systems requiring excellent engineering work to dam the streams and channel the passing water, rotating and energy-transmitting machinery, and, lastly, powerful millstones to crush the grain. These activities were normally conducted privately and the hard work and skill of the miller were essential factors in ensuring the success of the process. The last water mills to cease operating on the Ribeira Grande did so in the 1960s.



THE FANTASTIC SÃO MIGUEL HILL

SOUSEL

This is a land where the plains are interrupted by gentle but impressive hills of limestone uplands, with the Serra de São Miguel standing out on the landscape. Curiously, there is a bullring at the top of the hill, alongside an old chapel dedicated to the sword-bearing Archangel Michael. From the top of the hill you can admire a panoramic 360° view over the Alentejo's magnificent plains.

Leave Sousel from where the historic Santo Condestável (Saint Constable), Dom Nuno Álvares Pereira, ordered the Church of the Orada to be built and head out to "conquer" Saint Michael's Hill. Splendid greenery awaits you as you follow country roads and trails through old-growth olive orchards. It is a gentle climb and the reward when you reach the top is immeasurable. The peaceful descent takes you along country roads, with an opportunity to visit an old lime kiln. The final stretch of the route takes you through the urban space of Sousel where you can admire its cultural heritage.

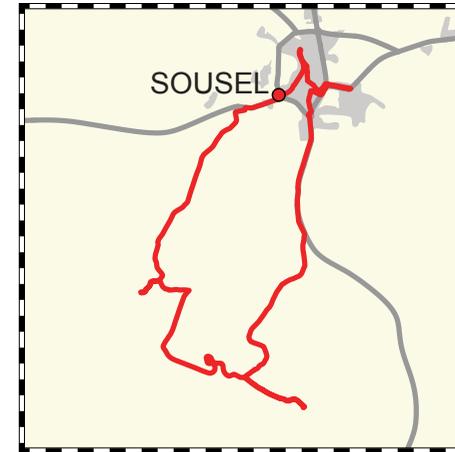
Set off from Sousel Church Square towards the old railway line. Cross the line and go around the right-hand side of the cemetery wall. Here you will see a wide road through an old-growth olive orchard, heading towards the hilltop. About half-way through the olive orchard, the road becomes a country path leading to the social space of the hunting club.

From here, you can pay a visit to a nearby lime kiln,

returning to the same spot to continue in the direction of the paved road leading to the summit of the hill. Tourist accommodation is offered at the top of Saint Michael's Hill, alongside the Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Carmo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel), the former Chapel of São Miguel and, a little farther on, you will find the Pedro Louceiro Bullring. After exploring the summit and admiring the splendid view, head back downhill on the side where the accommodation is located. Go around it and take the clearly visible path until you reach a clearing. From here you will find an out-and-back trail allowing you to visit another lime kiln. Back on the main path now, follow the road downhill, cross over the old railway line and you will find yourself on the EN245 national road leading into Sousel. On the way into the town, you can turn left and finish your walk back at the starting point or you can head into the historical centre and explore the cultural sights in the town centre.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1
SSL

Route: The Fantastic São Miguel Hill

Location: Sousel

Distance: 10,6Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 227m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 259m Max 385m

Approximate duration: 3h to 4h

Level of difficulty: Medium -

Type of surface: Country paths and regional roads

Start and finish:

Largo Nossa Senhora da Orada, in front of the church

Geographical coordinates:

N38°57'07" W07°40'44"

Where to park: Public car park at the site

Useful Contacts: Sousel Tourist Board;

Tel.: 268 550 100;

E-mail: posto.turismo@cm-sousel.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

CHURCH OF ORADA

The church was ordered built here in 1387 by D. Nuno Álvares Pereira, on the site where he is believed to have prayed prior to winning the Battle of Atoleiros in 1384. The current temple is Baroque in style, quite simple on the outside but with rich tile panels and an altar in gilt carving on the inside. Nossa Senhora da Orada (Our Lady of the Oracle) is still worshipped by many inhabitants of Sousel, especially in the month of August.



CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Standing atop Saint Michael's Hill, this chapel in popular style has a single nave with frescoes inside. A tombstone engraved with the year 1640 suggests that it may have been built prior to this. In the mid-eighteenth century it was referred to as Hermitage of Saint Michael and housed a small community of hermits who lived in cells next to the chapel.

THE FANTASTIC SÃO MIGUEL HILL NOT TO BE MISSED

LIME KILNS

Baking limestone to create lime is a process that has been known to humans since prehistoric times. When calcium carbonate stones are subjected to high temperatures, they turn into calcium oxide, which is unstable and reacts with water, producing calcium hydroxide, a mortar that solidifies when it absorbs carbon dioxide from the air. This completes the cycle, producing new limestone. In Sousel, due to the limestone facies of the terrain, the lime kiln industry was very important up until the 1950s. Nowadays, the lime kilns have fallen into disuse and have been largely forgotten, although they still exist in the São Miguel uplands.



CRISTOS MUSEUM AND OTHER MONUMENTS IN SOUSEL

In Sousel, you can visit an important set of sites that preserve historical memories. One is the very important Cristos Museum, which contains a collection of almost 1,500 pieces gathered over the years by collector Venceslau Lobo, and which was acquired by Sousel Municipal Council in 1990. Other highlights to be found throughout the urban space include: House and Mill of the Bastos Ribeiro Family; Convent Church of Santo António dos Paulistas; Main Church of Sousel; Igreja da Misericórdia (Church of Mercy); Sousel Castle; Manor House of the Calça e Pina Family; Chapel of São Sebastião (Saint Sebastian); Pillory; Igreja do Espírito Santo (Church of the Holy Spirit); Gothic Door of the Castle Governor's House.



TOWN OF SOUSEL

It is thought that this place name derives from the Latin "saxum", meaning stone or place of stones and that it subsequently evolved to "souso" with the diminutive "ello", making Sousello. This would mean a small mountain of stones, which is in keeping with the presence of the Serra de São Miguel. The lands of Sousel are acknowledged in the history of Portugal as far back as the thirteenth century. Since then they have become important as a population centre, as well as for lime production and farming.



THE DOLMENS OF RABUJE ROUTE

MONFORTE

The town of Monforte boasts an excellent geographical location that marked its importance as a defensive stronghold in the territory, with its castle and urban centre being part of a strategic border defence line. Large rural estates developed in the surrounding area, with people living there since prehistoric times. The presence of important megalithic funerary monuments is a clear indicator of this fact.

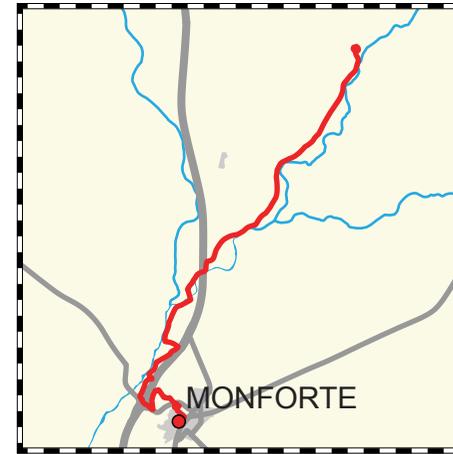
On this walk you go out and back along the same route but get different views of the landscape along the way, given the different perspectives on the outward and return legs. The first part of the route winds its way through the urban space, by way of the Monforte's public square with its churches and the riverside leisure area, followed by a section of oak groves and old-growth olive orchards.

Set off from the Praça da República in Monforte, go past the Chapel of Bones and head uphill towards what remains of the castle. You can see all the way to the horizon from the excellent viewpoint here. Go downhill now to the public square and go past the churches. Go underneath the IP2 road and turn right towards the riverside park where you can admire the old bridge on the Vaiamonte road, now an in situ museum piece. Follow the stream through farmland and go underneath the IP2 road for a second time, heading north-east. The route always follows a wide dirt track through

oak groves, olive orchards and farmland. Sometimes you will be quite close to the Monforte Stream and at others you will be a bit farther away. There are leafy trees growing along the banks and many species of birds and small mammals live in the immediate vicinity. All along the way you can see the now-abandoned granite quarries (be extremely careful if you approach them). These are where Monforte's pretty ornamental granite used to come from. Because the quarries are no longer active, the pits are full of water and have become lakes that provide shelter for birdlife. The farthest point of the route, where you turn back again, is marked by the megalithic Dolmens of Rabuje. This funerary site is impressive due to the size of the dolmens, their concentration and proximity, and the models of historical integration on the megalithic horizon. From here, you simply turn around and head back the way you came until you reach the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2
MFT

Route: The Dolmens of Rabuje Route

Location: Monforte

Distance: 13,4km, out and back

Accumulated gaps in meters: 116m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 228m Max 294m

Approximate duration: 4h to 5h

Level of difficulty: Medium

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:

Praça da República, Monforte

Geographical coordinates:

W39°03'10" W07°26'20"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area.

Useful Contacts: Monforte Tourist Office;
Tel.: +351 245 578 067; E-mail: turismo@cm-monforte.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

TOWN OF MONFORTE

People first began settling in this territory in the Neolithic period, with small communities growing crops and raising livestock. Various megalithic vestiges bear witness to their presence. In Roman times, villas were built that still remain today in the form of agricultural hamlets. The first fortress is thought to have been built during the period of Moorish reign. The town was conquered by D. Afonso Henriques in the twelfth century and was lost and won back several times. Over the course of its history, Monforte experienced a number of vicissitudes, sometimes due to its geographical location and sometimes due to people's tendency to move on to new places. In the late nineteenth century, following the restoration of the municipality, the urban area began evolving towards its present-day state.



MONFORTE CHAPEL OF BONES

Built in the eighteenth century, this is a small chapel backing on to the Igreja Matriz (Main Church). The interior walls are lined with human skulls, tibias and fibulas. The entrance has a door with iron railings for the people to see and to deposit their alms for the purpose of praying for help for souls in purgatory. In the centre, there is a small altar with a crucifix. Chapels of bones are traditionally built with the mortal remains of victims of a major natural catastrophe or destructive accident.



THE DOLMENS OF RABUJE ROUTE NOT TO BE MISSED

ROSSIO DE MONFORTE AND ITS CHURCHES

The "rossio" (public square) in Monforte contains three churches which form a triangle: the Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Church of São João Baptista and Church of the Calvário. They were built between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception) was inspired by Mudejar architecture; the Church of São João Baptista (Saint John Baptist) has a simple façade bounded by two towers; and the Church of the Calvário (Calvary) has four rectangular sections and an unusual Greek cross layout, having been remodelled in the early twentieth century.



MONFORTE QUARRIES

Deposits of pink Barbacena-type granite were quarried for many years and used for ornamental and decorative purposes. The quarries are no longer active and are mostly flooded now, giving rise to artificial lakes which attract many birds that use them for shelter and to nest.



MEGALITHIC NECROPOLIS OF THE DOLMENS OF RABUJE

The first dolmen at the site has been known as the Anta Grande de Rabuje (Big Dolmen of Rabuje) since 1929. Nearby, a set of five more megalithic funerary monuments stand atop a hill, making this a very special case in the territory's megalithic context. Dolmens are funerary monuments from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. The dead were placed in the foetal position along with offerings that they would need in their "other life". The construction, now above ground, had been covered over with earth, creating a man-made underground cave in the form of huge breast.



FORTRESS AND VALIANT TOWN OF ARRONCHES

ARRONCHES

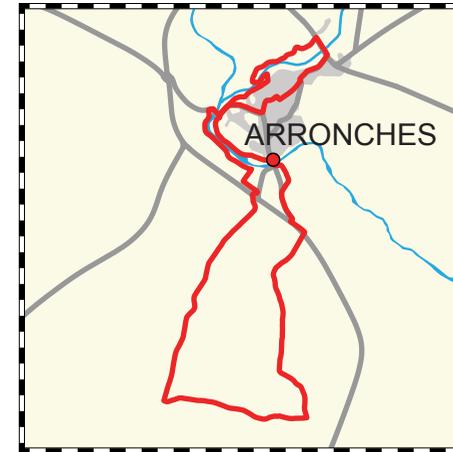
Arronches boasts a prime geographical location next to the Arronches Stream, which normally flows all year round. The São Mamede uplands are nearby, with their nature park and a vast and extremely beautiful natural and rural territory. Added to all this is a geological treasure in terms of ornamental rocks and an extensive history of human settlement dating back to the very earliest times of humankind.

This trail is suitable for virtually every kind of rambler. It is very flat and there is a good balance between natural countryside scenery and urban landscapes. Along the way, you cross the River Caia several times using different bridges and admiring the many cultural vestiges to be seen as you go. Start at the Interactive Centre for Rural Arronches and leave the town, crossing the River Caia. Turn left along the country path in order to avoid the paved road that you have to take for a bit until you reach the first turn-off on the right. This country path takes you through an oak grove followed by walled-in fields of olive trees. Go past some old farm buildings and keep going through the scattered groves of cork and holm oak trees. The trail winds its way between the walls that separate the different properties and you will often see livestock grazing in the fields. When the path between the walls ends, turn right along a stretch of the ancient royal road leading to the entrance of Monte D'El Rei, and then turn right again along the paved road. Immediately on your right, on the Safra Hill, where the geodesic dome named after it is located, you can see vestiges of an old black granite quarry. The path begins to

descend and you can enjoy a very pretty view of the whitewashed buildings in the town of Arronches. When you reach the industrial estate, keep going alongside the River Caia, along the Vassalo Path, passing by the pretty Baroque fountain until you reach the fifteenth-century Crato Bridge. From here, skirt around the northern side of the town and follow the Arronches Stream. Here you can admire the little farms, the flocks of sheep, the "garden shed type" buildings and an old, abandoned mill, long-forgotten by time and by people. Cross the river for the last time and head uphill. As you arrive in the town of Arronches, admire the mediaeval tower and the fantastic Elvas Fountain, built in marble and backing on to the rear of Church of Nossa Senhora da Luz (Our Lady of Light). Go along the narrow streets, admiring the different architectural styles, from the mediaeval main church to the layout of the town and the striking patterns of tiles on the art nouveau style buildings. Go past the thirteenth-century Main Church and walk along the narrow streets, typical of a walled town. When you reach the River Caia, take the attractive, modern riverside walkway that leads you back to the starting point.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR3
ARR

Route: Fortress and Valiant Town of Arronches

Location: Arronches

Distance: 10Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 221m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:

Min 255m Max 315m

Approximate duration: 3h to 4h

Level of difficulty: Low

Type of surface: Country paths and regional roads

Start and finish:

Interactive Centre for Rural Arronches

Geographical coordinates:

N39°07'04" W07°17'09"

Where to park: Public car park at the site

Useful Contacts: Arronches Tourist Board;

Telephone: +351 245 580 085;

E-mail: turismo@cm-arronches.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

CEIRA - ARRONCHES INTERACTIVE RURALITY CENTER

A museum space that preserves memories of country life in bygone days. The collection comprises more a thousand pieces related to farming, from simple hand tools to massive steam-driven machinery and mechanical balers. You can also admire very extensive collections relating to the work done by smiths and carpenters, who provided essential support for work in the fields. Videos featuring former farmhands and workers from the olive mill that now houses the museum provide a very interesting living memory.



PATHS BETWEEN WALLS

This type of path was typical in Portugal from the Alto (Upper) Alentejo northwards. Used to delimit properties, they simultaneously created unambiguous and well-defined public spaces between them, serving as communication routes throughout the territory. The walls provided a protective barrier for livestock and for farm work, as well helping to keep the arable lands clear of stones.

FORTRESS AND VALIANT TOWN OF ARRONCHES NOT TO BE MISSED

BLACK GRANITE QUARRY

Outcrops of gabbro, diorite and gabbro diorite framed in the peripheral ring of the plutonium complex of Monforte – Santa Eulália, which are known as Black Granite when exploited commercially. The entire area to the south of Arronches features large amounts of these superficial igneous materials, which offer enormous commercial potential as ornamental rocks.



VASSALO PATH AND VASSALO FOUNTAIN

This path's name clearly indicates Arronches' feudal importance; under this regime, the lords of the lands protected the inhabitants who in turn were subservient to them. The Vassalo Fountain is a fine example of eighteenth-century Baroque architecture; standing out on it, you can see the Portuguese coat-of-arms, embellished with floral and vegetal motifs. The tile panels on the sides of the fountain date from 1993; they replaced the very badly damaged tiles that still remained from when the fountain was built.



TOWN OF ARRONCHES

As indicated by the region's many caves, the human presence in the territory of Arronches dates back to prehistoric times. The town has been permanently settled since the Roman era, in the first century AD. Founded by Gaius Caligula, it was subsequently occupied by a range of different peoples who made it their home due to its important strategic location on a hill overlooking the River Caia. The name may be due to the colonisation by Andalusian peoples from the Aroche settlement. Conquered from the Moors in 1166 by King D. Afonso Henriques, it has been at the centre of many conquests and reconquests throughout Portugal's history, especially in skirmishes with neighbouring Spain.



DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES OF CAMPO MAIOR

CAMPO MAIOR

Being in Campo Maior is like breathing centuries of fights and battles, now finally dormant in the ancient memory of its walls, defensive structures, barracks and castle. Legend has it that after the prehistoric and Roman occupations, it was the Moors who built the first city. Christianised in the early thirteenth century by people from neighbouring Badajoz in the kingdom of Castile. A borderland between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile, it was forced to build a history of defences and contraband encompassing the now-peaceful fields that stretch for as far as the eye can see.

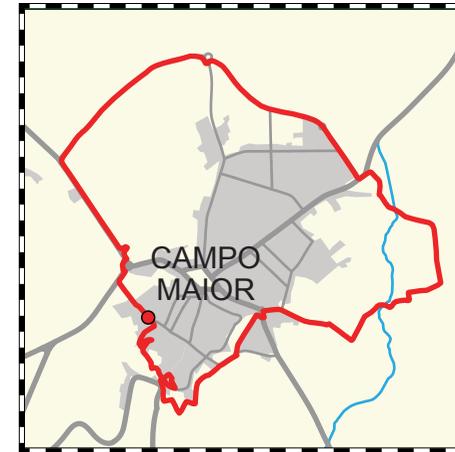
The route, which is both tranquil and accessible, helps you to relive spaces and moments in the town centre, in the ravelins and exterior walls and in the now-peaceful surrounding fields, which marked so many struggles in the past. Here too, you experience the peacefulness of the first Portuguese saint, ever-present in the memory of the people and the spaces.

Leave Campo Maior town centre by heading uphill to the highest point of the old military defences. Wander amid the barracks, former dwellings of the serving soldiers, and the ruined battlements. Pass the beautiful Monastery of the Imaculada Conceição (Immaculate Conception) and leave through the monumental space of the Portas de Santa Maria (Santa Maria Gate), also known as Portas da Vila (Town Gate). Go around the exterior walls and ravelins and go through the

fairground, heading towards the town's sports facilities. Immediately afterwards, there is a country trail that takes you through farmland and across a small stream. Keep going along past small fields and skirt around Campo Maior once again, this time via its industrial estate, where you can admire a panel bearing the image of Saint Beatriz da Silva, the first Portuguese saint and founder of the Order of the Immaculate Conception. Follow the outer ring road from which you have a fabulous view over the farmland, with the white buildings of Campo Maior in the background. Return to the town of Campo Maior by the Portalegre road and keep going through the town centre until you get back to the starting point. From here you can also visit some of the town's other hallmark heritage, not included on this walk.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR4
CMR

Route: Defensive Structures of Campo Maior

Location: Campo Maior

Distance: 7,5Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 285m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 261m Max 316m

Approximate duration: 2h to 3h

Level of difficulty: Medium

Type of surface: Country and city paths

Start and finish:

Largo do Barata, Campo Maior

Geographical coordinates:

N39°00'46" W07°04'20"

Where to park: Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area.

Useful Contacts: Campo Maior Tourist Board;

Tel.: +351 268 689 367;

E-mail: turismo@cm-campo-maior.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

TOWN OF CAMPO MAIOR

This sleepy town close to the border with Spain was a military stronghold for many years, initially during the Christian reconquest of the territory and later on many occasions of discord between Portugal and Spain. Legend has it that the town's origin, of uncertain date, was due to the desire of the country people living scattered around the area to get together and form a hamlet to protect themselves. Nowadays, the town is famous for its popular festivities, the "Festas do Povo", during which the town is richly decorated with paper flowers.



DEFENSIVE BULWARKS AND BARRACKS OF CAMPO MAIOR

The fortified bulwarks form an impressive irregularly-shaped structure with ten sides. The fortress also features a moat and a counterscarp around a fair part of it. Many of the military buildings are now used for civilian purposes such as dwellings, storage facilities and garages, but they retain their original architectural features.



DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES OF CAMPO MAIOR NOT TO BE MISSED

MONASTERY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF CAMPO MAIOR

Built in 1685 to house the Order of Franciscan Monks, the monastery was consecrated to Santo António (Saint Anthony). When the religious orders were extinguished in 1834, it was abandoned and fell into ruin. It was not until 10 June 1942 that the Order of the Immaculate Conception was restored in Portugal and the former convent was handed over to the nuns of the order for them to set up a new community, initially with 10 Spanish nuns. The major restoration work took some 26 years to complete.



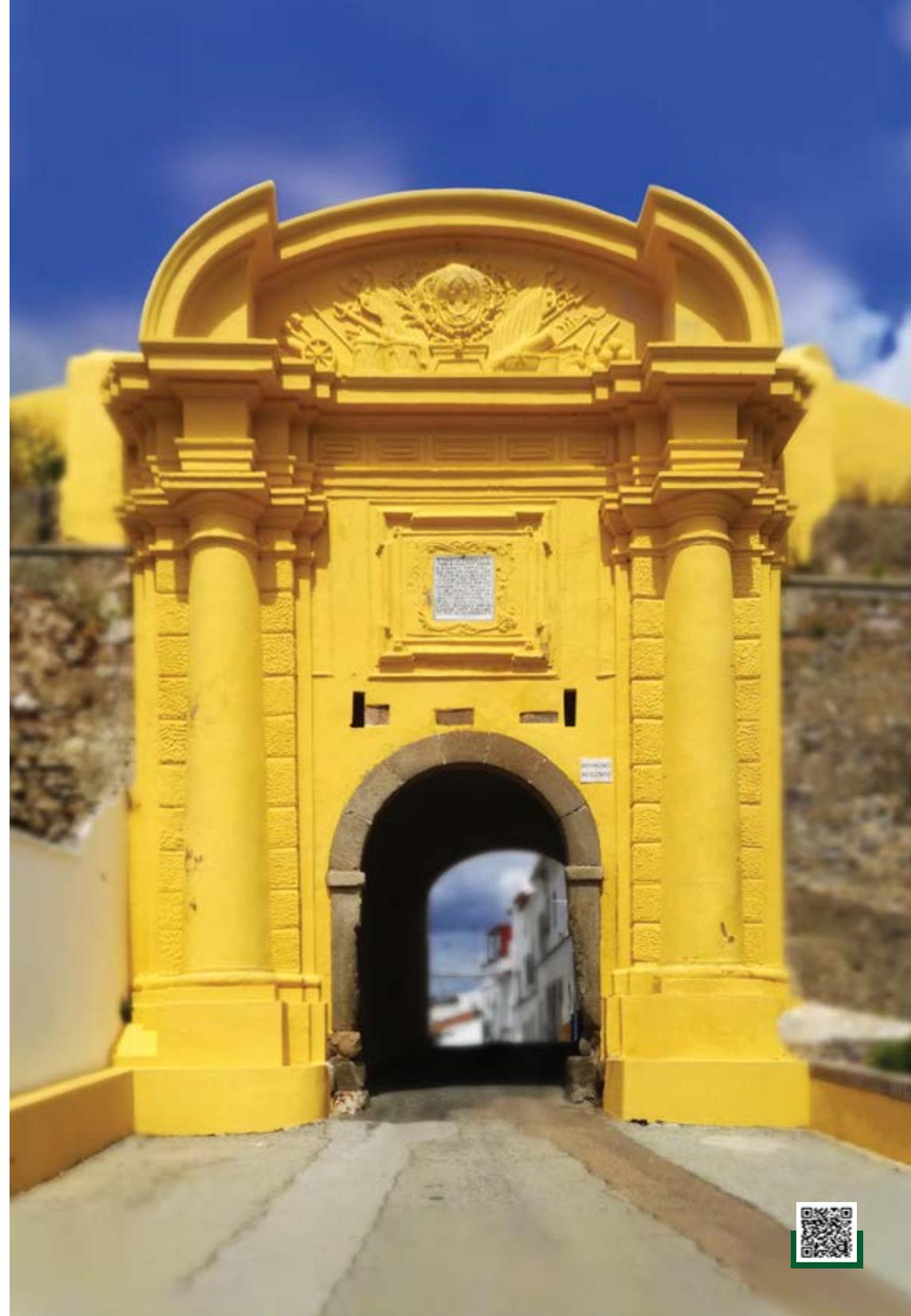
SAINT BEATRIZ DA SILVA

Born in Campo Maior in 1424, she was a maid of honour at the court of Isabella of Portugal, the wife of John II of Castile. She fled palace life and led a monastic life after Our Lady appeared to her asking her to found a cult devoted to the Immaculate Conception. She was greatly assisted in this pursuit by Queen Isabella, the Catholic daughter of her former mistress. She became known as the founder of the Order of the Immaculate Conception. Canonised by Pope Paul VI on 3 October 1976, she is the first Portuguese saint.



DELTA COFFEE

It was in Campo Maior that Rui Nabeiro, founder of the Portuguese coffee brand "Delta Cafés" began his business. When he started, he had only a small, poorly-equipped warehouse with 50m2 of storage space and just two roasters with a capacity of 30 kg. He produced his first batch in 1962, under the name "Delta Popular". Packaged in a pretty, brightly-coloured tin, it was the first to be marketed with the magic triangle of the Delta brand. Today, Delta Cafés is Portugal's biggest roaster and seller of coffee and can be found in various places around the world. Alongside its business activity, the company, which is the region's main employer, is very active in terms of social responsibility and worthy causes and is held in high esteem throughout Portugal.



LINES OF ELVAS

ELVAS

Exploring Elvas and its lines means being in one of the most important barrack cities in the whole world. Military defences from the past are today historical witnesses to bygone times; they are a delight, in part because of the perfection of their construction and the marvellous preservation of the heritage they represent; and also because of the beauty of the scenery in which they stand. Extremely rich religious heritage developed alongside this military system with many temples being built and records kept; and civilian heritage reach its peak with the construction of the majestic aqueduct.

This is a route where built heritage and the urban space are noticeably present and where nature surprises us with the fantastic scenery that we see along the way. The old country paths of the past have now given way to stretches of road that you can walk along in comfort, on your way to the fortresses that mark the start and end of the walk. The urban spaces of the city of Elvas are surprising due to the profusion of narrow streets and alleyways in the city centre and the walls, doors and bulwarks that mark the defensive enclosure.

Start next to the Graça Fortress, which is well worth visiting, and head downhill along the access road until you reach national road EN246. Turn left here and keep going along the edge of the road, next to a huge olive orchard. At the roundabout on the outer Elvas ring-road, turn right and follow the palm-lined avenue all the way to the majestic Amoreira Aqueduct. Go under the arch farthest to the left and start going uphill; go under the aqueduct again and enter through the door named after Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception). Go past the old storehouse, the Escola Agrária (Agrarian School) and keep going along the road where the barracks are until you reach the mediaeval castle, the original centre of Elvas. From

here you have a splendid 360° view over the territory and can even see Spain, right next door. Go down through the old Moorish fortifications, around the narrow alleyways and corners, pass the Church of Santa Maria (Saint Mary), built on the former site of an old Islamic mosque, and leave the Moorish enclosure through Porta de Tempre door, rebuilt in Romantic style during the nineteenth century. Go past the pillory and Church of the Domínicas (Dominicans) until you reach the cathedral. This is a fine sixteenth-century temple designed by Francisco de Arruda. Cross the Praça da República Square, go through the door of the second Islamic enclosure and turn down to your right; here you can see the old Fernandina Tower, which was used as a prison for many years. Go past the Contemporary Art Museum, which is worth visiting and pass the Chapel of the Misericórdia (Mercy). This brings you to the 25th of April Square, from which you can follow the wall on your left along Avenida Garcia da Orta until you exit through the Olivença Door. Cross the road and go all the way down Rua da Ajuda until you reach Avenida de Badajoz. Turn left here and go as far as the roundabout from which you can access, on the right, the path leading uphill to the Santa Luzia Fortress, which you can visit to round off the walk.



FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2
ELV

Route: Lines of Elvas

Location: Elvas

Distance: 6Km

Accumulated gaps in meters: 154m

Minimum and maximum altitude in meters: Min 247m Max 380m

Approximate duration: 2h

Level of difficulty: Low

Type of surface: Country paths

Start and finish:

Exterior door of the Graça Fortress

Geographical coordinates:

N58°53'35.82" W07°09'51.94"

Where to park: Public car park at the site

Useful Contacts: Elvas Tourist Office;
Tel.: 268 622 236; E-mail: turismo@cm-elvas.pt

NOT TO BE MISSED

GRAÇA FORTRESS

This magnificent work of eighteenth-century military architecture was designed by the Count of Lippe, who reformed the Portuguese army. There used to be a Spanish artillery battery here that, due to its proximity and altitude, had threatened the city of Elvas when the Spanish attacked during the Restoration War. What is particularly noteworthy about this fortress is that its architectural design enabled it to shelter a vast garrison of soldiers, weapons, munitions and supplies, despite the very limited space and difficult terrain. In the nineteenth century, it was converted for use as a military prison that operated until 1989.



MILITARY LINES OF ELVAS

This is the name given to the set of fortifications that always defended the city. You can start with the little old Moorish enclosure that protected the central part of the castle and the next ones that expanded as the urban space grew in the mediaeval period and up to the end of the first dynasty. Later, starting in the sixteenth century the fortifications continually expanded in the form of walls, moats, doors, bulwarks and ravelins, creating complementary and ever more powerful defensive structures. The hills outside also began to be used for more complementary defensive structures, while inside the urban space the Lines of Elvas were completed by adding military and religious spaces such as barracks, storehouses, hospitals, churches and chapels.

LINES OF ELVAS

NOT TO BE MISSED

AMOREIRA AQUEDUCT

Water supply is always a dilemma for any city and in Elvas only the old well in the Alcalá, dating from the Muslim period, ensured a regular supply. The city's population grew during the fifteenth century to the point where it became urgent to provide a better supply of water. Consequently, work began to build what is one of the most spectacular aqueducts in the Iberian Peninsula: 12 kilometres long, 843 arches, and five more arcades and towers, rising to a height of 31 metres. It is estimated to have taken 80 years to build and that more than 6,000 labourers were involved in its construction.



CITY OF ELVAS

With archaeological evidence dating back to the Neolithic showing that people have lived here since prehistoric times, Elvas saw its civilisation blossom during the Roman period and later extensive fortification during the Islamic period. Its mediaeval castle, lost and won so many times, became a strategically very important Portuguese stronghold. A barrack city, considered one of the biggest and best-preserved in the world, Elvas is classed as Unesco World Heritage and is renowned worldwide. Its walls, defensive lines and fortresses are an excellent witness to the military architecture of the last five centuries.



ELVAS CASTLE

The current castle is believed to have been commissioned by D. Sancho II and is based on top of a Muslim structure of which two belts of walls still remain. Despite the considerable transformations it has undergone throughout history, the castle maintains its mediaeval military structure and is an example of the overlaying of functions and evolution of strategic/military design with each successive transformation. In the early twentieth century, at a time when it was in quite bad condition, a civic movement worked to recuperate it and it was classed as the first National Monument in 1906. Today it is an excellent leisure space.



WELCOME TO THE ALENTEJO

However long a walk is likely to be, it always begins with one small step. The Alentejo Tourism Board took "that step" when it began restructuring the entire region with a sustained and harmonised offering of Walking Routes in the TransAlentejo Network, in which each of the 47 municipal council participated by contributing the route that best dignifies their respective territories. The work of a vast team that gathered contributions, studied trails, compiled content and created the

final product perfectly deployed in the terrain and supported by the promotional and support documentation for the walkers. And this project, which is a work in progress, still has considerable room for growth in each of the municipalities. The Municipal Walking Route Network will form the basis of the Alentejo Walking Tourism Destination regional offering. All of this because we want your experience in the Alentejo to be as fulfilling as possible, so here is our challenge to you: Come and walk in the Alentejo!

"Whoever walks alone will get there faster, but whoever walks with others will go much farther."

Clarice Lispector

SUPPORT





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