





galicia

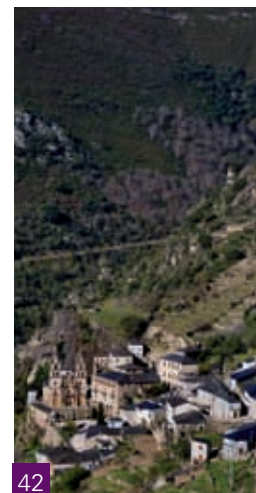
magical shrines



XUNTA DE GALICIA

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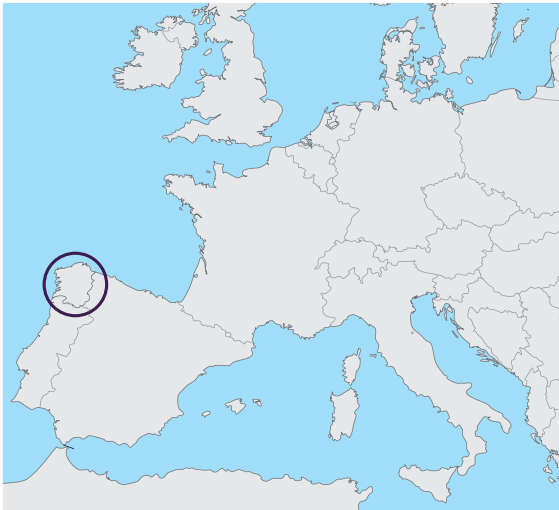
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# MAGICAL GALICIA

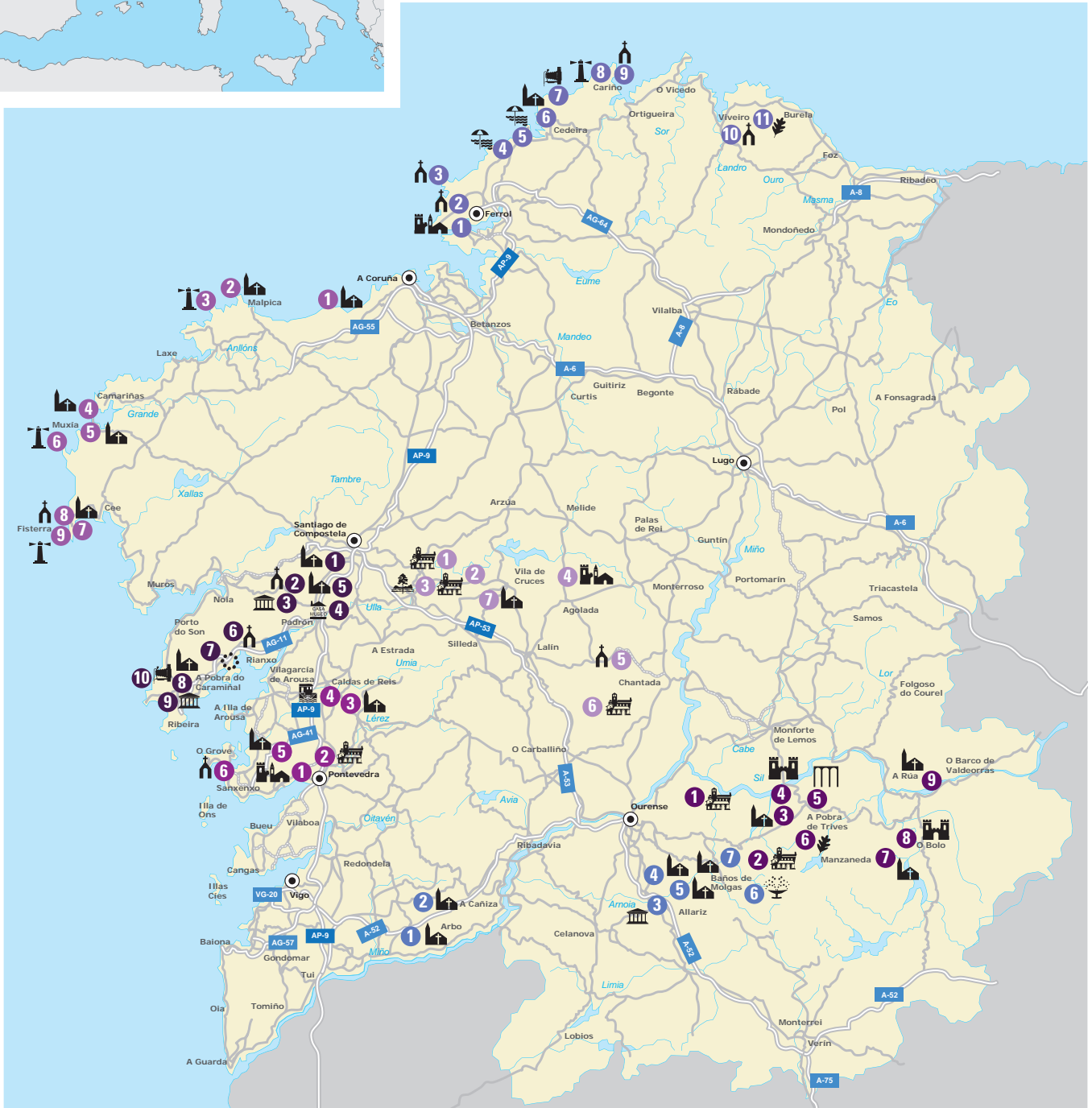
Imagine a land where the water from the springs works miracles, where young women approach the waves in order to bear child, where stones have a healing power, where the sun rises and falls every day in its sea... Imagine a land where from the very beginning its inhabitants sensed something magical and special, where the aroma of the healing plants and the incense blend into a different aura. If you are able to imagine all this, then you will be able to cover the Magical Sanctuaries of Galicia: temples located on unique spots where peculiar religious rituals intermingle with the most ancient pagan legends.

Come to our temples and make three wishes on the Santo André de Teixido Route and other sanctuaries in the North of Galicia, travel through the holiest places in A Costa da Morte, follow the same sea route that the Apostle's remains had to follow to reach Galicia... Discover truly magical places, not only due to where they are but also due to the rituals which surround them. This indeed is a sincere invitation to purify one's soul, to escape from everyday life and to become absorbed in a world of mystery, but above all, one of peace.



# Magical sanctuaries

Can you keep my secret?














Motorway / Dual carriageway	
High capacity road	
Others	



# Proposed experiences











## The "three wishes" trip

1	Magdalena neighbourhood		Historic ensemble
2	Chamorro hermitage		Hermitage
3	Santa Comba hermitage		Hermitage
4	Pantín beach		Beach
5	Vilarrube beach		Beach
6	Santo André de Teixido sanctuary		Sanctuary
7	Vixía Herbeira viewpoint		Viewpoint
8	Cape Ortegal		Lighthouse
9	San Xiao de Trebo chapel		Hermitage
10	The grotto of Lourdes		Grotto
11	Retorta grove		Protected nature reserve

## Atlantic sanctuaries

1	A Nosa Señora dos Milagres sanctuary in Caión		Sanctuary
2	Santo Hadrián do Mar church		Church
3	Punta Nariga lighthouse		Lighthouse
4	San Xíán de Moraime church		Church
5	The Virgin of A Barca sanctuary		Sanctuary
6	Cape Touriñán		Lighthouse
7	Santa María das Areas church		Church
8	San Guillermo hermitage		Hermitage
9	Cape Fisterra lighthouse		Lighthouse

## Literary sanctuaries

1	A Escravitude sanctuary		Sanctuary
2	Santiagoño do Monte chapel		Chapel
3	Camilo José Cela, Marquise of Iria Flavia, Foundation		Museum
4	Rosalía de Castro's museum house		Museum house
5	Santiago church		Church
6	The Virgin of Guadalupe chapel		Chapel
7	Large and small Neixón Celtic settlements		Castro culture
8	Santiago da Pobra do Deán church		Church
9	The Valle-Inclán museum		Museum
10	A Curotiña viewpoint		Viewpoint








## The heart of magical Galicia

1	San Salvador de Camanzo monastery		Monastery
2	San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery		Monastery
3	The river Toxa waterfall		Natural area
4	Agolada old traditional market		Historic ensemble
5	Nosa Señora of Mount Faro hermitage		Hermitage
6	Santa María A Real de Oseira monastery		Monastery
7	Nosa Señora do Corpiño sanctuary		Sanctuary



## Water and... oil miracles

1	Pontevedra's old quarter		Historic ensemble
2	San Salvador de Lérez monastery		Monastery
3	Nosa Señora de Amil Miracles sanctuary		Sanctuary
4	The river Barosa mills		Mill
5	A Nosa Señora das Cabezas de Armenteira sanctuary		Sanctuary
6	Nosa Señora da Lanzada chapel		Chapel

## Coffins, dances and holy waters

1	San Xosé de Ribarteme church		Church
2	Santa María da Franqueira church		Church
3	Santa Clara de Allariz Convent Sacred Art Museum		Museum
4	Santa Mariña de Augas Santas church		Church
5	Xunqueira de Ambía Collegiate church		Collegiate church
6	Baños de Molgas		Springs
7	A Nosa Señora de Monte Medo sanctuary		Sanctuary

## Sanctuaries and vineyards

1	San Pedro de Rocas monastery		Monastery
2	Santa María de Montederramo monastery		Monastery
3	Os Remedios sanctuary		Sanctuary
4	Castro Caldelas fortress		Fortress
5	The river Bibeí bridge		Bridge
6	Rozabales grove		Protected nature reserve
7	Santa María das Ermidas sanctuary		Sanctuary
8	O Bolo castle		Castle
9	San Miguel de Xagoaza church		Church

# The “three wishes” trip

Can you keep my secret?



Santo André de Teixido

This route along the jagged coastline of the provinces of A Coruña and Lugo will lead us to magical sanctuaries which rise where land and sea come to meet. Small in size but great taking into account the devotion they inspire, at each one we shall respect tradition and follow the rituals so that the three wishes we will make as we cover this spectacular route may come true.



- 1 Magdalena neighbourhood
- 2 Chamorro hermitage
- 3 Santa Comba hermitage
- 4 Pantín beach
- 5 Vilarrube beach
- 6 Santo André de Teixido sanctuary
- 7 Vixía Herbeira viewpoint
- 8 Cape Ortegal
- 9 San Xiao de Trebo chapel
- 10 The grotto of Lourdes
- 11 Retorta grove

Day 1

## From Ferrol to Santa Comba hermitage

We begin our itinerary in the city of Ferrol. A walk around the Magdalena neighbourhood will help us understand the history of this industrial, fishing town.

Along the way, don't miss the balconies at the Herrera gardens from where you will have a magnificent view of the Arsenal, an outstanding military complex which dates back to the 18th century as one of the most important works of engineering from the Enlightenment period. Also take a minute to savour an aperitif at one of the bars or terraces by the port while you go over the day's itinerary which will lead you through one of the most magical places in this spot of northern Galicia.

### The first wish is for the Virgin of Chamorro

Our first stop takes us to high rocky grounds where we will find the Chamorro hermitage (small chapel). It is said that this sanctuary owes its name to the devotion the fishermen have for the Virgin. When

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** Ferrol.

**Finishing point:** Viveiro.

**Days:** 3

**Approximate distance:** 120 km

**Dates for "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/ processions):**

- › Santo André de Teixido: The main festivity takes place on September 8<sup>th</sup>, but throughout the year lesser known ones are held (Whitsuntide Friday, Saturday and Sunday and June 24<sup>th</sup>).
- › The Virgin of Chamorro: Easter Monday.
- › San Xiao de Trebo: January 7<sup>th</sup>.

they were afraid to perish at sea they would yell "xa morro" ("I'm dying now") so that their Patron Virgin would save them. Surrounded by this faith and the admiration, enter the sanctuary, light a candle and make your first wish within this magical route. We now head the Covas beaches, towards a small island by the coast where the Santa Comba



San Martiño de Xubia monastery



Hermitage awaits us. As it is orientated to the north, the beach is windy and wild yet ideal for walks at any time of the year. This is a place for pilgrims since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They would pay homage to the Virgin Saint every last Sunday in July. The original route to Santo André is marked with the symbol of a fish (the sardine which the Saint ate during his trip) and at Narón it joins the better known and popular route which starts off at the Monastery of Saint Martin of Xubia, the area's Romanesque jewel, at O Couto. Pilgrims cover over 50 km to the Santo André de Teixido sanctuary. It is not hard to imagine how the force of the wind and the picturesque landscapes would accompany the pilgrims but if you are in good shape we recommend you stop imagining and find out for yourself.

*Who does not go while alive  
to Santo André,  
will go three times after death.*

Santa Comba hermitage





## Day 2 From Valdoviño to Cariño

Setting off by car, on our way to Cedeira, keeping the sea within our sight, we pass by Valdoviño, Pantín and Vilarrube. Whatever the time of year or the weather forecast, take some time to leave your footprints on the soft sand of these wild beaches. You will feel isolated and in complete union with the fierce sea by these coasts. Nearby, you will also come across typical inns where you may try some barnacles or razors (seafood) and to bring out their true flavour sip some of the local wines with them.

### The second wish at the Santo André de Teixido Saint's fountain

Still with the sound of the sea beating in our head, we shall continue towards Cedeira and drive up the Capelada mountain range to Teixido in order to contemplate its temple which lies at the edge of one of the highest cliffs in Europe. The best way to approach it, by combining feelings of emotion and vertigo, is to follow the path on foot from the famous stone cross of the *Carrís* Christ. In order to begin the rituals tied to this pilgrimage, you should carry a stone and leave it at one of the *milladoiros* (small piles of stones) which you will find by the cross or the very path. Having fulfilled this task, when the Final Judgement Day arrives, God will know that you have been here for as He promised the Saint, "Remain here Saint Andrew for alive or dead all will come to see you". This is why it is said that whoever doesn't visit the sanctuary while alive, shall do so in the form of a reptile after death.

Once one gets to the village, as one makes one's way down the winding slope in search of the church, one will come across, on both sides of the way, the traditional stands selling biscuits, images, medallions and other symbols among which the *sanandreses* and the bunches of *herba de namorar* ("falling-in-love grass") stand out. The *sanandreses* are most typical souvenirs one can take back home from Teixido. They are little colourful ornaments made from baked bread which represent various aspects related to the Saint: his boat, the sardine He ate during his trip... The women will tell you that they protect the place where they are kept. The "falling-in-love grass", also known as the sea coronation, is said to have magical powers related to love. The younger, single pilgrims go as far as they have to pick it so as to fix problems in their love life or to find their significant other.

As you make your way down between the little houses, you will start to see the tiled roof, the steeple and the whitened walls of this 18<sup>th</sup> century sanctuary. Legend has it that the Apostle Saint Andrew's boat capsized here and turned into stone, the same as what happened to the Virxe da Barca

"Figuriñas de pan" (Bread figurines)



Santo André de Teixido sanctuary





in Muxía. If you look carefully, you will be able to make out the stone boat by the cliffs.

Inside the church, the Baroque altarpiece and the images of the Patron Saint are always surrounded by flowers and miniature boats for the protection of their crews. The feeling of respect which this holy place gives is lit up by dozens of candles which shine before the votive offerings. These wax figurines in the shape of a body part are placed here to thank the Saint for His help.

While taking in this scene, it is time to carry on with the rituals in order to pray for our second wish to come true. Light a candle and walk to the neighbouring Fountain of the Saint or Fountain of the three spouts. Make your wish and throw a piece of bread into the fountain. If it floats, it means that your wish will come true and that the following year you will be alive and able to visit the Saint again.

### Before us one of the highest cliffs in Europe

The sunset tells us that this second day is coming to an end. We shall do so by offering a gift to our senses. At Vixía Herbeira, a viewpoint located on the top of one of Europe's highest cliffs, we will be able to contemplate the cliffs which are over 600 m high. As we continue towards cape Ortegá, one will be amazed by the force of the Aguillóns: spiky rocks which rise from the sea and where the waves clash with all their might. If you happen to be here during a storm, you will have the chance to see the strength of the sea in its entire splendour, without a doubt, a feeling you will never be able to forget. After contemplating the array of colours in the sky over this stretch of coast, the craggiest in Spain, we will finish our day in the little fishing village of Cariño. On our way we will see the San Xiao de





The town of Ortigueira

Trebo chapel and when we get to the port, we may indulge in an unforgettable gastronomic experience by digging into a ray fish stew or scrambled eggs with sea urchins and algae, two typical dishes which say much about this land.

### Day 3 From Ortigueira to Viveiro

On this last day we head towards Viveiro. On our way we shall come to Ortigueira, where its old town and port beckon us to go for a stroll. Further ahead, at O Barqueiro, a charming fishing village, it is well worth our while to take a detour and stop at Estaca de Bares. This is a unique place: the northern most spot on the Iberian Peninsula where the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Cantabrian Sea meet. This is one of nature's true spectacles. Once we get to Viveiro, after covering its beautiful historical

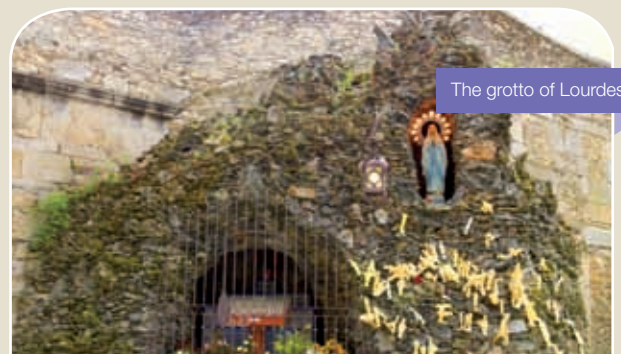
centre, we will make our way to the convent of the Conceptionists to find the grotto of Lourdes.

### The third and last wish at the grotto of Lourdes

This sacred place is a replica of the sanctuary of the French Virgin. The image of the Virgin is situated in a display case on above hundreds of candles and wax figurines which seem to be climbing up the wall to find the best position to ask the Virgin Saint for her favours. We too should light a candle and make our third and last wish along our route.

We recommend ending this itinerary by getting in touch with nature once more by taking a calm and relaxing stroll through the Retorta Grove, surrounded by 80 m eucalyptus trees which seem to tickle the sky with their branches: it's like a forest full of giants. Now, all we need to do is to cross our fingers and hope our three wishes soon come true...

*May the Saint who brought upon  
you your illness,  
give you back your wellness,  
by God's power again,  
and Saint Andrew's, amen.*



The grotto of Lourdes

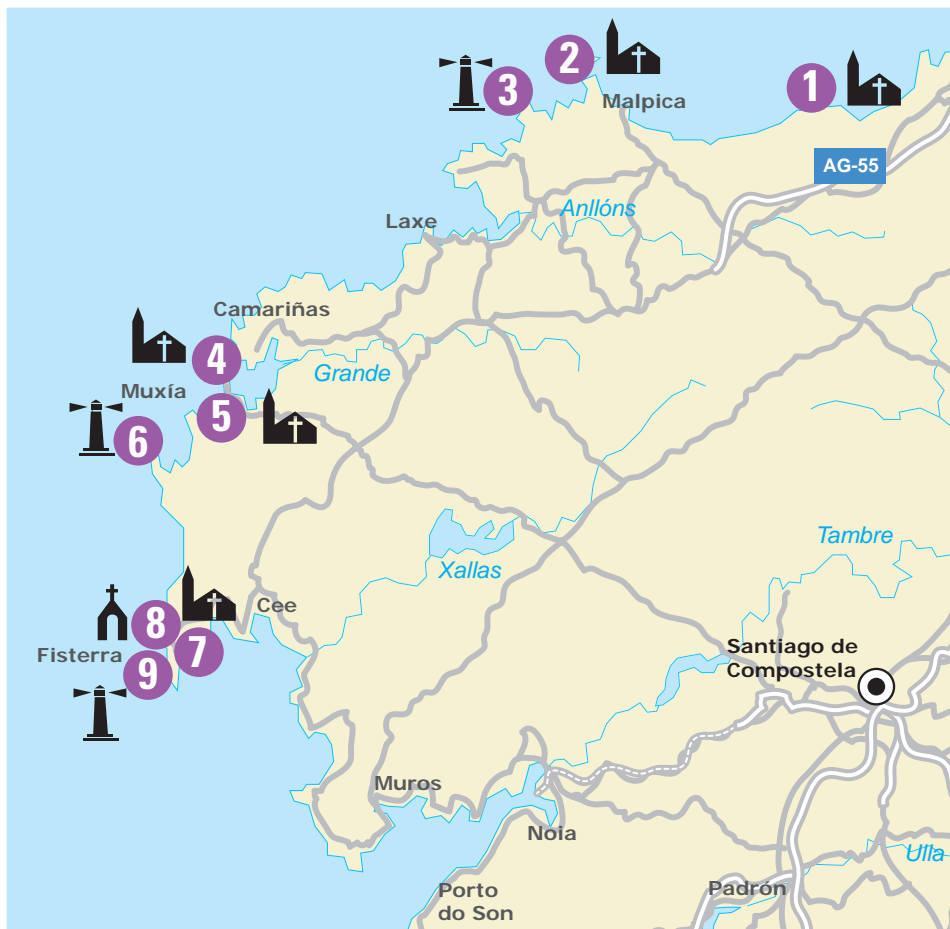
# Atlantic sanctuaries

Can you keep my secret?



This trip along the “Costa da Morte” (Death Coast) invites us to learn about the legends, beliefs, rituals and sea processions which unfold along a coast which is full of sanctuaries which stare at the sea from privileged viewpoints.





- 1 A Nosa Señora dos Milagres sanctuary in Caión
- 2 Santo Hadrián do Mar church
- 3 Punta Nariga lighthouse
- 4 San Xíán de Moraime church
- 5 A Virxe da Barca sanctuary
- 6 Cape Tourián
- 7 Santa María das Areas church
- 8 San Guillerme hermitage
- 9 Cape Fisterra lighthouse

## Day 1 From Caión to Muxía

We shall begin the first day in Caión, a former old whaling town, where we will find the Sanctuary of Nosa Señora dos Milagres. From this hillock one is able to enjoy an unbeatable panoramic view. The town is surrounded by a rough sea which seems to eat away at the little peninsula during every storm. It's easy to imagine what the life of the fishermen was like years ago, as they would have to fight against the sea and the wind in search of a great whale in their boats.

### A healing Virgin

The procession at Nosa Señora dos Milagres begins on the Sunday before September 8<sup>th</sup>. For a whole week, thousands of people from all over the area come to the sanctuary to ask the virgin to heal them or to thank her for the divine intervention she has achieved for them. Hundreds of them arrive on foot and some even circle the nineteenth-century

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** A Laracha.

**Finishing point:** Fisterra.

**Days:** 2

**Approximate distance:** 135 km

**Dates for the "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/ procession):**

- › Miracles of Caión: September 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
- › Santo Hadrián do Mar: The Sunday after June 16<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Señora da Barca: The Sunday after September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- › Santo Cristo de Fisterra: Resurrection Easter Sunday.

temple on their knees. Tradition tells us that the holy spring performs miracles on one's skin, so, as we are here, we should dampen a piece of cloth and then leave it to dry so all our skin problems may disappear. If we happen to be here during the

procession days, we will be able to see a big white mantle surrounding the spring and on any other day in the year we can go down to the parish church and approach the altar of the virgin to see the very same mantle.

### The Saint who fought against the snakes

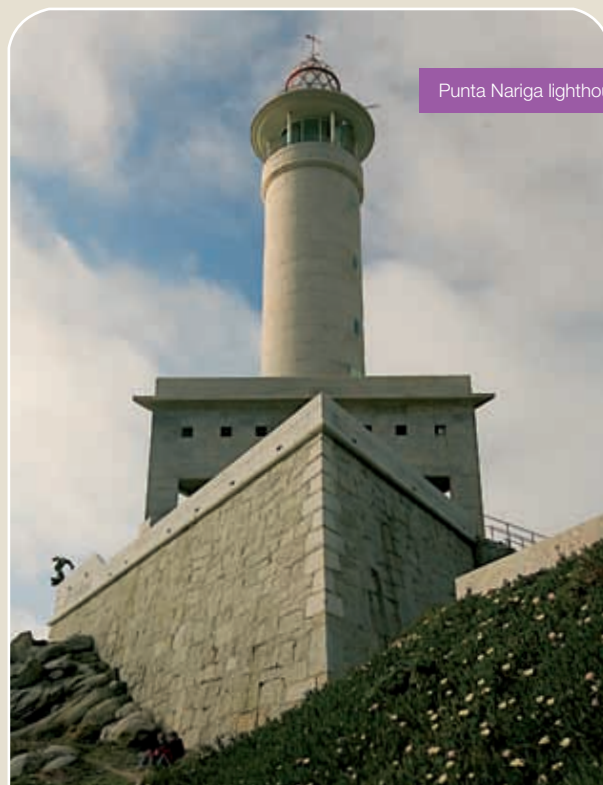
We shall now head to Malpica de Bergantiños. In fact, to wash in holy water is a ritual that the faithful who come to the sixteenth-century sanctuary of Santo Hadrián do Mar also follow. The simple solitary temple rises upon the cape bearing the same name. It is closely related to the sea and is near to the Sisarga isles. On the main day of the festivities, the procession heads out of the town of Malpica with the image of the saint early in the morning. The 3 km long old track becomes full of pilgrims who accompany the image along the sandy beach by the coast. Santo Hadrián gets his fame for performing miracles from the fact that he rid this area of a plague of snakes. Tradition says that from the moment he terminated the last one, the only reptile to be seen on the cape is the silhouette of one on one, of the rocks at the foot of the hermitage.

### Where rocks resemble witches and turtles

As we leave behind the peninsula of Malpica, and before we get to the next magical sanctuary, we are fortunate enough to come across several emblematic spots like the original and modern punta Nariga lighthouse. It was designed by the architect from Pontevedra, César Portela, and it represents an amazing stone ship heading into the ocean. We should also note the rock formation surrounding it. The wind and the saltpetre carve the huge granite masses producing natural sculptures in the shape of witches, bears or turtles. From here we can make out the Sisarga isles and towards the south Cape Roncudo where the barnacle fishermen from Corme risk their lives, between the rocks and the threatening waves, in their search for this

*Christ Saint of Fisterra  
Christ with the golden beard  
I come from a distant land  
Oh Saint, just to see you face.*

*I come from “A Virxe da Barca”,  
I have rocked the stone,  
I have also seen thee  
Christ Saint of Fisterra.*



highly prized seafood. Don't forget to try some of this culinary treasure from Roncudo, for many the best in Galicia, at one of the local taverns. Without a doubt, this is the best way to feel the taste of the sea on one's palate. If we stop at Corme, we should take the opportunity to visit the Pedra da Serpe (The Snake Stone), as Santo Hadrián also came here to free the area from the plague. One of the snakes was turned into stone, and for Christian purposes, a stone cross was placed by it.

### Bream, sea bass and razor clams on the Costa da Morte

Carrying on southwards and before coming to Muxía, the "land of monks", we will stop at the Romanesque monastery of St Julian of Moraime. This is an ancient Benedictine monastery which is of great beauty and has been standing since the twelfth century.

Once we get to Muxía and to bring an end to this day's trip, we suggest a walk by the port as the sun sets over the rough sea of the Costa da Morte. There, we can dine at one of the many restaurants: bream, sea bass cooked in salt or razor clams are just a few of their delicacies.

Santo Hadrián "romaría"



Fisterra lighthouse





On the second day of our route, we begin to understand why Muxía is known as “the bride of the sea”. Head to the Sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca (Virgin of the Boat) which will surely be a moving experience. Imposing and majestic, it rises over the very rocks which are licked by the sea. Before entering the temple, take some time to enjoy the view which will help remember the stories which surround these great stone masses.

### Under the “Pedra (rock) dos Cadrís” we go

Tradition tells us how the Virgin Mary arrived on a boat to Muxía to encourage the Apostle St James to continue his struggle to evangelize Galicia. We will now find the boat turned in to the stones which surround us. We can see the “Pedra de Abalar” (The rocking stone), which would have been the hull of the Virgin’s boat; also the “Pedra dos Cadrís” (The stone of the rump), the sails; and the “Pedra do Timón” (The stone of the rudder). Curious customs surround these magical stones: traditionally, pilgrims would stand on each side of the large stone in order to make it move from one side to another, and the “Pedra dos Cadrís” could heal kidney or back problems if one went under it up to nine times. If you have any health issues related to the former, try performing the ritual and you will see how the issue will disappear thanks to the healing power of this rock.

Now that we are pervaded by the spirituality which these huge, powerful rocks release, it is time to approach the entrance of the sanctuary. We can already sense the typical smell of incense and wax so common in places like this. From the railing in the entrance, we can make out at the back the Virgin’s chamber surrounded by dozens of small boats. All of these are offerings which so many fisherman have left to thank their Patron Saint for delivering them home safely after being at sea during a storm.

After feeling the devotion and religious aura of this magical place, we head







to the spot situated further west on Spanish continental soil: Cape Touriñán. Here, at the very end of the isthmus, we will feel the wind blowing on our face as our skin comes to life and we feel the peace and solitude of this corner of the world. Only an immense ocean separates us from the American continent. The waves strike the rocks with great power. One feels insignificant under this intimate and daunting experience.

### Say farewell to the sun at the end of the world

Once we leave Touriñán behind, we head towards the Greco-Roman world's Finis Terrae (Land's End) only to find even more experiences tied to myths and legends by the sea. Our next stop is Santa María das Areas church, a twelfth-century Romanesque temple situated on the path that takes us to the Fisterra lighthouse. In one of the chapels, we will be able to contemplate the Christ with the Golden Beard. Legend says that the sea brought him to this

town. One cannot help but approach the image to see if what the legend says is true: It is said that this Christ's hail and nails grow... Could this be true? After the intrigue and mystery of the Christ of the Golden Beard, on our way to "land's end" we must stop at the ruins of St William's hermitage, yet another place full of magical powers related to fertility.

Of a pre-Romanesque origin, this chapel was built on an ancient Celtic fortress where some locate the mythical Ara Solis, the altar for worshipping the sun. Another element with a great ethnographic interest is the so-called "cama de pedra" (stone bed), a place where until recent times, couples would come in the hope of being able to bear a child. From this hermitage, one has a splendid view of Cape Fisterra and its mythical lighthouse on the tip, and the road there is also easily made out.

The end to this itinerary could not be more perfect: to see the sun disappear at the end of the world is priceless.

*Our Lady of "A Barca",  
Our Lady please help me,  
For I am lost at sea,  
And there is no oarsman to row.*



Santa María das Areas church



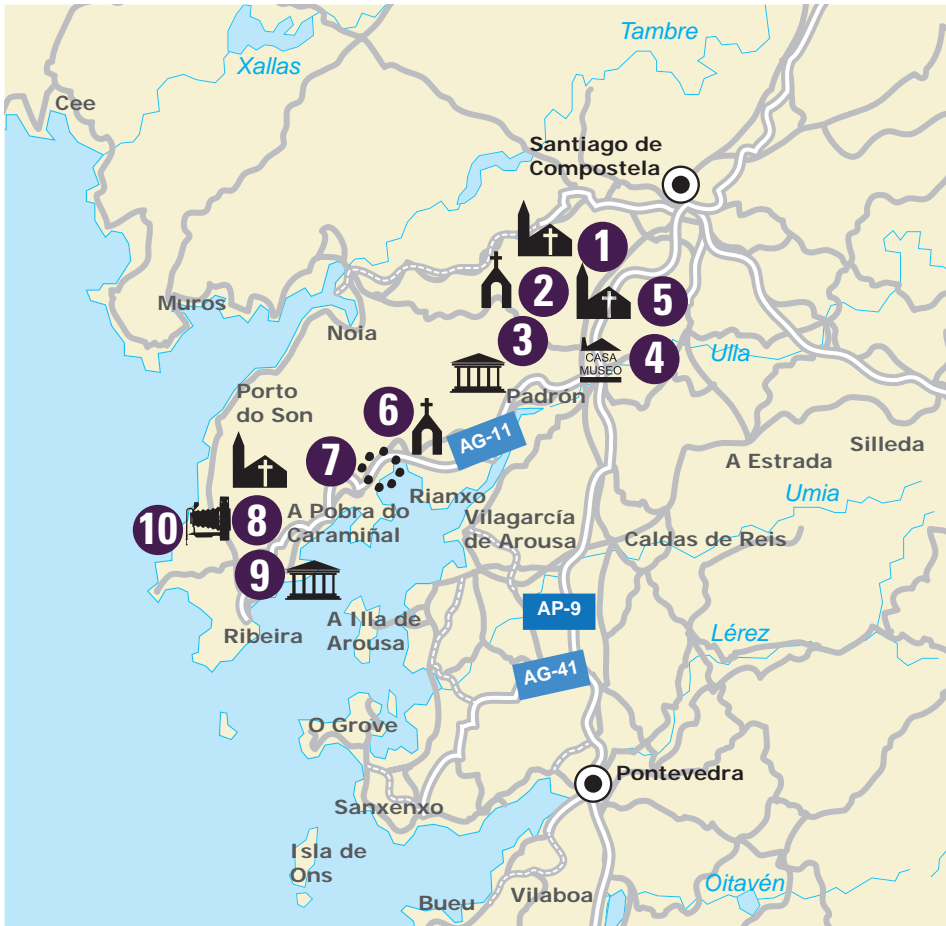
# Literary sanctuaries

## Can you keep my secret?

A Curotiña viewpoint



All the way along this northern route of the Arousa estuary we will discover incredible magical and spiritual spots. Many of them were the birthplace of many great Galician writers. If we follow the tracks of the Apostle Santiago, we will come to this land ready to soak in its literature, its legends and its miracles.



- 1 A Escravitude sanctuary
- 2 Santiaguíño do Monte chapel
- 3 Camilo José Cela, Marquise of Iria Flavia, Foundation
- 4 Rosalía de Castro's museum house
- 5 Santiago church
- 6 The Virgin of Guadalupe chapel
- 7 Large and small Neixón Celtic settlements
- 8 Santiago da Pobra do Deán church
- 9 The Valle-Inclán museum
- 10 A Curotiña viewpoint

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** Padrón.

**Finishing point:** Ribeira.

**Days:** 2

**Approximate distance:** 49 km

**Dates for the "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/processions):**

- › Santiaguíño do Monte: July 25<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Señora de Guadalupe: The Sunday after September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- › The Divine Nazarene: The third Sunday in September.

### Other interesting details:

- › Camilo José Cela Foundation. Contact number: 981812424/5 ([www.fundacioncela.com](http://www.fundacioncela.com)).
- › The Rosalía de Castro museum house: Closed on Mondays. Contact number: 981811204 ([www.rosaliadecastro.com](http://www.rosaliadecastro.com)).
- › Barbanza Archaeological Centre: Open from Thursday to Sunday. Contact number: 981843810 ([www.centroarqueoloxicodobarbanza.org](http://www.centroarqueoloxicodobarbanza.org)).
- › The Valle-Inclán museum: Closed on Mondays. Contact number: 981831662 ([www.aproba.org/es/turismo/museovalle-inclan](http://www.aproba.org/es/turismo/museovalle-inclan)).

Day 1

## From A Escravitude sanctuary to Rianxo

We will begin our first day of this itinerary at the Sanctuary of *A Escravitude*, an eighteenth-century

temple where many people come drawn by the fame of the miraculous waters of its fountain. The temple rises, regal and impressive, just by the main entrance. Once one gets there, one should not miss the chance to drink from the spring nor should one





avoid going in to admire the Baroque altarpiece or going for a walk in the wood behind the sanctuary. Then, set off towards Padrón, a place where, according to tradition, the remains of the Apostle St. James arrived.

### Among the stones and magical waters at Santiaguíño do Monte hermitage

Once we are close to Padrón, it is worthwhile to go up to the ermida de Santiaguíño do Monte. The road that leads us up to the temple goes through lush vegetation, which makes the place, where the Saint supposedly preached to the pagans for the last time before returning to Palestine, acquire a magical halo. After years of unsuccessful preaching, the Virgin Mary appeared before him on this very spot to encourage him to continue. The rocks and the fountain which are kept here are said to be miraculous by the devout as it was St. James himself who made the waters gush by tapping the rocks with his staff after a pagan woman had questioned the power of God. During procession days people would climb the rocks on their knees and pass through one of the two openings in the rocks one has to do during one's lifetime or, if not, after death. If you still have enough energy, you should try it.

### Camilo José Cela and Rosalía de Castro, inspired by these lands

On the other hand, Padrón also allows us to meet two essential Galician writers such as the 1989 Nobel Prize winner Camilo José Cela, who has a Foundation by the Iria Flavia collegiate church, or the distinguished poet from the Galician Literary Revival Period, Rosalía de Castro, who spent her last days at the *Matanza* (Slaughter) House. This manor, currently turned into a museum, still maintains the bench the writer would sit and write or



Santiaguíño do Monte chapel



O Pedrón



*The Virgin of Guadalupe,  
As she walks along the shore.  
Barefoot on the sand  
She looks like a Rianxeira (Woman  
from Rianxo)*

*Small waves come,  
Small waves come and go  
Don't go on board Rianxeira  
As you are bound to get seasick.*

*Rianxeira Fragment*

await inspiration. It was not until after her death that the beautiful camellias, which are in full blossom in spring and among which there is a variety named after the poet, were planted.

Before departing from Padrón, it is worthwhile to go for a walk along its Breakwater by the river Sar, which will lead you to St. James' (Santiago) church. Inside one can contemplate the famous "pedrón", where the Apostle's boat was tied to. And, of course, don't forget to taste the famous peppers, which have made the town known to the world, and as the saying goes "some are hot and others are not".

### **A magical night filled with sparklers and hymns in honour of the Virgin Moreniña de Rianxo**

If we follow the literary road towards the southeast, we will get to the fishing town of Rianxo, the land of other distinguished Galicians like Castelao, Rafael Dieste and Manuel Antonio the so called "poet of the sea". In Rianxo's Main Square the seventeenth-century Sanctuary of Nosa Señora de Guadalupe, referred to as the *Virxe Moreniña* (The Dark-skinned Virgin) by the people of Rianxo, awaits us. This Virgin plays the leading role during one of the most



Iria Flavia Collegiate church





BRADOMIN

important festivities in the area during the month of September. At around this time, the *Moreniña* sets out on a sea procession with all the fleet up the cove of Rianxo covered in petals. As the great finale to the festivities, the most vibrant moment awaits us when, well into the night, the town becomes illuminated by thousands of sparklers carried by the people of Rianxo and the visitors. Surrounded by this magical atmosphere, one finds it inevitable to join in the singing of the well-known *Rianxeira*.

Without a doubt, the best way to bring this day to an end is to savour some Rianxo little sardines or some mussels from the Arousa Estuary at one of the taverns in town watching the sun set and listening to the interesting stories which the fisherman have to tell.

Day 2

## From the Neixón Celtic settlements to the Curotiña

On day two of our trip while still with the sound of *Ondiñas veñen* (the chorus of the *Rianxeira* song) buzzing in our head, we make our way to Boiro and we make our first stop at the archaeological grounds of the Castros (Celtic settlements) de Neixón. It is situated on a small peninsula at the end of the Arousa estuary and it is one of the most important archaeological sites in the North West of the Iberian Peninsula. We should take our time to cover this little peninsula and take in the marvellous spectacle the estuary has in store for us. From this point, we will be able to contemplate a magnificent panoramic view, not only of the estuary, but also of the fishing town of Rianxo. Nearby the *castros* (Celtic settlements), we will come across the Barbanza Archaeological Centre where we can find out more about the traces the first settlers of this land left behind.

## Coffins for the Pobra do Caramiñal Nazarene

We shall continue our route following the coastline towards A Pobra do Caramiñal. There we will stumble upon the *Divino Nazareno* (The Divine Nazarene) at the Santiago de Deán church. The *Nazareno* or Shroud





pilgrimage, on the third Sunday in September, is a procession which has taken place since the fifteenth century. Thousands of faithful followers take part in it fervently as they march alongside the empty coffins which lead the way in front of the devout who escaped death thanks to the divine intervention of the *Nazareno*. Their families, dressed in purple habits, carry the coffins and huge candles with wax votive offerings tied to them. It is an amazing sight, even for the most sceptical, where it is plain to see that life goes before death. If your visit does not coincide with the procession, you should nonetheless enter the church during afternoon mass if possible. Apart from lighting a candle to ask the *Nazareno* to hear your prayers, visit the Alba (Dawn) chapel which is one of the oldest and it is where the fisherman would go to hear mass after returning from sea at dawn, hence its name.

The best way to continue our visit is to go for a stroll in the town centre: see the docks, where boats rest until another day at sea begins; cross its impeccable tree-lined avenue or even stop for a bite at one of the terraces which could keep you there longer than you had intended, but whatever you do, do not miss the chance to take in this quiet fishing town's atmosphere.

*You are to sing  
Little bagpipe girl  
You are to sing  
That I am dying of sorrow*

*Sing child  
By the fountain  
Sing, I will give you  
Bread rolls from the pot*

*Cantares Gallegos – Rosalía de Castro*

### Valle-Inclán's traces

We shall stretch our walk up to the Bermúdez tower, where the Valle-Inclán museum is, so as not to abandon our magical-literary theme. Proof of this is that the author, known as the father of the theatre of the grotesque, would attend the *Nazareno* procession in his time as he lived in the town for several years. This Renaissance style building is another symbol of A Pobra do Caramiñal. Here, at the museum, one can grasp the feel of Valle-Inclán as one can see some of his personal items as well as some of his first editions several of which were set in this town like *Sonata de Otoño* or *Divinas Palabras* (*Autumn Sonata* or *Divine Words*)

### The immense Arousa estuary from A Curotiña viewpoint

A perfect end to this itinerary would be to go up to the Curotiña viewpoint. As we take the road that heads there we are not to miss the Moldes stone cross. Here, the Virgin Mary, with Her back to the restless sea, is a witness to the legend which speaks of how long ago the town of Valverde used to be here but its people were so selfish that a terrible curse fell upon the town. It is said that the Virgin shed a teardrop because of their behaviour and so, the wind began to blow and buried the town under a mountain of sand. It is now what is known as the Corrubedo dunes, which are a part of one of the most spectacular areas of the North West, the Corrubedo natural park dunes and the Carregal and Vixán lagoons.

When we reach the top, among wild horses and the typical vegetation of the highlands, as we lean on the stone rail, our eyes will relax as they move towards the powerful Atlantic horizon. On a clear day, we can see Fisterra and even the Cies Isles. It is well worthwhile to go up to A Curotiña even if it is at the end of the day to contemplate the colours of the sunset on the calm waters of the Arousa estuary.



# The heart of magical Galicia

Can you keep my secret?

San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery



This route runs along the paths of the heart of Galicia, where the provinces of Pontevedra, Lugo and Ourense come together, in order to lead us on a mystical trip stopping at the magical sanctuaries situated in beautiful natural areas.



- 1 San Salvador de Camanzo monastery
- 2 San Lorenzo de Carboeiro monastery
- 3 The river Toxa waterfall
- 4 Agolada old traditional market
- 5 A Nosa Señora de Monte Faro hermitage
- 6 Santa María A Real de Oseira monastery
- 7 A Nosa Señora do Corpiño sanctuary

## Day 1 From Camanzo monastery to the Agolada "Pendellos"

We set off in the Lands of the Deza, a landscape where we will find the Cira Tower where we will come across the remains of the fortress where during the 12<sup>th</sup> century Queen Urraca held Xelmírez captive. Among woods, falls and manor houses we stop to discover the early Romanesque richness of the Camanzo Monastery and its well-preserved frescos. Founded by the Counts of Deza, from the monastery you will be able to take in the great view of the river Ulla valley.

### Carboeiro monastery, a time for meditation and feeling close to nature

We continue our trip and arrive at the Carboeiro Monastery in the town council of Silleda. This building surrounded by nature and isolated was perfect for monks from different centuries as a refuge for meditation. The monastery, built on high terrain and surrounded by a one of the river Deza's meanders, allows us have first-hand knowledge

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** Vila de Cruces.

**Finishing point:** Lalín.

**Days:** 2

**Approximate distance:** 111 km

**Dates for the "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/ processions):**

- › Our Lady of the "Corpiño": The most important one takes place on June 25<sup>th</sup>. On March 25<sup>th</sup> the "Winter Corpiño" is held.
- › Our Lady of O Faro: September 8<sup>th</sup>.

of Galicia's heritage and Medieval history which you may increase by taking a guided tour of this monument. The disciples of Mestre Mateo, who was responsible for the Portico of Glory in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, are to blame for this Galician, lancet Romanesque style gem. Its placement within nature highlights the privileged location of the monastery surrounding us by the mysticism of these holy walls. The temptation of a relaxed two-hour trek along ancient paths, crossing



the Devil's bridge (it used to be a strategic place for muggings), pulls us away from the monastery. The bridge will lead us to the river Toxa fall, whose waters plunge 30 m, which makes it one of Europe's highest falls. The view from the bottom is spectacular but you should also go up to the viewpoints at the top. From the top you will be able to see the river Deza and a part of our itinerary. During the summer seasons, one may take a break and bathe at the Carixa river beach.

### A marketplace which awakens every month of August

Forget your weariness and prepare for our next stop: the town of Agolada's trade tradition seen especially at the "pendellos". This former 400-year-old market place in the centre of the town is now a kind of civil painting which tells us about Galicia's former economy, the relationships which were woven in the medieval markets and the deals where one's word was sacred. As we walk about the narrow lanes, among the columns and stone stands, we can almost smell the country produce or feel the livestock which farmers and traders from all around came to sell. After it was recovered, life returned to the Pendellos every August in the shape of a traditional handicraft market.



San Salvador de Camanzo monastery

*When someone "expels the Devil from his or her body" or "gets rid of the (evil eye) meigallo" the evil force which possessed the individual disappears. A satanic possession is one body with a double spirit which holds the soul of a person and a devil. The person and the devil take it in turns to appear. They never do so at the same time.*





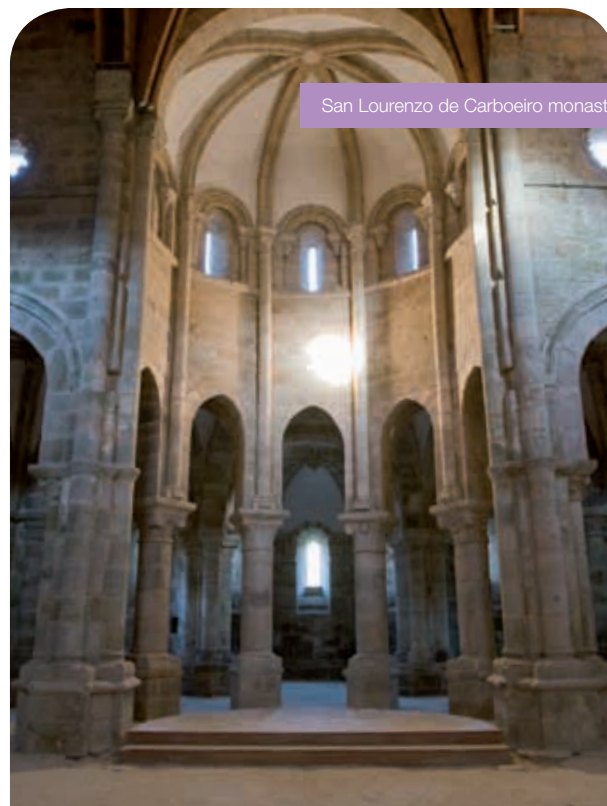
Day 2

## From mount Faro de Chantada to Nosa Señora do Corpiño sanctuary

The first stop on this second day will be at an altitude of 1.187 m on the top of mount Faro in the town council of Chantada in the province of Lugo. Here we find a chapel in honour of the Virgin who bears the same name. On the top of this mountain, which is a natural frontier between Chantada in Lugo and Rodeiro in Pontevedra, one may contemplate parts of the four Galician provinces, smooth hills, farmland and century-old groves.

### Savouring the tasty Cea bread

Our trip now takes us to the municipality of Cea in the province of Ourense where the Monastery of Santa María A Real of Oseira takes our breath away. It is known as the “Galician Escorial”. Don't miss the opportunity to visit it on a guided tour and don't forget to take back home with you a delicious



San Lourenzo de Carboeiro monastery





and original souvenir: the *Eucaliptine*, a liquor made by the very monks. Cea bread is another tasty treasure you should not forget to try during your stay in this village.

## Nosa Señora do Corpiño

We again change provinces and wander into the municipality of Lalín in Pontevedra where the Sanctuary of Nosa Señora do Corpiño stands. This neoclassical temple is situated at the top of a hillock. From here one has an excellent view of the natural area which is home to the oldest Marian sanctuaries known in Galicia. This sanctuary was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the ruins of the ancient chapel of the Apparitions. After its foundation, the numerous miracles of Nosa Señora do Corpiño, above all those related to head troubles, made it extremely well-known. On pilgrimages, which coincide on St. Johns Day and the summer solstice, is when the masses flock to the sanctuary. However, all year round devoted visitors approach the Virgin to ask a remedy of Her. This is proof of the love and trust which the Virgin inspires among Her followers for Her miracles related to all sorts of illnesses but especially those which have to do with the mind and the spirit. As times change, it has also become possible to state one's prayer on the Sanctuary of "O Corpiño's" website.

This sacred place is well-known for being the site where many possessed are cured and for the practice of exorcisms at the door of the church, for which the Parish priest has an authorisation from the Vatican. Nowadays, psychiatrists search for a plausible explanation to these strange mental illnesses yet among the elders one can still hear talk about being possessed by the Devil himself. In any case, you can try to get a feel of this magical place by entering the atrium where all kinds of people would get together to "get rid of the *meigallo*" (the evil eye), "free themselves from the Devil" and so on. At the stands around the temple lucky charms to protect you against the evil eye or envy as well as those to protect your health are sold.

The Galician writer, Vicente Risco, already wrote about these rituals



Santa María A Real de Oseira monastery



where relatives of the “possessed” as well as the altar boys, exorcists and *rosareiras* (women who sold rosaries) would take part. If you fear legend, don’t open your mouth while you are in the temple for a ball of hair spat out by one of the “possessed” might still be lost among the benches and accidentally enter your body. Currently, those who ask the Virgin for Her help follow rituals which are much less traumatic though.

In the same way as the most devout pilgrims do, remember to touch the image of Our Lady before leaving. The procession on festive days lasts over an hour. A multitude of pilgrims surround the church almost making it impossible to see. One by one they walk under the image so as to show their faith. They touch the cloak with their very hands or rub their handkerchiefs and ask for protection. Faith, devotion and zeal are also feelings which are in the atmosphere on the so-called *Corpiño Pequeno*

(The small Bodice) which is celebrated with the coming of spring on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

### The “cocido” Festival in Lalín

Another tradition which you should take into account is buying cheeses and dried cold meats in the stores near the sanctuary, where you will most certainly see a poster announcing the Festival of the *Cocido* (typical Galician dish) in Lalín. This Festival dates back to 1968 and is held on the Sunday before Shrovetide. Hearty and filling, the Galician *cocido* is homage to boiled pork and other products from our land. This typically winter dish is a point of reference on the gastronomic calendar for the whole of Galicia, but above all for the municipality of Lalín, where this gastronomic meeting attracts thousands of people every year to this land filled with history, tradition and superstition.

Oseira monastery cloister





# Water and... oil miracles

Can you keep my secret?

Nosa Señora dos Milagres de Amil sanctuary



Water, whether fresh or salty, is the thread which will lead us through this magical experience of saints, fountains, springs and miracle stones, all of which turn into altars to cure illnesses and to celebrate fertility rituals.



- 1 Pontevedra's old quarter
- 2 San Salvador de Lérez monastery
- 3 Nosa Señora dos Milagres de Amil sanctuary
- 4 The river Barosa mills
- 5 Nosa Señora das Cabezas de Armenteira sanctuary
- 6 Nosa Señora da Lanzada chapel

## Day 1 From Pontevedra to the river Barosa natural pools

We begin our route by visiting Pontevedra's old quarter, one of the best preserved and most beautiful in Galicia. Strolling across the charming Teucro or Leña squares, under the stone archways or stopping for a coffee at one of the terraces at Ferreira square, turns out to be a very pleasant experience, especially on a sunny spring day when the camellias are blossoming. Another must is visiting the original Peregrina church in the shape of a scallop shell. It is elegant and quaint and inside it holds the image of the Patron Saint of Pontevedra. What a way to start our magical route!

### San Benitiño de Lérez, a small yet miraculous saint

A few minutes away is San Salvador monastery which is home to the sculpture of Benitiño of Lérez. This 18th-century temple rises on top of a hill from where one may contemplate the magnificent views of the city of Pontevedra and the river Lérez. The image of Saint Benitiño of Lérez (Benitiño-

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** Pontevedra.

**Finishing point:** Sanxenxo.

**Days:** 2

**Approximate distance:** 67 km

**Dates for the "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/processions):**

- › San Benitiño de Lérez: July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Señora dos Milagres de Amil: The Sunday after September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Señora das Cabezas de Armenteira: Easter Monday.
- › Nosa Señora da Lanzada: The Last weekend in August.

Benedict referred to in a typically affectionate Galician way) is small (the suffix *-iño* is also used to express a small size) yet its size does not prevent him from being the one who works the most miracles as the traditional song says. Saint Benitiño is perfect for curing warts and skin infections: all



*If you go to San Benitiño  
don't go to the one at Paredes  
for there is one that performs more miracles  
in San Benitiño de Lérez.*

one needs to do is rub a piece of cloth on the saint in order to obtain some of the magical ointment. If you happen to be day during the procession on the main festive day, you will be able to see how much devotion is shown to him by his followers who cover him completely in notes. During this day, if we walk along the banks of the river Lérez, we can contemplate the pilgrims sailing up the river in their colourful boats full of bows and flowers. After visiting the saint, we can join the rest of the pilgrims for a picnic: “empanada” (Galician pie) and Galician wine to the sound of the pipers.

### **Night-time walks and giant candles**

Continuing our route towards the north, we get to the Sanctuary de Nosa Señora dos Milagres of Amil, in Moraña. As soon as we get there, we will notice that is a temple which is very much alive and kicking, especially if it happens to be a festive day. What most surprises us about this pilgrimage are the nocturnal processions which take place so as to attend mass during the early hours of the morning.



San Benitiño de Lérez

San Salvador de Lérez monastery



Another typical image one may contemplate are the candles, which are as tall as a person, leaning against the church walls. Some are already lit waiting to be purchased to join the procession. Silence invades the devout who cover the way on foot or on their knees, slowly, behind the carriers of the image which is completely covered in bank notes or pictures of the grateful. The beautiful, delicate carving of the virgin stands out. “She is dressed in a white cloak with golden embroidery and her brown locks emerge from under her veil”. Another custom one can join in with is drinking the water from the holy fountain at the foot of the theatrical hundred-step staircase which leads to the temple or using it to freshen up or wash oneself. The ritual may also be continued by following the pilgrims’ steps to Rozavella, 1 km away, where the first magical spring is situated.

Most of the devout ask Nosa Señora dos Milagres of Amil to solve health issues or for her protection, one which fisherman also pray for by leaving replicas of their boats, which is quite unique as this temple is quite far away from the sea.

Before continuing to our next destination, we shall stop to discover yet another magical piece of atmosphere but this time related to nature. It is a spot where we can contemplate the Barosa falls, a magnificent sight made up of water mills and natural pools. If the weather is good, one can bathe in the crystal clear waters and feel the rush of the falls on one’s shoulders as if it were a natural spa.

The river Barosa falls





After the relaxing walk with which we ended our first day, we shall move on to Meis to visit the Sanctuary of Nosa Señora das Cabezas. If Saint Benitiño will cure our warts, Our Lady will do so with our headaches. In fact, the inside of the temple is full of votive offerings, illuminated under the candlelight, in the shape of this part of the body. Yet, funnily enough, the healing power of Nosa Señora das Cabezas goes one step further: the day before the procession, many a student camps nearby the sanctuary to ask her for a good memory in order to pass their exams.

### The abbot who wanted to see paradise

The saint's temple is within the premises of the Monastery of Armenteira, founded by the noble abbot don Ero. Legend tells us that, during one of his strolls around Armenteira, the abbot asked the Virgin if he could take a glimpse of Paradise. Suddenly, in the tree under whose branches the abbot was resting, a bird began to sing. Its sound was so pleasant that the monk forgot about time and remained there, sitting on the soft grass, by the spring. And so, it seemed to him that he had been there but a short time, yet it had been two hundred years! This is one of the miracles of the Virgin depicted by king Alfonso X, the Wise, and it confirms the legend which runs through the parish of Santa María de Armenteira.

### Magical waves at A Lanzada

And, to finish this miracle-filled itinerary, we head towards the sanctuary of Nosa Señora da Lanzada, situated in the touristic municipality of Sanxenxo. The ritual related to this temple speaks about the hope of having descendants or bearing child. The magical ritual, an inheritance from old, tells us that, at exactly midnight during the procession or on St. John's Day (June 24<sup>th</sup>), any woman who wants to be a mother should indulge in a "fertility bath" in the salty waters of the Lanzada beach,





*I took my wife  
to A Lanzada, to the nine waves;  
It was to uncast a spell  
and send the devil away.*

allowing nine waves to break upon them. One may join the people who approach this beach on the days of the pilgrimage, at any time, in order to feel the force of the cold Atlantic.

Once we have ended our route through these holy places, there is nothing better than a hearty meal at one of the many terraces in Sanxenxo or Portonovo so as to heal the body. Grilled seafood or ray fish stew accompanied by a Rías Baixas wine, are just an example of the rich and varied gastronomy in this area.



Bird's eye view of A Lanzada beach

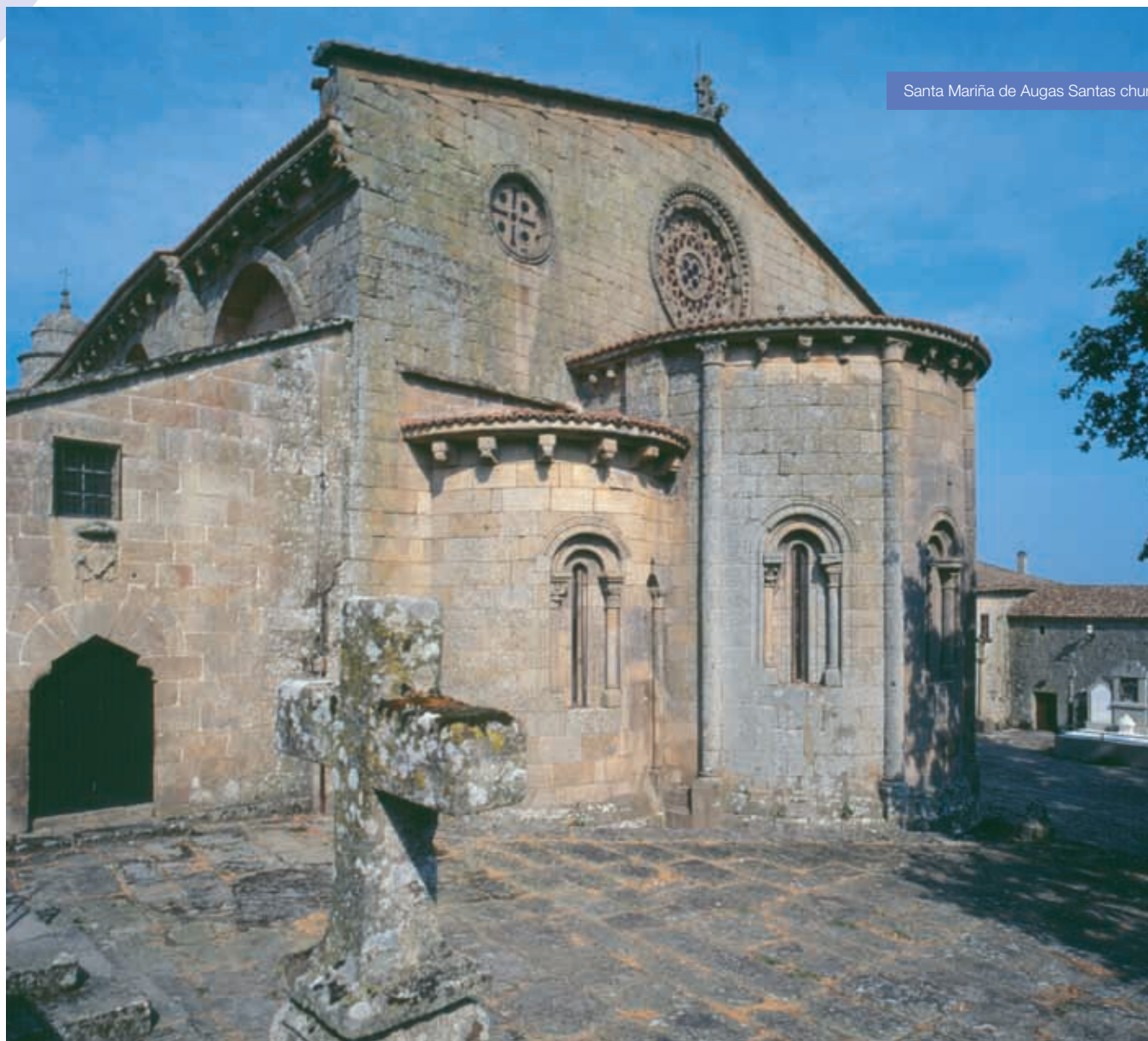


Nosa Señora da Lanzada chapel



# Coffins, dances and holy waters

Can you keep my secret?



Santa Mariña de Augas Santas church

On this new trip which we are about to begin in the lands of the “Baixo” (Lower) Miño, we will come up and close to the unique relationship we, Galicians, have with death. The sanctuaries on this route hide disturbing and surprising legends as well as rituals and pilgrimages which seldom are stumbled upon.



- 1 San Xosé de Ribarteme church
- 2 Santa María da Franqueira church
- 3 Santa Clara de Allariz Convent Sacred Art Museum
- 4 Santa Mariña de Augas Santas church
- 5 Xunqueira de Ambía Collegiate church
- 6 Baños de Molgas
- 7 Nosa Señora de Monte Medo sanctuary

## Día 1 From Santa Marta de Ribartarme sanctuary to Santa Mariña de Augas Santas sanctuary

Our first day's trip begins in As Neves in the Province of Pontevedra. Here we will discover an unforgettable way to live a truly authentic experience at the Santa Marta of Ribarterme Sanctuary. Thanks to the fervour of the devout, one of the most surprising traditions in our culture, an open coffin procession with those whom the Saint spared from death, is still *alive and kicking*.

### Santa Marta "romaría": coffins and fans

Every 29<sup>th</sup> July, the followers of Santa Marta offer to carry a candle matching them in size, circle the church atrium on their knees or even wear a shroud. The first time one contemplates the long line of coffins accompanied by singing women and family members, one inevitably becomes awestricken. Even though some of the coffins in this unique procession are empty some of them hold the actual

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** As Neves.

**Finishing point:** Baños de Molgas.

**Days:** 2

**Approximate distance:** 104 km

**Dates for the "romarías" (pilgrimage festivities/processions):**

- › Santa Marta de Ribarterme: July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Señora da Franqueira: Whitsuntide Monday or September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- › Santa Mariña de Augas Santas (Holy Waters): July 18<sup>th</sup>.
- › Nosa Sra. de Monte Medo: September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Other interesting details:**

- › Santa Clara de Allariz Convent Sacred Art Museum: Closed on Tuesdays. Contact number 988440702.

person who escaped death. Sometimes, the heat, the devotion or the horrific feeling of being carried inside a coffin while still alive, brings those who



*Virgin Saint Mary  
Northern star  
Who gave life back  
To whom was close to death.*

*Virgin Saint Mary  
Beloved saint  
Who when we were about to die  
Gave us life back.*

*The pilgrims' verse in two stanzas*

have offered themselves to provide an even more unheard of vision, that of waving arms which rise out of the coffins in an attempt to create a soothing breeze or to find some relief from this suffocating penitence.

The acolytes who await up on the belfry begin to sound the bells to the rhythm of death as soon as they see the funeral cortège approach. Agitation, an atmosphere of fervour can be felt all around, the smell of incense and melting wax becomes stronger and people begin to push and shove in order to touch the image of the saint. Undoubtedly, something magical comes over those who are present. When mass is over, those who have been spared, join in the festivities, which take place in the oak grove, with the rest of procession. The smell of octopus, bread and "melindres" (traditional biscuits) blend in with the bustling crowd. *The Guardian* has actually considered this to be one of the five most unique traditional festivals in the world.

### Where some oxen decided to build a temple

Carrying on across the province of Pontevedra, we will come to the municipality of A Cañiza. We will visit the Gothic Sanctuary of Nosa Señora da Franqueira in this beautiful land. According to legend, an old lady found the image of the Virgin on a steep area on the mountain. The unevenness of the terrain proved building a temple there impossible and this caused an argument among the neighbours. To settle the row, they decided to place the image onto a cart driven by unguided blindfolded oxen to see where they would head in order to build a hermitage there. Thus, in order to commemorate this event, the image of Nosa Señora da Franqueira leaves the church every September 8<sup>th</sup> on a cart driven by oxen. Heading the procession, two dancers who braid and un-braid ribbons tied to a stick all the way, and two performers, a Moor and a Christian, read a dialogue in verse to the image. A unique tradition stands out: the young ladies who are seeking a suitor and are able tie a shrub of broom using only one finger, will marry within a year thanks to the divine intervention of Our Lady.





## The secrets hidden by the Virgin “Abrideira” de Allariz

Let us continue towards the municipality of Allariz, one of the best kept Galician towns, through which one is to wander keeping one’s eyes well open so as to contemplate all of its charm. One of its cobbled roads is sure to lead us to the Clarisas convent, founded in 1268 by Queen Violante, the wife of King Alfonso X, the Wise. Inside we will encounter the ivory image of the Abrideira image, from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which represents a seated virgin holding the Child. When it is opened, it appears like a tableau destined to narrate the life of Mary. Allariz is an ideal place to have lunch at one of the restaurants by the river while admiring the view. Ah! And don’t forget to taste an “amendoado” (almond biscuit), which will, without a doubt, turn into one of the memories of this trip.

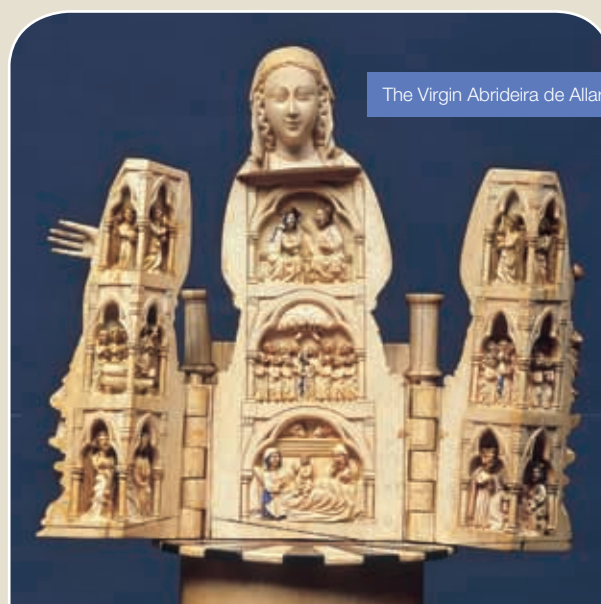
A few km away from the town, hidden in an idyllic spot, the Sanctuary of Santa Mariña de Augas Santas, one of the best examples of Galician 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century architecture, awaits us. Its legend will allow us to find out about the history of the places where this virgin was tortured without mercy for not loving the Roman governor, Olibrio, back. The Saint miraculously survived all the punishments

*Christian, are there cowbells in your  
country?*

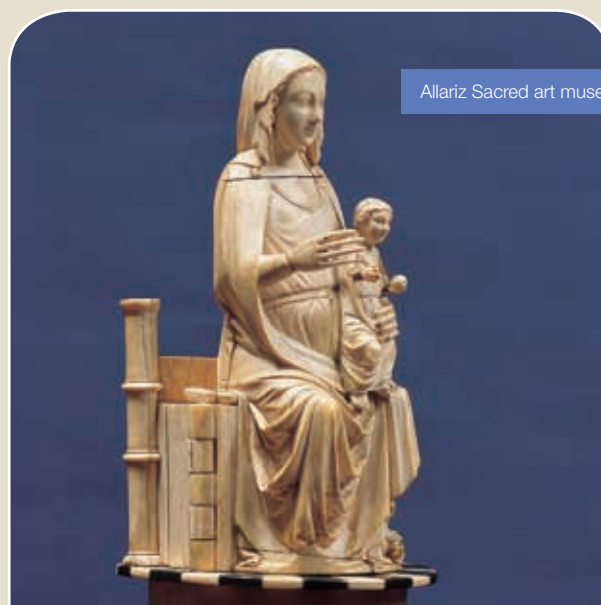
*Indeed, there are.*

*Well, stand Christian, for in your  
country we are, and do not treat me  
in your land like I treated you in mine.*

*Dialogue between a guard and a prisoner  
Sanctuary of Nosa Señora da Franqueira.*



The Virgin Abrideira de Allariz



Allariz Sacred art museum





so the torturer finally decided to have her beheaded. It is said that as the decapitated head bounced three times on the ground, with each bounce there appeared a fresh water spring, the three Augasantas fountains situated behind the church where the image of the martyr is kept. Following in the pilgrims' footsteps, one should soak in the spirituality which surrounds this place. Take the opportunity to ask the Saint for her favours and visit the fountains while feeling a shiver due to the recollection of this legend.

As we leave the sanctuary, a relaxing walk lies ahead along the Roman road which is covered by a lush natural vault. The silence will only be disturbed by the rustling of the leaves as we walk by. Follow the route of the procession to the ruins of the thirteenth century Ascension basilica which was never finished. In the crypt of this temple we will find the "Forno" (Oven) of the Saint, where Olibrio supposedly tried to burn her alive although she was saved thanks to the intervention of Saint Peter. A few yards away is the "Piouca da Santa" or the Black Water Fountain, which, according to legend, owes the dark colour of its water to the fact that Saint Mariña washed off the ashes from her body here after escaping from the flames. As it is plain to see, magic and legend are present in every corner, surely, one will not depart unmoved.

Day 2

## From Xunqueira de Ambía Collegiate church to Nosa Señora de Monte Medo sanctuary

On our way to the Sanctuary of Nosa Señora de Monte Medo, we should make a quick stop in Xunqueira de Ambía to discover its Collegiate church and its gothic cloister. Afterwards, when we get to the thermal spring village of Baños de Molgas, we shall become captivated by the tranquillity and withdrawal of a true village of the interior Galicia. Here we will realize how powerful the vital liquid is in the area. The most has been made of these thermal springs for over a



hundred years and they have been recognised to be medicinal since 1873. In order to feel the loving warmth of Galicia, there is nothing better than a bath in these waters.

### An oak tree which keeps the image of a saint

When we get to the Baroque sanctuary, which is one of the most visited in the Diocese of Ourense, we will have to travel back in time to the battle between the counts of Caldeia and Pena, at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, in order to better understand its legend. It is said that after a tough battle on mount Medo, the Lord of Caldeias, seeing defeat close, was able to turn the tables and win the battle thanks to his prayers to the Virgin. Thankful for the victory, he ordered the hermitage of Nosa Señora da Defensa be built, yet, in time, it vanished. Years later, a little girl found the image of the saint inside an oak tree and she asked for another temple to be built on the same spot. The neighbours decided to take the image to the parish church but before they got there, they realized that the image was back where it had been found so they thought it best not to upset the virgin. Currently, thousands of followers, many of which arrive on foot from their homes, flock here. They mainly arrive on the two most important festive days of the pilgrimage, September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and also during a novena, when the fervour is such that some stay at the local inn for the nine days.

Xunqueira de Ambia Collegiate church



Nosa Señora dos Milagres sanctuary







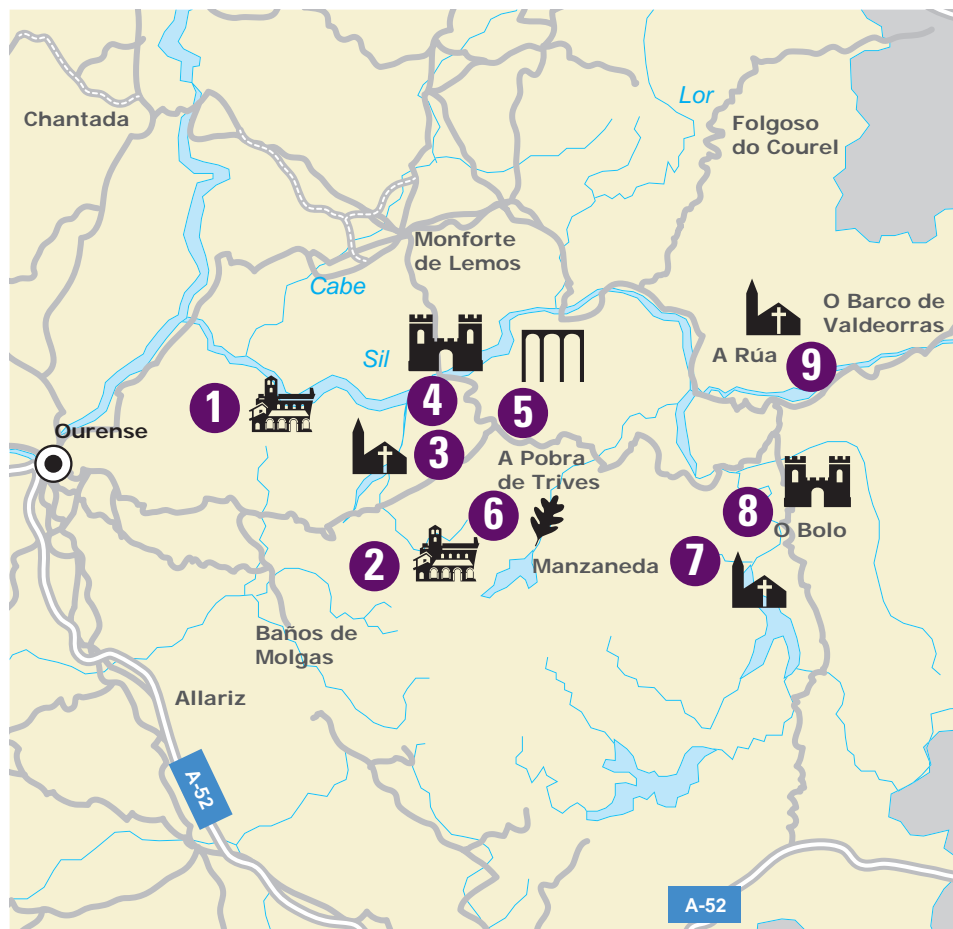
# Sanctuaries and vineyards

Can you keep my secret?

San Pedro de Rocas monastery



An outstanding mountainous landscape will accompany us on this route across Galicia's highest grounds. The isolation and solitude of the wild nature of these mountains are able to take us to the times when hermits and anchorites would seek refuge in them.



- 1 San Pedro de Rocas monastery
- 2 Santa María de Montederramo monastery
- 3 Os Remedios sanctuary
- 4 Castro Caldelas fortress
- 5 The river Bibei bridge
- 6 Rozabales grove
- 7 Santa María das Ermidas sanctuary
- 8 O Bolo castle
- 9 San Miguel de Xagoaza church

## Day 1 From Esgos to Manzaneda

We will start off on this first day of our trip at the heart of the Ribeira Sacra (Sacred Riverside), in the municipality of Esgos. Here, once we have crossed a thick pine tree wood, we will come across the first remains of Christianity in Galicia at the Monastery of San Pedro de Rocas (Saint Peter of the Rocks). This temple, which was dug out of the very rock, keeps a treasure waiting to be discovered inside: the remains of the only Romanesque world map known of in Europe. The map, also known as the “World Map of the Devout”, shows the routes of the apostles of Christ around the world in their intention to spread Christianity.

### A monastery dug out of the rocks

Another of the marvels hidden at San Pedro is its sixth-century interior, which is one of the oldest in Galicia, and its three chapels, which were dug out of the rock. When we approach it from the outside, we will be drawn to its unique belfry 14 m high on top of a huge rock. One is not to miss

## USEFUL INFORMATION:

**Starting point:** Esgos.

**Finishing point:** O Bolo.

**Days:** 2

**Distancia (aprox.):** 124 km

**Dates for the “romarías” (pilgrimage festivities/processions):**

- › As Ermidas: September 8<sup>th</sup> or the first Sunday in October.

**Other interesting details:**

- › O Bolo castle museum: Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. Contact number: 988323030

the anthropomorphic tombs, which, due to the combination of stone, rain and lichen, have a magical halo which will be hard to forget. Nearby the graves, look for the miraculous fountain which is said to cure warts and erase wrinkles. Take this opportunity to drink some of this water and visit the interpretation Centre of the Ribeira Sacra which is in the same site. At this museum, one may discover what monastery life was like and also learn about



*The Monastery of Rocas, which was dug out of the very rock, keeps a treasure waiting to be discovered inside: the remains of the only Romanesque world map known of in Europe.*

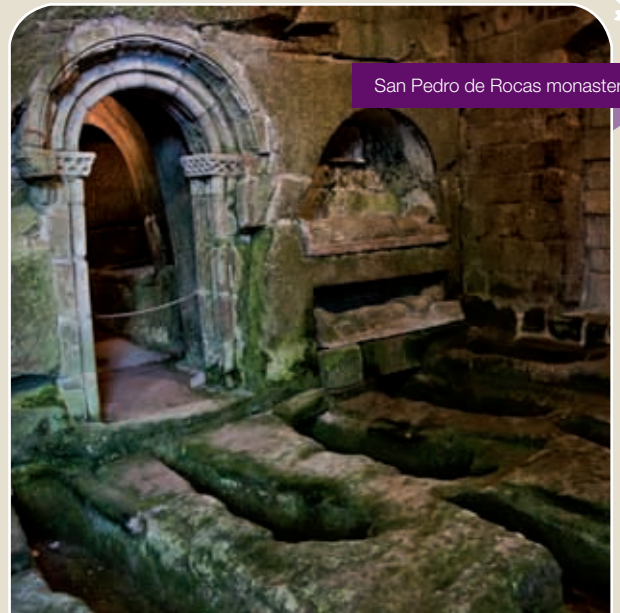
the traditions in the area, the trades and, of course, the wine culture. One should not forget that this is the land of the wines with Ribeira Sacra Guarantee of Origin, one of the five guarantee of origin and quality of wines in Galicia.

If we have the time and the energy we can leave the monastery behind and follow the Royal Way of Saint Peter. A very well sign-posted route made up of old paths and tracks which run through lush indigenous vegetation will lead us back to Esgos.

### **The hermit guard at Montederramo monastery**

From here, we can head to Montederramo, a place protected by high mountains like mount Meda and the San Mamede range, where we will find the old Santa María Monastery, founded during the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Only one medieval arch remains as it was completely renovated during the sixteenth century. A very unique aspect about the monastery is the legend which links its construction to the hermitage on top of which it stands. It is said that this temple was built by a friar from the San Mamede Range with the only aid of two roe deer which would carry the stone. It is this very monk- turned into a stone statue- who guards the entrance to the temple. A great way to discover all the different corners of this religious ensemble is to book a guide tour through the tourist information centre. On the tour, one is taken through two of its most beautiful gems, the Processional Cloister and the Hospice Cloister. If one has enough time and enjoys nature, it is recommended cover the birch tree woods by means of the trekking routes.

We get to Castro Caldelas still feeling that we are being observed by the hermit guard at Esgos who we have just left behind.



San Pedro de Rocas monastery



Santa María de Montederramo monastery

## The castle and the Os Remedios sanctuary in Castro Caldelas

Here, we stroll about until we find the Os Remedios sanctuary and its Castle. First, we will visit the sixteenth-century temple in the town square where one the old Prado hermitage stood. We may visit the Sacred Art museum inside. As we walk out. A stone cross with the image of the apostle Santiago and of the Virgin of Pilar is witness to the Jacobean route (Santiago Way) which passed by leading to the hostels in the Ribeira Sacra monasteries.

As for the castle, it was told to be built over six hundred years ago by the Lord of Castro, after he had won these lands for fighting side by side the King known as “the Avenger”. The thick, coarse walls of this castle will lead our steps towards the past. The ethnographic museum inside, shows the importance of Castro Caldelas in the history of this area thanks to the many objects found during the time when alterations and improvements were done: the rocks, the linen looms and the farming implements will take us back to medieval times for a moment. The visit is a unique experience to imagine what life in a fortress of this kind was like in those times.

Our trip continues towards A Pobra de Trives where we will cross the Roman Bridge over the river Bibei. It is from the time of the emperor Trajan and it is still currently in full use. This great work of Roman engineering avoids a 23 m drop. Its height is imposing, especially if one looks over the side

Os Remedios sanctuary



*There used to be in Castro Castle a powerful count that had three beautiful daughters ready to be wed. Yet another count, who was also rich and noble, sent a messenger to ask for one of his daughter’s hand in marriage. The Count of Castro asked “Cal delas?” (Which one?). Thus, the people began to call this land Caldelas (Whichone).*

*Legend about the name of Castro Caldelas (Vicente Risco)*

The bridge over the river Bibei





at the robust pillars which impassively withstand the continuous rush of the river. This is a good opportunity to try a piece of shortbread Trives cake, a delicious handmade product with almonds, which is typical in this area.

### **A pause to learn about a hundred-year-old chestnut tree**

In order to allow this day to come to an end, the Pumbariño Chestnut Tree awaits in the lands of Manzaneda. This tree is said to be over a thousand years old and it is undoubtedly the star among the trees in the Rozabales Grove. To get to it, we will need to cover a lush track accompanied by hundred-year-old chestnut trees which will offer us shelter and tranquillity. When we get to the old Pumbariño, we should try and embrace the 12 m wide trunk and thus take back home with us a beautiful snapshot.

### **Day 2**

### **From O Bolo to O Barco de Valdeorras**

The second day of our trip will begin in the O Bolo, a municipality in Ourense, where we will start the day at the spectacular As Ermidas sanctuary. This is an imposing building situated under a high rock by the river Bibei. The As Ermidas sanctuary stuck between two steep farmland strips, takes its name from the hermits who looked for solitude in this far away place.

Legend tells us that the image of Our Lady was found by some child shepherds inside a cave who entered because their sheep would always make a strange sound as they passed by. The current sanctuary which keeps the image was dug out of the rock and built upon the old hermitage. One of the attractions of this sanctuary is the image of the Virgin, which is guarded by several silver angels who dance while they ring some little bells in the centre of the main altar.

During Easter, many a churchgoer comes here to follow the Stations of the Cross in procession, from the sanctuary to the top part of the village, as an evocation of the ascent to the



Calvary. It is customary to end the processions, where thousands of devout follow, with a serving of octopus “á feira” (boiled with salt, paprika and olive oil) washed down with Valdeorras Guarantee of Origin wines from the cellars in this area. Without having to wander out of this area, we can also visit the twelfth-century O Bolo Castle which used to belong to the Counts of Lemos. Half-destroyed after the Irmandiñas Uprisings, for a long time it was used by the neighbours as a school, a prison or even a place for festivities. Now one can walk around and enjoy its fascinating history.

### **A Templar Knights priory turned into a cellar**

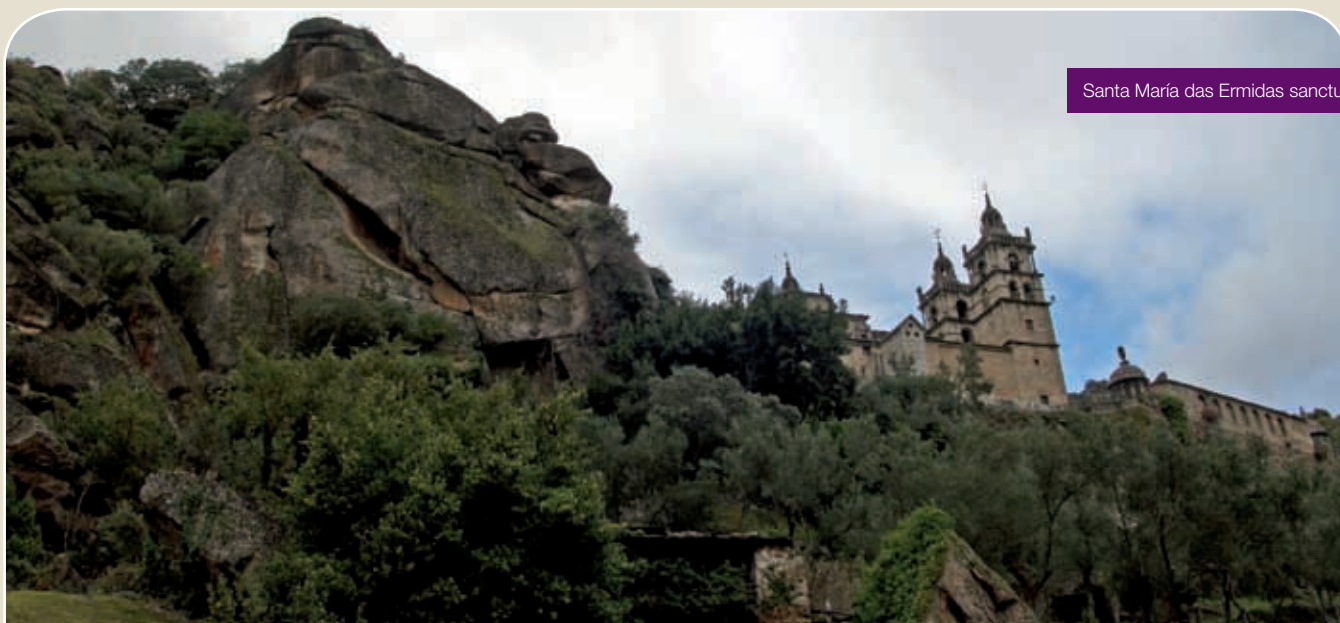
To finish our route, near O Barco de Valdeorras, we can visit the medieval monastery of San Miguel de Xagoaza, on the banks of the river Mariñán. Its completely renovated interior can be visited, as it has been turned into a modern cellar where cultural activities also take place. When it first came to be, this monastery was a priory of the Templar Knights, but later it became part of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, which later was known and the Order of Malta. If we contemplate the facade attentively we will discover the Malta Cross carved by the stone masons as living witness its glorious past. Vines fall down the sides of the mountains of these lands thanks to the calm work of the farmers who patiently transform the slopes into steep farm lands, “socialcos”, which catch the eye of the visitor. In the lands of Valdeorras, mountains turn into humanized landscapes and vines, more than plants, become jewels of nature cared form with art and loving care.

Rozabales grove



*As Ermitas sanctuary, stuck between two steep farmland strips, takes its name from the hermits who looked for solitude in this faraway place.*

Santa María das Ermidas sanctuary







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