

galicia

Galician springs



XUNTA DE GALICIA

IMPORTANT NOTICE_

With the aim of promoting its tourism products, Turismo de Galicia carried out an open tender procedure (arm's length principle) aimed especially at travel agencies.

The itineraries included in this brochure are the outcome of the package holiday proposals created by the winning agency.

Galicia is water

Galicia is the number one hot springs destination in Spain. There are more than 300 hot springs in the region – making it one of the richest in Europe in terms of mineral and hot springs – that were used by the Romans. Our thermal spas have a long tradition as therapeutic, relaxation and leisure centres.

Seawater also has many benefits for body and mind and thalassotherapy spas concentrate all these benefits. Besides the water, the algae, mud and sea salt treatments – combined with other products such as wine or chocolate – provide a stimulating experience.

In Galicia, the sea offers the world's finest fish and seafood, guarding treasures deep in its ocean, and its islands innumerable legends. Its water creates beautiful landscapes in which vineyards find the ideal conditions for producing excellent wines.

We offer you hot springs and spa tourism so that you can experience Galicia in a totally different way – through its water – combining the best of our land with restful moments in thermal spas and thalassotherapy spas.

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1 Water and nature in Lugo

A weekend for getting to know the historic city of Lugo and enjoying its hot springs with your family. We'll walk along its Roman wall, just over two kilometres long. We'll also visit the Marcelle Natureza Zoo, where we'll see kangaroos, reindeer and even giant tortoises.

p. 8



2 Relaxation at the end of the Way

We'll enjoy a day in Santiago de Compostela, visiting its stone structures and hot springs and we'll discover some of Galicia's most picturesque fishing villages on the way to Fisterra. There, we'll watch the sun sink into the Atlantic.

p. 14



3 Water and adventure in Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Nature Park

This experience is aimed at enjoying the mineral waters in Lobios, a twenty-first-century spa village that shares its space with Roman-era archaeological sites, all located in a setting of spectacular beauty and natural resources which we'll travel on foot and horseback.

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7 Walk and rest

This is a five-day adventure that links the splendour of Galicia's thermal springs with the beauty of the Way of St James. After finishing a day-long stretch on the French Way, our exhaustion will be compensated with relaxing spa treatments.

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8 Pilgrim - End of the Way spa treatments

Here's a suggestion for experiencing Santiago in a different fashion after finishing the Way: surrounded by stones, we'll taste the essence of Galician cuisine, discover the most characteristic corners in the city and relax body and spirit in an urban spa.

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4 Water, stone and Cíes

In Oia, we'll dive into the seawater of its thalassotherapy spa and benefit from treatments with algae, mud and salts. Later, we'll sail towards the Cíes Islands – a natural paradise of great ecological value – where we'll enjoy swimming at one of the best beaches in the world.

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5 Atlanticus

In Baiona, we'll call to mind the discovery of America. In Oia's thalassotherapy spa, we'll take full advantage of the Atlantic. Aboard a sailboat, we'll ply the waters of the Ría de Vigo to discover the San Simón archipelago, with its history full of glorious – and dark – episodes.

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6 Hot springs and O Ribeiro wines

The spa village of Laias and O Carballiño offer us the healing properties of their micro-medicinal mineral waters. We'll combine this experience with the wine-filled richness of the lands of O Ribeiro, where we'll tour a winery and sample its excellent wines.

p. 40



9 Family enjoyment in Guitiriz

We'll enjoy Guitiriz's waters as a family. We'll visit its beautiful, nature-filled areas, full of springs, rivers and mills and also benefit from the properties of its famous micro-medicinal waters while the children enjoy the spa's leisure area.

p. 62



10 An ocean of relaxation in A Toxa

This island paradise offers us the sea's benefits in its thalassotherapy centres. In O Grove, we'll sample the very best seafood and we'll embark in its port to ply the Ría de Arousa. Here, we'll get to see the work done in the shellfish rafts, where the best seafood in the world is farmed.

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11 Mondariz-Balneario

Mondariz – Balneario, a flagship hot springs in Europe since the late nineteenth century, offers us the ideal plan for diving into its therapeutic waters. We'll delight in the rich natural and historical heritage surrounding it, which will also take us to Pontearreas, Soutomaioir and Tui.

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- TOLL MOTORWAY
- MOTORWAY
- HIGH-CAPACITY NETWORK
- NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK
- BASIC AND COMPLEMENTARY REGIONAL NETWORK
- REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK
- BROAD-GAUGE TRACK
- NARROW-GAUGE TRACK
- NATIONAL/NATURE PARKS

1 EXPERIENCE Water and nature in Lugo

- day 1 | Lugo
- day 2 | Outeiro de Rei – Lugo
- day 3 | Lugo

2 EXPERIENCE Relaxation at the end of the Way

- day 1 | Santiago de Compostela
- day 2 | Noia – Muros – Carnota – Dumbría – Corcubión – Fisterra

3 EXPERIENCE Water and adventure in Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Nature Park

- day 1 | Bande – Lobios
- day 2 | Lobios
- day 3 | Lobios

4 EXPERIENCE Water, stone and Cíes

- day 1 | Baiona – Oia
- day 2 | Vigo – Islas Cíes – Vigo
- day 3 | Oia

5 EXPERIENCE Atlanticus

- day 1 | Baiona – Oia
- day 2 | Vigo – Ría de Vigo – Archipelago of San Simón – Vigo – Oia
- day 3 | Oia

6 EXPERIENCE Hot springs and O Ribeiro wines

- day 1 | Cenlle
- day 2 | O Carballiño – Leiro
- day 3 | Cenlle – Punxín and San Amaro

7 EXPERIENCE Walk and rest

- day 1 | Palas de Rei
- day 2 | Palas de Rei – Melide – Arzúa – Palas de Rei
- day 3 | Arzúa – O Pino – Brión
- day 4 | O Pino – Santiago de Compostela – Brión
- day 5 | Santiago de Compostela

8 EXPERIENCE Pilgrim - End of the Way spa treatments

- day 1 | Santiago de Compostela
- day 2 | Santiago de Compostela

9 EXPERIENCE Family enjoyment in Guitiriz

- day 1 | Guitiriz
- day 2 | Outeiro de Rei – Friol
- day 3 | Guitiriz

10 EXPERIENCE An ocean of relaxation in A Toxa

- day 1 | A Toxa Island
- day 2 | O Grove – A Toxa Island
- day 3 | A Toxa Island

11 EXPERIENCE Mondariz-Balneario

- day 1 | Mondariz-Balneario
- day 2 | Mondariz-Balneario – Pontareas – Soutomaior – Mondariz-Balneario
- day 3 | Mondariz-Balneario – Tui

Water and nature in Lugo

We propose a weekend family getaway to explore Lugo, a city with an ancient history and whose setting revolves around the River Miño. It is possible to stroll its Roman wall – more than two kilometres long –, admire its buildings from an almost bird’s-eye view and relax in the spa’s leisure areas in their hotels. To complete the experience, we’ll pay a visit to Marcelle Natureza, where we’ll get to observe animal life in a nature-filled environment of great beauty.



> Lugo Spa – Roman Hot Springs



1 EXPERIENCE

- day 1 | Lugo
 - 1_ Lugo
 - 2_ Old Town
- day 2 | Outeiro de Rei
 - 3_ Marcelle Natureza Zoo
 - 4_ Wall
 - 5_ Cathedral
 - 6_ Centro de Interpretación da Muralla (Wall Interpretation Centre)
- day 3 | Lugo
 - 7_ Museo Provincial de Lugo (Lugo Provincial Museum)
 - 8_ Praza Maior square

START_ Lugo
END_ Lugo
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_

- Balneario de Lugo – Termas Romanas_ www.balneariodelugo.com
- Marcelle Natureza_ www.marcellenatureza.com

- Centro de Interpretación de la Muralla. Tel_ 982 251 658 / 982 297 347
- Museo Provincial de Lugo_ www.museolugo.org



| day 1 |

Relaxation among hot springs

We'll arrive in Lugo around noon. After dropping our bags at the hotel in the Old Town, we'll eat in any of the restaurants dotting its streets. Another option is to go for tapas, a deeply rooted custom in the city. No wonder its culinary motto is: "And to eat, Lugo".

We'll head back to the hotel to enjoy its Hot Springs Club, where parents can relax peacefully while the children have fun in the area designed for them adjacent to the swimming pool, in complete safety. You can access both facilities during your three-day stay.



Visit a nature reserve and take a journey to Roman times

A zoo, right in the middle of nature

After breakfast, we'll take the car to **Outeiro de Rei** (16 km from Lugo in the direction of A Coruña), where **Marcelle Natureza** – a small zoo located in a natural setting – is to be found. Here, the family will spend a morning discovering the world of the fauna and flora.

The zoo has different areas over which species from different continents are spread, from zebras, ostriches and bison to wolves, kangaroos, bobcats and reindeer, among many others. We'll be amazed at both snakes and giant tortoises in the reptile centre.

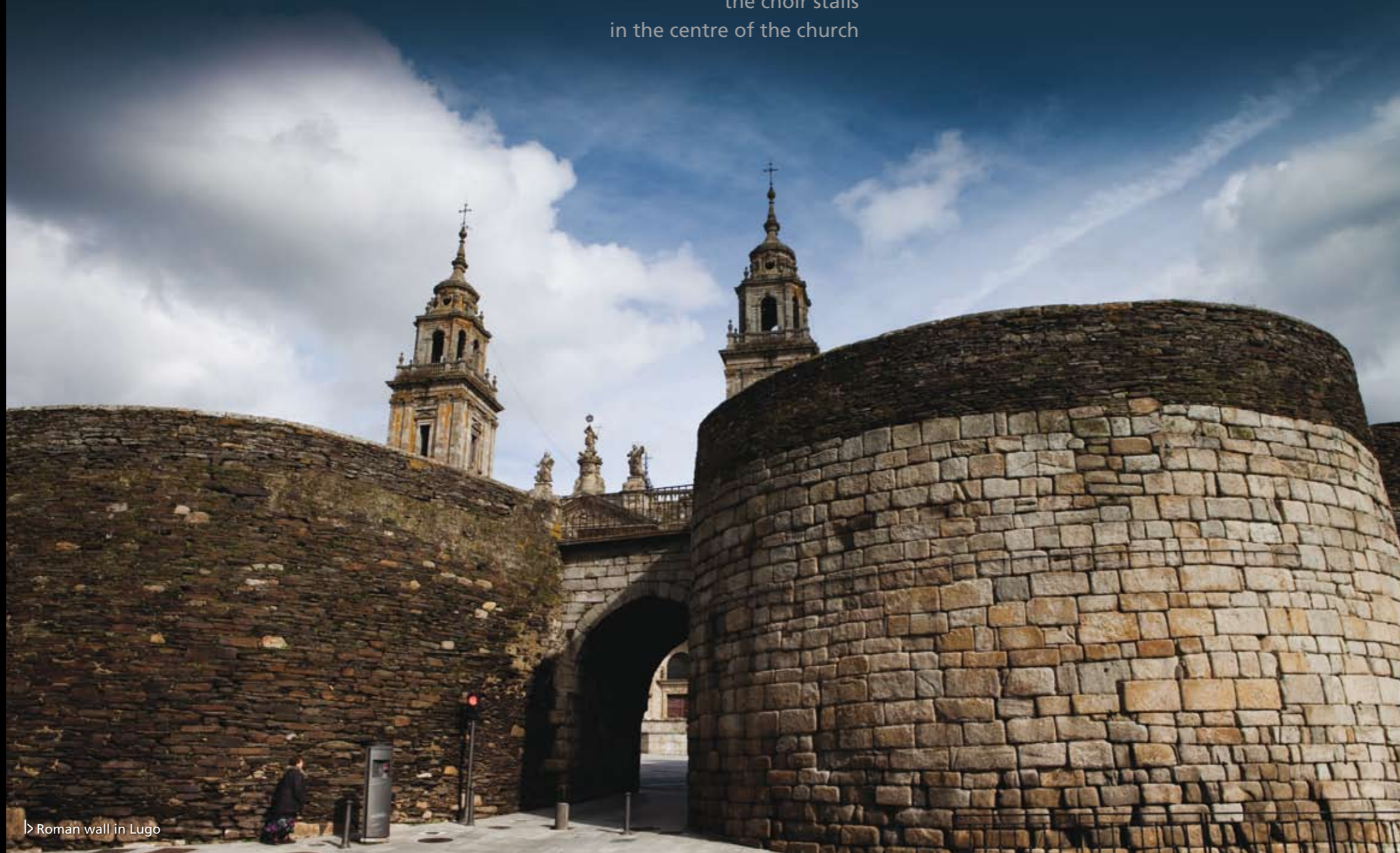
To enjoy the visit as unhurriedly as possible, we recommend that you eat at the zoo itself, or bring your own picnic and allow yourselves to be enveloped by nature and the banks of the River Miño, which has been declared a Biosphere Reserve. This experience will serve to raise the awareness of children and adults about caring for nature.

The Cathedral of Lugo is the only one in Galicia that preserves the choir stalls in the centre of the church

The Wall of Lugo and its cathedral

Back in Lugo, we can take a walk along its Roman wall, a World Heritage Site, and even stroll its full length, which extends just over two kilometres. Alternatively, take the **Campo Castelo** stairs up to **Torre A Mosquera**, a recreation of what one of the towers in the wall would have been like at the time of its construction, and then descend to catch increasing glimpses of the cathedral, descending from the wall via the **Porta de Santiago** ramp, which is the only access for people with reduced mobility or those with children in strollers.

Entering the cathedral will lead us to a unique interior since, of the five bishoprics in Galicia, only Lugo retains its choir stalls in the centre of the church. Another surprise awaits us in the apse: the **Chapel of the Virxe dos Ollos Grandes**, of whom there are many devotees in the city.



↳ Roman wall in Lugo



↳ Church of San Pedro



↳ River Miño. Lugo





> Lugo Spa - Roman Hot Springs



> Lugo Spa - Roman Hot Springs



> Lugo Spa - Roman Hot Springs



> Lugo Spa - Roman Hot Springs

The Wall Interpretation Centre

We'll exit the cathedral through its north door and enter the maze of streets in the Old Town until we reach the **Praza do Campo** square. We head over to the Wall Interpretation Centre for details on its construction and daily life in the city. Videos and touch screens will take both children and adults back in time to the Roman era, when temples, houses, buildings and walls were built in *Lucus Augusti*, the name given to the city when it was founded as one of the capitals of *Gallaecia*, the Galicia of the Romans.

Later on, in one of the restaurants and tapas bars for which Lugo is so famous, we'll allow ourselves to be tempted by fish, meat or vegetables typical of Galician cuisine.

The Lugo Provincial Museum houses a recreation of a traditional Galician kitchen

| day 3 |

Hot springs and a trip through history

In the morning, there will still be time enough for one last dip in the pools of the **hot springs club**. Or – while the children enjoy the play area, depending on their ages – parents can enjoy health, aesthetic or beauty treatments in one of the booths in the hotel's facilities.

Before leaving Lugo, we recommend that you pay a visit to the **Provincial Museum**, housed in a former Franciscan convent. Entrance is free and in its rooms will take us on a trip to the past. We'll get a close-up look at torques and other gold jewellery worn by the inhabitants of our fortified pre-Roman Iron Age villages, the remains of mosaics that decorated the floors of the richest houses in the city, or the

recreation of a traditional Galician kitchen with a *lareira* (hearth), *potes* (pots) and *cantareiros* (jug racks), along with other characteristic items and utensils. The ensemble comes complete with paintings, sculptures and an exhibition of ceramic and porcelain from Sargadelos, together with a collection of fans and timepieces that will amaze you.

Our steps will lead us to the Alameda or **Praza Maior**, with its terraces, and to the City Council. We'll take one last family photo next to the monument depicting the city's founders. Then we'll return to the hotel to collect our bags and finish off this journey through the history of Galicia, its natural beauty and the benefits of its micro-medicinal waters.

Relaxation at the end of the Way

Ever since remains attributed by tradition to the Apostle St James were discovered in Compostela in the ninth century, each year thousands of pilgrims make their way to this destination. There are several different historic routes that will take us to this World Heritage Site city. Whichever we choose, with each step, we'll feel the heartbeat of Jacobean magic.



> Fisterra lighthouse



EXPERIENCE

day 1 |

Santiago de Compostela

- 1_ Porta do Camiño
- 2_ Casas Reais
- 3_ Praza de Cervantes square
- 4_ Acibechería
- 5_ San Martiño Pinarío Monastery
- 6_ Praza do Obradoiro square
- 7_ Pilgrim's Office
- 8_ Cathedral
- 9_ Rúa do Franco
- 10_ Old Town

day 2 |

Noia

- 11_ Old Town
- 12_ Church of Santa María A Nova
- Muros
- 13_ Town of Muros
- 14_ Church of San Pedro de Muros
- 15_ Hermitage of San Roque
- Carnota
- 16_ Granary
- Ézaro (Dumbría)
- 17_ O Ézaro waterfall
- Corcubiión
- 18_ Town of Corcubiión
- Fisterra
- 19_ Faro

START_

Santiago de Compostela

END_ Fisterra

DAYS_ 2

MORE INFORMATION_

→ Pilgrim's Office (Santiago)_ www.peregrinosantiago.es

→ Cathedral of Santiago_ www.catedraldesantiago.es



| day 1 |

Monumental grandeur, gastronomy and hot springs in Santiago

Entering Compostela after following the Way of St James after travelling for so long – sometimes even weeks or months – will give us a one-of-a-kind feeling.

An endless number of beautiful streets and squares

We'll head off to the **Porta do Camiño**, where long ago French Way pilgrims entered the walled city of Compostela. Santiago's mediaeval walls no longer stand, although in the city names such as Mazarelos Porta, Porta Faxeira, Mámoa da Porta and Porta do Camiño continue to be used.

We'll go up **Rúa das Casas Reais**, where we'll have a chance to look at some façades with noble family crests that do honour to the street's name. We'll cross the charming **Praza de Cervantes** square before diving into the **Rúa da**

Acibechería, named after the guild of craftsmen who carved jet stone. Even today we'll find numerous metal smiths who will offer us their creations.

Before arriving at Compostela's majestic basilica, we'll leave to our right the **Monastery of San Martiño Pinarío**, which was founded by Benedictine monks in the tenth century. One of the most powerful in Galicia, the complex – which occupies about 20,000 square metres – is one of the largest buildings of its kind existing in Spain.

San Martiño Pinarío Monastery, which occupies some 20,000 square metres, is one of the largest in Spain



> Praza da Acibebería square at the Cathedral of Santiago

Praza do Obradoiro square is one of the most beautiful in the world

A mysterious stone arch allows us to cross underneath the twelfth-century **Palace of Archbishop Xelmírez**, the most famous in Santiago's history. All at once, we'll come face-to-face with the marvellous Praza do Obradoiro square, kilometre zero of all Jacobean routes.

A sublime moment in time, we'll surely share our joy with dozens of pilgrims who are amazed at seeing so many works of art. On one side we'll find the **Hostal dos Reis Católicos** – a Renaissance work whose construction was ordered by Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon – and, on the other, the **College of San Xerome**, a late Gothic work dating from the fifteenth century. Behind us is the **Pazo de Raxoi**, the current city council building and a neoclassical recreation of balanced shapes, while facing us is the stone symphony of the Obradoiro's fascinating baroque façade, called thus due to having been the worksite of the stonemasons who carved the Galician granite, transforming cold stone into exquisite plastic shapes. We'll feel overwhelmed as we contemplate this square, one of the most beautiful in the world.

We pick up our "Compostela" and tour the cathedral

Before entering the cathedral, we suggest that you head over to the **Pilgrim's Office**, where they'll certify your pilgrimage with a mediaeval-era document known as the "Compostela". You can leave your backpacks here and enjoy a more relaxed tour of the city.

Noon Mass is dedicated to the pilgrims and, during the Holy Year or on certain liturgical dates, the enormous censer known as the *bota fumeiro* is made to work. Seeing this will take our breath away and remain forever in our fondest memories.

The Cathedral of Santiago offers us a plethora of treasures. The most universal of these is the **Pórtico da Gloria**, the culminating work of Romanesque art, carved in stone by Maestro Mateo and his school of masons. You simply must visit the crypt where Apostle's tomb is located, and do the traditional embrace of his image, which presides over the central altar.

The most exquisite delicacies of Galician cuisine

It's time to look for a restaurant and sample the highly appreciated Galician cuisine. On the nearby **Rúa do Franco** – its was named thus to identify the pilgrims, mainly of French origin, who settled there – we'll find a wide variety of establishments specialising in the fresh, local products of the native cuisine. Fish, seafood and meats are on public display in refrigerated showcases, capturing the attention of passersby, especially outsiders, who are often surprised by this culinary exhibition. This will also be a good opportunity to sample the famous **torta de Santiago**, a cake made of crushed almonds.

After lunch, we can take a tranquil stroll through the city's **Old Town**. The Rúa do Vilar, the Rúa Nova, the squares surrounding the cathedral and the remaining mediaeval streets will gradually reveal their secrets to us. We'll easily find a charming café to have a rest while witnessing the spectacle of continuously wandering tourists.



> Pórtico da Gloria. Cathedral of Santiago



Relaxing at a hot springs or other type of spa

To finish off the day, we suggest a relaxing option designed to relieve the fatigue of our pilgrimage. In Santiago, we'll find several options for establishments with different kinds of spas as well as a hot springs spa or two with certified micro-medicinal waters. A thermal circuit, followed by a massage, will be the best way to end our day. Dinner at our hotel-spa will be the finishing touch.

Fishing villages on the way to Fisterra

Santiago de Compostela is the traditional end of the pilgrimage to Santiago. However, thousands of people decide to continue their path of spirituality until they reach Fisterra, the “end of the earth” as the Romans called it.

We'll spend this second day getting close to the seafaring world of Galicia through its most picturesque villages. We propose that you hire a car for an excursion in search of the place where the sun sinks into the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean.

The River Xallas's waterfall into the sea, a unique phenomenon in Europe

Noia's Old Town

The first stop will be in the small town of Noia. We can take a walk around its Old Town with its mediaeval layout and stroll over to the **Church of Santa María Nova** to have a look at the collection of guild-related tombstones on display there. These are tombstones with marks or signs carved on them identifying the guild to which the deceased belonged (sailors, blacksmiths, masons, shoemakers, and so on). At times, these signs were interpreted as dark symbolic messages.



In Muros we'll sample the very best fish and shellfish

From Noia we'll continue on our way to Muros, along the coast of its estuary, discovering breathtaking seascapes at every turn. In this town, we'll find fine places to sample seafood from the Galician sea, a selection filled with freshness and flavour that class them among the best in the world.

During the Middle Ages, Muros – which was founded in the tenth century – was one of the most important of Galicia's ports; it was declared a historical/artistic complex in 1970. Its waterfront, surrounded by inviting colonnades, is the starting point of narrow streets that will lead us to solidly impressive buildings along with others that are more rustic and seafaring. We'll take the opportunity to visit the “maritime” Gothic **Church of San Pedro de Muros** or the **Hermitage de San Roque**, situated at the town's highest point, from which we'll have a lovely view of the entire region.

Granaries, waterfalls and the taste of the sea

Along this coastal route we'll find places that invite us to stop our vehicle and will gift us with extraordinary views and landscapes of lighthouses and untamed beaches. It is said that **Carnota** is home to the Galicia's largest granary, whose spectacular beauty deserves our visit.

In the small village of **Ézaro**, we'll discover another natural wonder: the River Xallas's waterfall emptying directly into the sea, a rarity in continental Europe. From the viewpoint at the top of the waterfall, we'll contemplate one of the most beautiful maritime images of Galicia.

Later, it'll be worth the effort to make a brief stop in **Corcubión** before ending our outing in the village of Fisterra. This is a very picturesque setting offering all the authenticity and seafaring-flavoured atmosphere of Galician coastal villages. We'll sample the delicious plaited bread with egg, made here with great skill.

Sunset over the sea at Fisterra

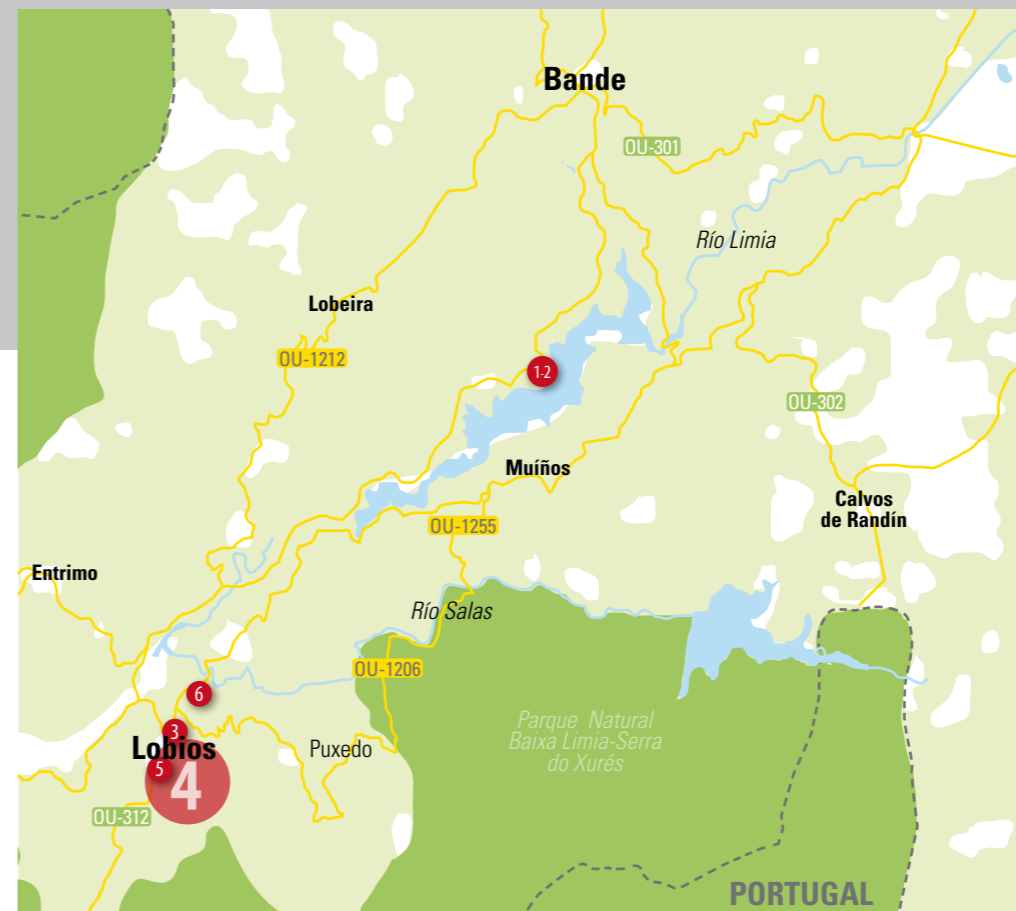
A visit to the **Fisterra Lighthouse** will be the day's most anticipated moment. If we've calculated the time right, we can stop here long enough to watch the mesmerising scene of the setting sun that from time immemorial has led to religious rites taking place here, and which has been identified as an “*ara solis*”, an ancient solar altar. After the last light, it will be time to return to Santiago de Compostela or to take the opportunity to stop at one the many local restaurants to treat our weary bodies to a delicious dinner.

Water and adventure in Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Nature Park

In Lobios, the hot-springs experience blends the curative powers of the thermal waters with the fascinating environment of the Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Nature Park. Twenty-first century spa villages and settlements dating back to the ancient Roman Empire are surrounded by mountains, glacial valleys, reservoirs, cascades, granite eruptions shaped like needles and bowling pins, and riparian and mountain forests that are home to mountain lions, roe deer and wild horses. This is Nature's architecture, which coexists with human-built megaliths, Roman roads, granaries and watermills.



> Granaries in Queguas. Serra do Xurés



START_ Bande
END_ Lobios
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_
→ *Aquae Querquennae Via Nova* Interpretation Centre. Tel_ **988 444 401**
→ Balneario de Lobios. Tel_ **988 448 440**



EXPERIENCE

- day 1|
Bande
- 1_ *Aquae Querquennae Via Nova* Interpretation Centre
 - 2_ *Aquis Querquennis* archaeological site
- Lobios
- 3_ The spa village of Lobios
- day 2|
Lobios
- 4_ Corga da Fecha route
 - Archaeological remains of the *Aquis Originis mansio*
 - Corga da Fecha
 - Bridge over the River Caldo
 - Cabaniña do Curro
 - 5_ Spa in Lobios
- day 3|
Lobios
- 5_ Spa in Lobios
 - 6_ Trail horseback ride from the San Martiño site

| day 1 |

From a Roman villa to a spa village

The excavations of the Roman village of *Aquis Querquennis*

On the road to the spa village of Lobios we take the OU-540 through the municipality of Bande, where there is a unique example of the heritage of the Baixa Limia region that is very closely linked to hot spring therapy: the Roman sites of *Aquis Querquennis*. We suggest you reach this stage in your trip by early afternoon to visit this important site. The turnout is small and simple and signposted few kilometres after the village of **Bande**.



→ Lobios spa

This large Roman military camp – dating from the first or second century AD – was the base camp for the construction of the *Via Nova*, an important Roman road close to the site that linked Astorga and Braga. Situated on the banks of the River Limia, on a spit of land that occupies part of the **As Conchas reservoir**, from which it partially emerges when the water is rising, it has a blue and green background marked by the waters and riparian forest and a mountain.

The site is very large: to date, over two thousand metres of rectangular wall have been excavated and many building elements have been found inside, such as rows of square pillars, the remains of beautiful columns and standing arches.

Next to the camp, we'll also be able to discern what remains of an ancient Roman *mansio*, a kind of inn for travellers on the *Via Nova* which boasted an oven for baking bread, accommodations, kitchen and patio. You'll find hot springs welling up generously among the remains. You can make use of them as did the Romans in times long past and as the locals – who ascribe properties against rheumatism and skin diseases to them – continue to do.

We suggest that before touring the archaeological remains, you visit the *Aquae Querquennae Via Nova Interpretation Centre*, which is on way to the site. It recreates the route of a Roman road and the elements found



> Nosa Señora do Xurés hermitage



> Pozas de Vilameá. Lobios



> Aquis Querquennis Roman archaeological site

The thermal waters emerging among these archaeological remains have been attributed with healing properties since Roman times

In the spa village of Lobios

We resume our journey to the spa village of Lobios, situated in the parish of Río Caldo, which is only a half-hour drive away. The municipality, which is part of the territory of the Baixa Limia-Serra do Xurés Nature Park, offers a broad variety of establishments where we can stay, such as houses, apartments or rural hotels and a four-star spa hotel in the spa village itself.

Once you've settled in, we suggest you take advantage of what remains of the afternoon to enjoy the benefits of these bicarbonate-, sodium- and chloride-rich waters emanating from the springs at a temperature of more than 70 degrees. We can do this in the spa hotel's indoor swimming pools, which boast spectacular views of the mountains of the Serra do Xurés, and combine the water's micro-medicinal properties with a massage or beauty, relaxation or health treatment, or outdoors, where there is a riverside promenade and a large area designed for swimming next to the River Caldo, with a large, free-of-charge pool of steaming hot spring waters that mix with the cooler waters of the river.

For dinner: game or beef

Our advice is that you dine in the accommodation you've chosen, but keeping in mind local, native products. Outstanding choices include game or beef from a *cachena* cow, a native breed with small bodies and large horns. They live in semi-free-range circumstances in extensive herds on the nearby plains in Leboreiro, O Quinxo, Santa Eufemia, Xurés and Pisco.

Hiking trails through the Nature Park and relaxation in the spa

After breakfast, we suggest that you start off enjoying the amazing scenery, nature and ethnographic and archaeological resources of the nature park with a hike along one of the trails of the many that there are here. You can ask the restaurant where you are staying to prepare a picnic for you.

An ancient Roman mansion – with underfloor heating

We propose that you take the so-called **Ruta da Corga da Fecha**, which begins in the spa in Lobios and follows the riverside promenade along the River Caldo, where we were the day before. A few hundred metres off the *Via Nova* are the archaeological remains of the **Aquis Originis mansio** where the current excavations let us discern what was a kitchen and the spa area. It also has hypocaust – a heating system that circulated hot air through underfloor pipes – used especially in the hot springs of the Empire.

Restored mills, waterfalls and blue-tinged pools

We continue our journey through the valley of the River Caldo until we cross the **Corga da Fecha**, the starting point of the ascent that will take us to crystal-clear pools that run along the edge the entire Corga. Some fifty metres on from here you can cross the **bridge over the River Caldo**, to your right, and admire a mill – of several that exist on the river – that has been restored.

Then retrace your steps before resuming the route before the bridge and you'll begin an ascent to some beautiful pools and waterfalls or "*corgas*". They are a series of cascades along the final stretch of the Fecha brook reaching an elevation distance of two hundred metres in search of the embedded river bed of the River Caldo. At each step of the cascade, the water forms pools in which it takes on a lovely bluish colour.

A small hut used by shepherds

If we continue climbing, we'll be rewarded with beautiful views of the valley of the River Caldo and the Serra de Santa Eufemia. Next, you reach level ground, where you can connect with another of the park's routes, known as **Cabañina do Curro**, which offers the opportunity of visiting this little hut – or "*chivana*" – a curious building used by shepherds for shelter.

If we hike the route when spring is in full bloom, besides having our vision flooded with beautiful scenery, our noses will appreciate the plethora of aromas given off by the abundant plant life that greets us at every step.

In the afternoon, back at your accommodation, we recommend that you put yourselves into the hands of the professionals at the **Lobios spa** for a massage that will reinvigorate you after your hike and that you enjoy the jet pool, thermal chairs and other services offered in the spa's leisure facilities.

At dinner, we'll sample organic goat cheese and honey

At dinnertime, you'll enjoy traditional Galician cuisine in the spa's restaurant or in another local spot. Exquisite organic goat cheese is produced locally. A few years ago, a species belonging to the family of the extinct Xurés breed of goats – whose last refuge was these mountains in the late nineteenth century – was reintroduced. The current specie's good adaptation to the area has allowed old local customs and traditions to be recovered and showcased, such as the production of this artisan cheese. For dessert, consider the fact that – thanks to the Nature Park's rich and varied flora – the local honey is outstanding.



| Lobios spa

A trail ride

After breakfast, there is still time for a last swim or spa treatment at the **hotel-spa in Lobios**. Then we encourage you to enjoy yesterday's same panoramic views, but from a different perspective: on horseback.

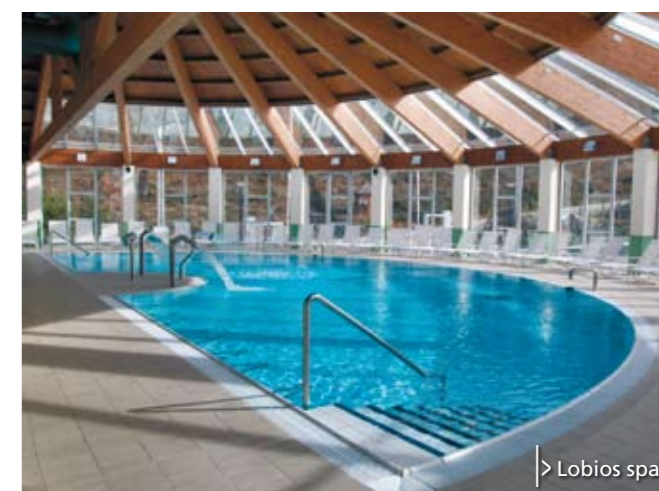
This route – of great scenic interest – can be chosen to last one, two or even four hours through the area around Lobios, starting from **San Martiño**. Along the trail, you'll discover places of outstanding beauty. You'll have the opportunity to pass through villages that reveal the details of their traditional architecture, and even cross small brooks or streams.



| Aquis Originis



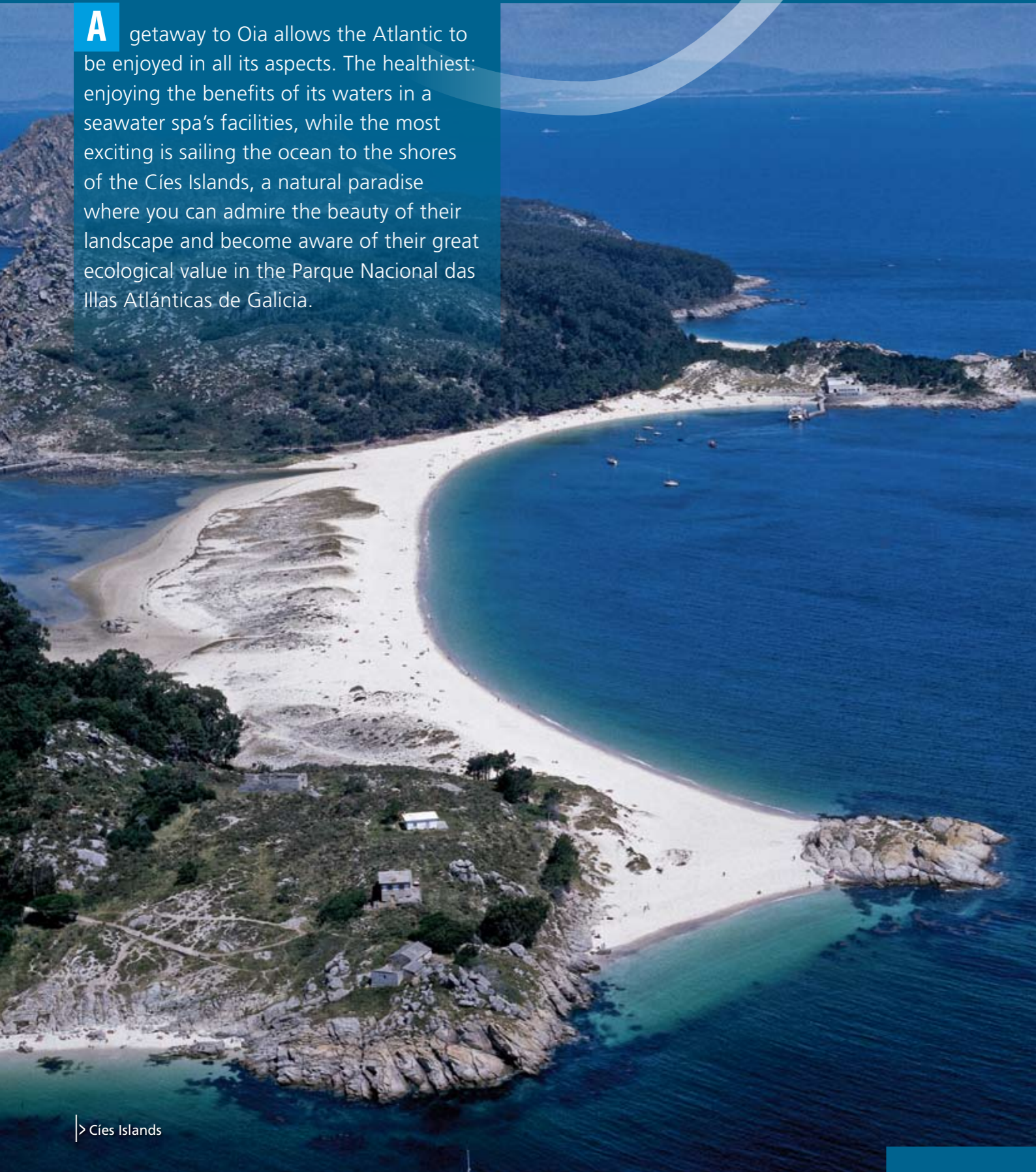
| O Xurés



| Lobios spa

Water, stone and Cíes

A getaway to Oia allows the Atlantic to be enjoyed in all its aspects. The healthiest: enjoying the benefits of its waters in a seawater spa's facilities, while the most exciting is sailing the ocean to the shores of the Cíes Islands, a natural paradise where you can admire the beauty of their landscape and become aware of their great ecological value in the Parque Nacional das Illas Atlánticas de Galicia.



START_ Baiona
END_ Oia
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_

- Talaso Atlántico_ www.talasoatlantico.com
- Parque Nacional das Illas Atlánticas de Galicia_ www.iatlanticas.es
- Convent of Santa María de Oia_ www.monasteriodeoia.com



4 EXPERIENCE

- day 1|
Baiona
1_ Cape Silleiro lighthouse
Oia
2_ Talaso Atlántico
- day 2|
Vigo
3_ Bouzas pier
Cíes Islands
4_ Boeiro Islet – San Martiño Island – Monte Faro Island – Monte Agudo Island – Rodas Beach – Nature Interpretation centre
Vigo
3_ Bouzas pier
5_ A Pedra market
- day 3|
Oia
2_ Talaso Atlántico
6_ Convent of Santa María

| day 1 |

The waters of the Atlantic, concentrated in a thalassotherapy spa

A picturesque coastal road leads to the municipality of Oia, in the Baixo River Miño region. This is the destination that we suggest for you to experience the effects of the recognised micro-medicinal mineral properties of the Atlantic's seawater and its algae, silt, salts and mud applied in health, beauty and relaxation treatments.





> Cape Silleiro



> Baiona and the Cíes Islands

The sea breeze in Cape Silleiro

We recommend arriving early in the afternoon at this area bordering the municipalities of Baiona and Oia. This way, you'll have the chance to come into contact with the spectacular scenery of this coast which is open to the ocean and will impress you. You can do this from the lookout of the **Cape Silleiro Lighthouse**. Take the road that starts off in Baiona towards A Guarda; about five kilometres along, a detour to the left allows us to ascend to the lighthouse. It is a prime location for seeing how the waves hit the rocky coast and for viewing the town of Baiona, the Cíes Islands and – scanning the distance – Cape Home.

The lighthouse at Cape Silleiro – dressed in its characteristic red and white stripes – stands 85 metres above sea level. It opened in 1924 to replace the old one that dated back to 1866; today, it is one of the main points of orientation for the ships that ply these waters. Its 3,000-watt lamp can be seen for 40 miles when the weather is clear. Above it, you'll find some old artillery batteries and the remains of the military headquarters which served to defend this stretch of the coast.

Thirty-four-degree seawater, algae, mud and mineral salts

We can spend the rest of the afternoon enjoying the hot springs facilities of the thalassotherapy spa. Its seawater pool – heated to 34 degrees – has different hydrotherapy systems aimed at creating a state of relaxation and well-being following a series of seawater treatments. Another option is to experience the properties of seaweed, mud or salts via remineralising, moisturising, antioxidant or stress-relief treatments.

For dinner: octopus, soft-shell crabs, scallops or sea urchins

At dinnertime, you can decide whether to remain in the spa-hotel's restaurant or choose another one in the area. There are numerous restaurants on both sides of the coastal road winding through all the villages in Oia that include products from the coast – especially octopus, soft-shell crabs, scallops and sea urchins – in their various preparations. When choosing the wine, keep in mind that we are close to the O Rosal area, which belongs to the Rías Baixas Denomination of Origin.



> Sailboat in the Cíes Islands

| day 2 |

Sailing to the Cíes Islands

We embark on Bouzas pier in Vigo

If we got to know the more therapeutic and relaxing facet related to the sea, we'd like to encourage you to try a completely opposite kind of adventure. So, after breakfast, we suggest that you take a sailboat to the archipelago of the Cíes Islands, which belong to the Parque Nacional das Illas Atlánticas de Galicia.

There are several charter sailing companies that arrange this kind of seagoing excursion from the Bouzas pier in Vigo. There's where we'll have to go in order to embark at mid-morning. Whether we are experienced sailors or taking our maiden voyage, we can experience the exhilarating sensation of steering the vessel ourselves during the voyage under the supervision and direction of the crew.

Special Protection Area for Birds

The Cíes archipelago begins south, at **Boeiro Islet** and **San Martiño Island**, also known as “Illa do Sur” (South Island) and the first whose shores we skirt. From the sea, we’ll be observing its mountainous terrain and its various faces. We’ll notice that the one facing the estuary is soft and sandy, while the western face – looking towards the open sea – will appear rugged, with steep slopes ending in cliffs.

During our voyage, we’ll spot birds such as the yellow-legged gull, which has one of the largest colonies in the world in the Cíes Islands. Not surprisingly, the archipelago has been declared a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA).

Next, we’ll head over to the **Monte Faro Island** (Middle Island) and **Monte Agudo** (North Island), both linked by the large sand spit that makes up **Rodas beach**, where the boat will be moored to visit the island. You can take the opportunity to stroll its soft, light-coloured sand and dip your feet in the turquoise waters, or even take a dip if the weather permits. This place, crowned with small dunes, is a paradise; across the sand is a crystal-clear lagoon. In 2007, the British newspaper *The Guardian* rated this beach as one of the world’s best.

A lunchtime, we’ll head back to the sailboat for our picnic. After having a rest, we can hike a stretch of the path known as the “**Monte Faro Route**”. It starts at the information booth and soon leads us to “Illa do Medio” (**Middle Island**) through the dike connecting the two islands. This route allows us to discover iconic sites, the first of which will be the lagoon, where we can see the fish, shellfish and algae that are examples of this setting’s rich aquatic ecosystems.

The British newspaper *The Guardian* rated the beach in Rodas as one of the world’s best



> Rodas beach

Hundreds of yellow-legged seagulls

Next, we can visit the **Nature Interpretation Centre** to better understand the park’s natural and cultural wealth. At the end of the climb there is a bird observatory from which we’ll see hundreds of seagulls nesting on the cliffs. Hopefully, we’ll also be able to see groups of European shags, which pick the areas closest to the sea to nest; there are magnificent views of the lagoon and Rhodes beach from here. After our hike, we’ll return to the boat, sailing the waters into the estuary until we dock at Bouzas pier.

If you decide to stay in Vigo before returning to the hotel for dinner, we recommend that you go to the **A Pedra market**. There, the famous *ostreiras* on Rúa Pescadería – with decades of experience in their hands – will masterfully open the freshest bivalves for you, which you can enjoy with some Albariño wine with the Rías Baixas Denomination of Origin.

| day 3 |

A treatment in the thalassotherapy spa and a visit to the Convent of Santa María

After breakfast, a final treatment in the thalassotherapy spa’s hot springs facilities, or a dip in the fun-therapy pool with seawater can be a great way to bid farewell. Then – if you still have time – we suggest you visit Oia’s most iconic building: the twelfth-century Convent of Santa María, which we reach easily by following the coastal road. We’ll find this Cistercian gem – declared a Historic and Artistic Monument – on the waterfront with its baroque façade keeping an eye on the Atlantic or facing the onslaught of its waves when the weather is turbulent.



> Convent of Santa María de Oia



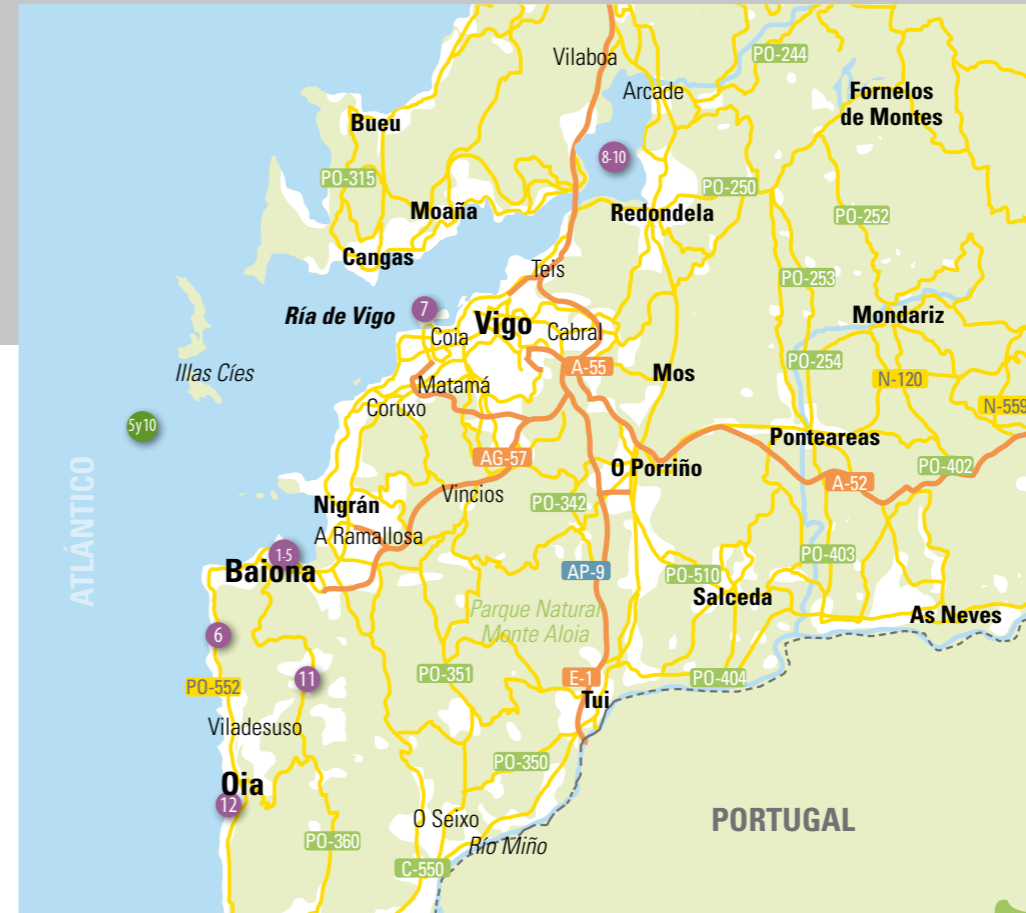
> Talaso Atlántico

Atlanticus

The municipality of Oia shows us the Atlantic's most relaxing and exciting side. We can enjoy the benefits of its waters as they are applied to thalassotherapy. We can also get caught up by the spectacular scenery, flora and fauna of Vigo's bay and the San Simón cove, a Special Protection Area for Natural Assets and Site of Community Importance in the Red Natura 2000. Meanwhile, we'll dive into exciting stories of pirates, sea battles and sunken sea treasures.



> San Simón Island



5 EXPERIENCE

- day 1 | Baiona
 - 1_ Boardwalk
 - 2_ Marina
 - 3_ Fort
 - 4_ Reproduction of the caravel *La Pinta*
 - 5_ Old Town
- Oia
 - 6_ Talaso Atlántico
- day 2 | Vigo
 - 7_ Bouzas pier
- Vigo Estuary / San Simón Archipelago
 - 8_ Captain's Pier
 - 9_ San Antón Island (Interpretation and Documentation Centre)
 - 10_ San Simón Island (Box Tree Promenade)
- Vigo
 - 7_ Bouzas pier
- Oia
 - 6_ Talaso Atlántico
- day 3 | Oia
 - 6_ Talaso Atlántico
 - 11_ Serra da Groba
 - 12_ Convent of Santa María

<p>START_ Baiona END_ Oia DAYS_ 3</p>	<p>MORE INFORMATION_</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Talaso Atlántico_ www.talasoatlantico.com → Fundación Illa de San Simón_ www.fundacionilladesansimon.org → Convent of Santa María de Oia_ www.monasteriodeoia.com
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| day 1 | History in Baiona and seawater in Oia

Our proposal for you to enjoy the benefits of thalassotherapy will take us to the facilities at the Talaso Atlántico seawater spa, located in As Mariñas, in the municipality of Oia.



> Talaso Atlántico

We'll recall the discovery of America

We suggest that you arrive in the area – separated from the town of Baiona by barely fifteen minutes' travel by car via the PO-552 – early in the afternoon, which is why we propose that you previously make a stop in this attractive town. The first thing that catches your eye is the **Seaside Promenade**, which is very carefully tended and extends six kilometres. You can start your stroll at A Ramallosa, facing Ladeira beach, and continue on to the fishing port and marina.

If you've got something more relaxing in mind, drive towards the town centre and begin at the **marina** itself on Avenida Monterreal. You'll enjoy the view over its busy bay teeming with fishing boats and modern pleasure craft. At the end, you'll be able to see the **fortress** – now a state-owned hotel – capping the peninsula of Monterreal.

Among the ships moored at the end of a long pier, there is an older one that will catch your eye, reminding you of the caravels that accompanied Columbus on his discovery of America. This is an exact replica of the **caravel La Pinta**, which is closely tied to Baiona's history. The original reached this port in 1493 with the first news of the existence of the New World. In commemoration of this historic milestone, every year on the first weekend in March, Baiona celebrates the **Festa da Arribada** (Reaching Home Port Festival) which has been declared an official Tourist Event.

The ship's interior can be toured and is a fun way to relive the exploits of the discovery. Inside, it houses a small museum on Columbus with figures representing the crew and Native Americans. It has reproductions of metals, plants, food and exotic animals that it brought from the New World on its first trip back to Europe.

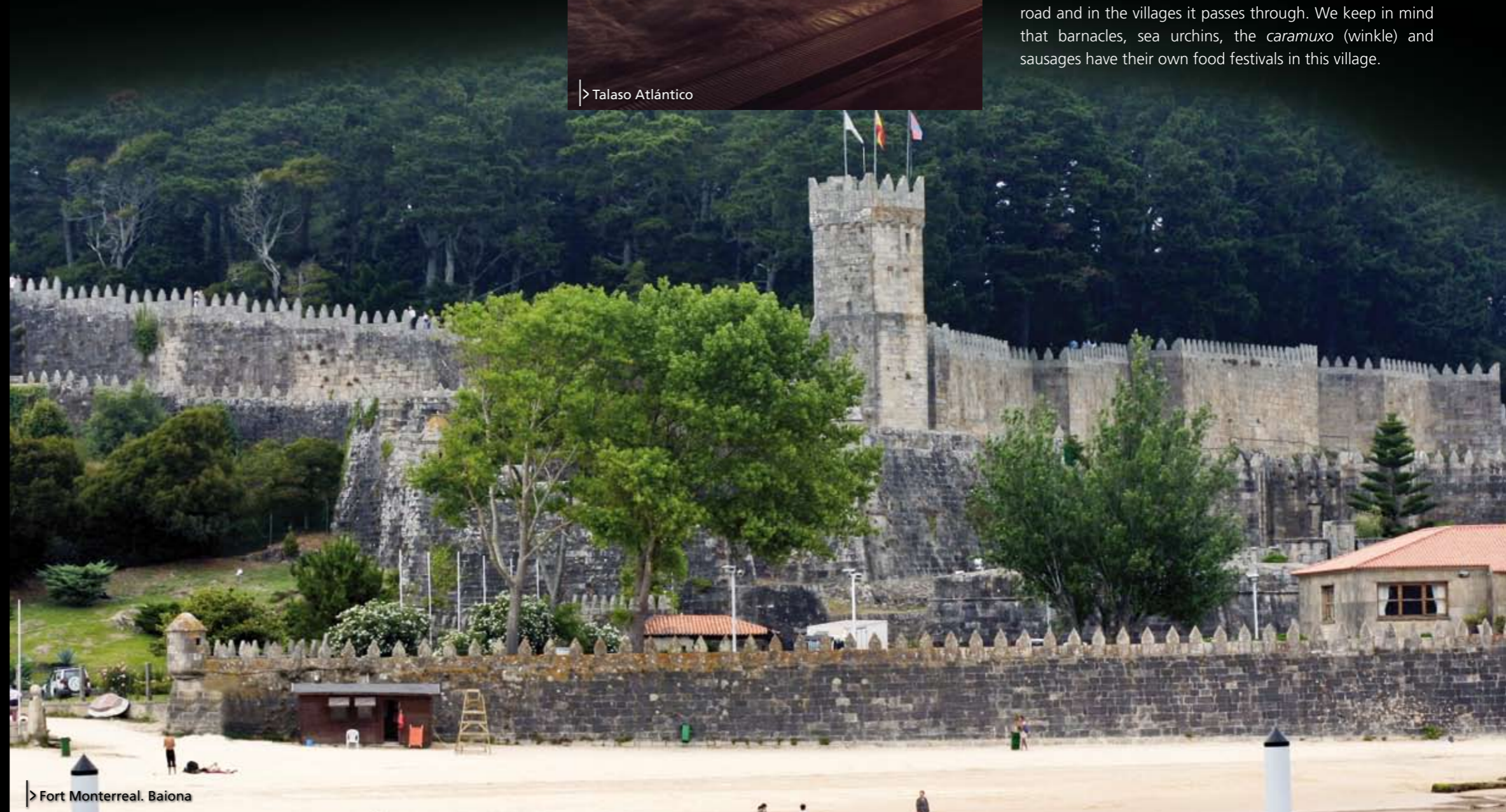


> Festa da Arribada (Reaching Home Port Festival)

A stroll through Baiona's Old Town

After the tour, you'll have the feeling that you're continuing your trip back in time if you enter the narrow streets with arcades and cobblestones of the Old Town, which can be accessed from the seaport. You'll surely enjoy a short walk as at every step you'll find a church, a fountain or the house of a member of the nobility. In Baiona, as in any of the towns and cities of Galicia, tapas are on offer everywhere if you're in the mood to enjoy this custom.

In 1493, the caravel La Pinta reached the Port of Baiona with the first news of the existence of America



> Fort Monterreal. Baiona



> Talaso Atlántico

Treatments with sea-based products in Oia's thalassotherapy spa

After the tapas, it will be time to head over to the village of Oia to enjoy the benefits of the water and other sea-based items. You'll find a wide range of accommodation locally, including the four-star hotel that houses thalassotherapy spa facilities.

Once you've dropped your luggage in the accommodation of your choice, it will be time to try the seawater pool heated to body temperature or any of the treatments based on algae, silts, mud or salts with rehydrating and remineralising properties.

Barnacles, sea urchins, winkles or sausage for dinner

Following the treatment, it's nice to rest a bit before dinner, for which there are many alternatives. Restaurants, bars and seafood restaurants are located on both sides of the coastal road and in the villages it passes through. We keep in mind that barnacles, sea urchins, the *caramuxo* (winkle) and sausages have their own food festivals in this village.

The dark and glorious history of the archipelago of San Simón

During the second day of your stay, we suggest that you take advantage of the proximity to Vigo's estuary to get to know its landscape, environmental treasures, history and legends found in its seabeds as well as emerging from its surface, such as the small archipelago of San Simón.

The crew will let us handle the rudder and sails

The various local charter sailing companies offer boat tours. Touring this way can help us to add even more excitement to the experience, for example by plying the waters in a sailboat. The embarkation point will be on the **Bouzas pier**, in Vigo,

where we can head after breakfast. Remember to take warm clothes, sunscreen and avoid shoes with black soles.

Before setting sail, the crew will give us all the instructions and safety-related material necessary. In addition – if this is our maiden voyage – they'll let us try out handling the sails and rudder. This will be the right time to remember what Captain Nemo said to Professor Aronnax: "We are in that Vigo Bay, and it rests with yourself whether you will penetrate its mysteries", because in this estuary, Jules Verne also found inspiration for his *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

We make a stop in front of a shellfish raft for oysters or mussels

Once on board, we head for the San Simón cove, which is the end point of the interior of Vigo's estuary. Polygons of shellfish rafts for cultivating bivalves such as oysters and mussels flank both ends of the estuary, appearing huddled together. A little further on, the route includes a stop at one of them in order to get to know first-hand the process of breeding on these floating platforms.

Our journey continues and we see how the banks of the estuary narrow until they meet at the cable-stayed **Rande Bridge**, which was the longest of its kind in the world when it opened. Once across, we'll enter the bay of San Simón. It is said that on its seabed lie the treasures brought back from America by Spanish galleons there were moored here, which were ordered to be sunk by the Franco-Spanish fleet when it was defeated by the Anglo-Dutch coalition in the memorable battle of Rande, fought on 23 October 1702.

Colonies of ducks, herons, gulls and cormorants

The cove's appearance will remind us of a large lagoon. Here, the salt water of the Atlantic and the fresh water of the Rivers Verdugo and Maceira meet. This phenomenon gives rise to a unique ecosystem known as the Special Protection Area for Natural Assets and Site of Community Importance in the Red Natura 2000: extending before our eyes, we see a marsh- and estuary-filled landscape. If you are birdwatchers, the colonies of ducks and wading birds (herons, gulls and cormorants) will provide a magnificent spectacle.

The seabed at the bottom of the bay of San Simón could hold the treasures Spanish galleons brought back from America

Jules Verne found inspiration in Vigo's estuary for writing *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*



> Vigo estuary



> Shellfish rafts

In San Simón, we are received by a sculpture of Captain Nemo

As we approach the islands of San Simón and San Antón – joined by a lovely three-arched bridge – in the middle of the water, we'll see the sculpture of Captain Nemo, master of the submarine *Nautilus*. At low tide, two divers appear at its feet, only to be once again engulfed in the water when the high tide returns.

After docking at the **Captain's pier**, we'll enter San Simón. From this moment forward, we'll be immersing ourselves in the history of the archipelago, which has been revived after years of neglect. It has become a think tank, a laboratory of ideas that serves as a platform for different groups for expression and the free flow of thought. An environmental restoration project included the rehabilitation of its old buildings; this initiative is an homage to the dark and glorious history of the islands' past.

For ten centuries, the islands served as a settlement for monks Templars, a place of inspiration in mediaeval Galician-Portuguese lyric literature, the object of looting by Vikings and pirates and witnesses of naval battles. And later, a lazar house, concentration camp and Franco-era prison, orphanage and holiday retreat for Franco's guard. We can discover the details of this story at the **Interpretation and Documentation Centre**, which occupies the building known as the "little hospital" on San Antón Island.

We have lunch and walk around the island of San Simón

After our visit, we can cross the bridge to the other island in San Simón to eat in the restaurant and café and afterwards go for a stroll. The beauty of its landscape leaves no visitor indifferent. Its lush vegetation has many non-native species, including some that are exotic. **The Paseo dos Buxos** – a vault of box nearly two hundred years old – is quite interesting. Although the small size of the archipelago allows it to be crossed in a half-hour, we recommend a leisurely walk, discovering the abundance of natural and artistic details, which are at times obvious and at other times more hidden.

By mid-afternoon, once we've docked in Vigo, heading back to the thalassotherapy spa for some thermal treatments before dinner may be a very inviting idea.

The archipelago of San Simón was
a lepers' hospital,
Franco-era concentration camp
and then prison

*"Sediam e na ermida de San Simón
e cercáronme as ondas, que grandes son;
jeu atendendo o meu amigo,
eu atendendo o meu amigo!"*

*"Standing in the hermitage of San Simón,
with the waves beseiging me;
how big they are!
And I, waiting for my friend,
waiting for my friend!"*

Mendinho, Galician-Portuguese troubador

| day 3 |

From the sea to the mountain

After breakfast, there will still be time for a dip in the thalassotherapy spa's seawater swimming pool. We can also have a massage or one final relaxing, aesthetic or health treatment.

Among wild horses

When you've finished, head towards the south of the municipality of Oia along the coastal road so that after a sea-filled weekend, you can explore the mountains. Along this trip, we encourage you to take one of the roads that head towards the **Serra da Groba** from Viladesuso or Mougás. Its forest trails lend themselves to discovering the world of summer pastures and wild horses.

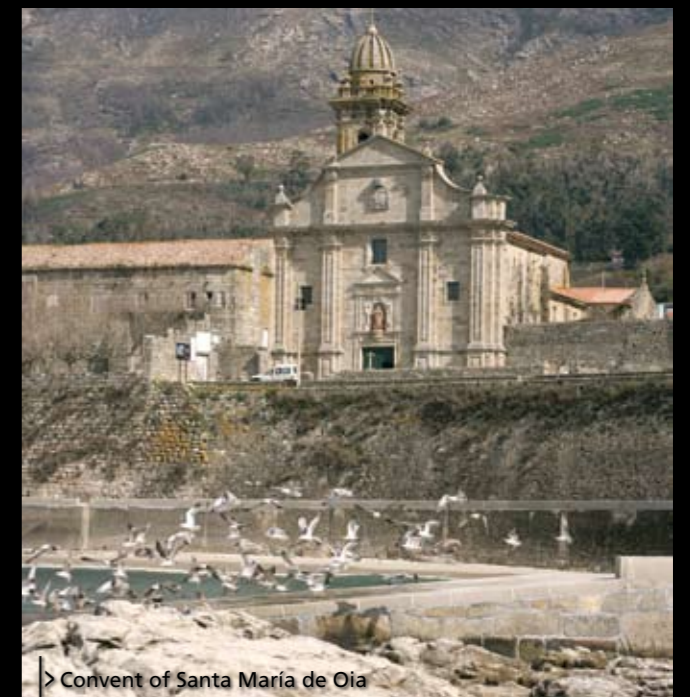
We're in the land of Galicia's most traditional *curros*, one of the well-attended and most popular spectacles in the area, which consists of corralling the horses from these mountains and subsequently trimming their manes and branding them. This event takes place in May and June.



Here, the Galicia's most traditional roundups are held; a battle between man and horse whose purpose is to cut their manes and brand the animals

A convent on the waterfront

We also recommend that you continue a bit further south to the municipality of Oia, the location of the **Convent of Santa María a Real de Oia**. In addition to the magnificent construction of this austere Cistercian convent, which was founded in the twelfth century with the help of King Alfonso VII, its oceanfront location will also amaze you.



> San Simón bay, Cesantes

> Convent of Santa María de Oia

Hot springs and O Ribeiro wines

We suggest that you enjoy the particular symbiosis between hot spring therapy and wine tourism in the heart of Galicia with a getaway to the lands of O Ribeiro and O Carballiño. Here the waters heal, create beautiful landscapes and exert a beneficial influence on the cultivation of grapevines.



> Laias spa



EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Cenlle
- 1_ Spa village of Lobios
 - 2_ Barbantes-Estación
 - 3_ Pazo de Rioboo
 - 4_ Laias spa
- day 2 |
O Carballiño
- 5_ Temple of A Veracruz
 - 6_ O Carballiño Grand Spa
 - 7_ Municipal Park Leiro
 - 8_ Viña Meín winery
- day 3 |
Cenlle
- 4_ Laias spa
 - Punxín and San Amaro
 - 9_ San Cibrao de Las

START_ Cenlle
END_ Punxín and San Amaro
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_

→ O Ribeiro Designation of Origin: www.ribeiro.es
→ Laias spa (Cenlle). Tel_ 988 280 409

→ O Carballiño Grand Spa . Tel_ 988 270 926
→ Viña Meín winery_ www.vinamein.com



| day 1 |

Mineral waters and charming landscapes in Laias

Laias' waters have been enjoyed since Roman times

The districts of O Carballiño and O Ribeiro, in the province of Ourense, have been known since ancient times for their thermal waters and wine of the O Ribeiro Denomination of Origin, which today remain the basis of their economies. In this setting, the municipality of Cenlle provides spaces where water – which gushes forth at over fifty degrees – heals and also creates places of spectacular beauty.

In terms of accommodation, locally there are rural tourism houses and a spa hotel in the parish of Laias where the ancient Romans settled to mine the golden sands carried by the River Miño. We suggest that you arrive in Cenlle early in the afternoon so that you can enjoy at your leisure its scenery and micro-medicinal waters, whose benefits were appreciated as far back as 999 by Bermudo II, King of León, who came here accompanied by Prince Alfonso V to treat and obtain relief from his gout.

A walk along the banks of the River Miño

Once you've settled in at your chosen accommodation, we suggest you start making contact with this water- and forest-filled landscape. Outside of the spa village of Laias there is a path of just over two kilometres that allows you to walk among the vegetation at the edge of the River Miño, following its course to **Barbantes-Estación**.

Along the path – which is signposted and easy to walk – we'll notice how the calm backwaters of the river are like a mirror reflecting these vineyard-covered hillsides, dotted with small villages and lush vegetation of *carballos* (pedunculate oak), *cerquiños* (Pyrenean oak) and other riparian species. Along the way, we'll feel the coolness – and also some mystery – as we walk along the twisted and moss-covered trunks of the oaks that appear along the path.

Other sections have a more romantic air when the leaves fall and cushion our path. On the other side of the river stand grand mansions such as the seventeenth-century **Pazo de Rioboo**, whose beautiful baroque gate with Compostela-style influences seems to offer us a friendly greeting.



A thermal treatment session in the spa

When the walk is over, we can finish off the afternoon in the spa's facilities, allowing the benefits of its hyperthermal and mostly bicarbonated and alkaline waters take effect on our health. Its outdoor heated pool and adjoining terrace are like a balcony with spectacular views to the **Castrelo de Miño reservoir**.

Dinner, based on meat and savoury pies, with O Ribeiro wine

At dinner time, these lands have excellent products from traditional Galician cuisine. We can start off our meal with a savoury pie, and follow it with meat *richada*-style, *cachucha* (pig's head) or pork with turnip tops, accompanied by O Ribeiro Denomination of Origin wines. We suggest that you leave sampling the octopus *á feira* for tomorrow in O Carballiño, where the *polbeiras* (octopus cooks) enjoy a well-deserved fame.



| day 2 |

A day in the spa town of Carballiño

After breakfast, we propose that you drive to the spa town of O Carballiño, which you'll reach via the AG-53 and then taking the signposted exits to the town. Original buildings, spas and riverside promenades along the banks of the **River Arenteiro** make it ideal for spending part of the day.

The striking style of the Temple of A Veracruz

We can start off by visiting one of the buildings that most catches the eye of new visitors, the Temple of A Veracruz, by the Galician architect Antonio Palacios. This building is in the "historicist" style, in which decorative elements from different artistic periods such as Romanesque and Gothic are mixed and castle or manor battlements are added. All this defines a very particular construction style which is present in other buildings such as the Votive Temple in Panxón or the Virgin of the Rock in Baiona.

The medicinal waters of the O Carballiño Grand Spa

Next, following Marcelino Parrondo street, we'll reach Avenida do Balneario and soon see the O Carballiño Grand Spa emerge behind its gate from among a magnificent grove of oak and beech trees. This forest increases the building's own charm, with its crenellated tower, its large white gallery and glazed lantern in the centre. We suggest that you go on inside, where you'll find the **Pabellón de Agüistas**, which houses the spring of medicinal waters, and give its healing waters a try.

Walk along the shores of the river

The morning will culminate perfectly if you finish it off with a stroll along the shores of the River Areteiro, touring one of the town's most iconic leisure areas, the **Municipal Park**. The park is an extensive woodland crossed by roads, avenues and squares, walkways and wooden bridges and is the site of the **Festa do Polbo**, O Carballiño's tribute to the octopus *par excellence*, held every second Sunday in August. We encourage you to continue on to the end of the walk, beyond the area known as **illa do Filomeno**, the location of a fish farm, until you reach the **Pena do Namorados**, a big boulder on top of a granite structure, wrapped in legends about treasures and romance.

Pulpo á feira and bread from Cea

At lunchtime, we may remember a local saying: "For meat, bread and wine, O Carballiño". Nevertheless, we're not going to renounce a few plates of octopus *á feira* style, cut on alderwood plates, with coarse salt, pepper and olive oil by the famed *polbeiras* of the locality. Bread from Cea – a nearby town known for this product – and O Ribeiro Designation of Origin wines will be luxurious accompaniments. Lastly, for dessert, you can enjoy some cream-stuffed pastries – a typical O Carballiño sweet – and coffee liqueur, which is so popular in the province.

Touring a winery, in the home of O Ribeiro

In the afternoon, we suggest that you visit some of the wineries included in the O Ribeiro Designation of Origin and sample their wines. One interesting option is to visit the parish of San Clodio, in the municipality of Leiro, where it is believed that Cistercian monks planted the first vines in the mediaeval era.

We'll take a walk through a plantation of *Treixadura*, one of the designations' preferred white varieties. Adjacent to the vineyard stands a charming rural accommodation – a pioneer of wine tourism in Galicia – the result of the rehabilitation of a grand old manor house. From here, we can see the vineyards climbing the mountainside. We finish off our visit with some samples of their wines and return to the hotel for dinner.



> Octopus



> San Cibrao de Las fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village



> Vineyards and Monastery of San Clodio Leiro

| day 3 |

A spa treatment and a visit to a fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village

On the morning of the departure we can take advantage of the spa's hot springs facilities and enjoy an aesthetic, health or relaxation treatment that will get us ready to return home completely stress-free.

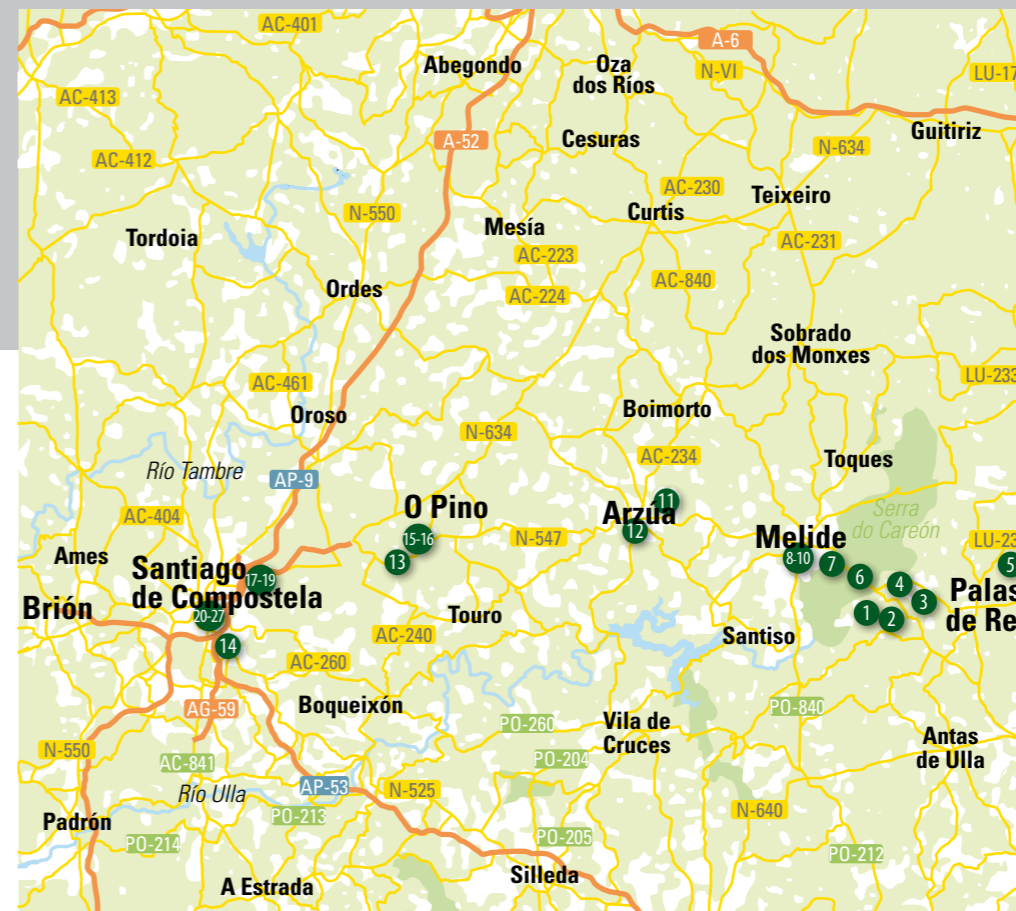
The San Cibrao de Las fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village is one of Galicia's largest

Once the treatment has been completed, you can take advantage of the fact that just a few kilometres separate these facilities from the San Cibrao de Las fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village, one of the largest in Galicia. It is also known as *A Cidade* and straddles the municipalities of Punxín and San Amaro. It was inhabited between the second centuries BC and AD, during the final stage of the *castrexa* culture.

You'll be able to pick out strong, extensive walls – one inside the other, forming two nearly concentric ellipses. The surface area between the walls is close to 100,000 m², of which almost 9,000 are part of the acropolis. This extension makes it difficult to notice all the interesting elements it contains. We recommend that you take a good look at on one of its most unique buildings: the **fountain/cistern** next to the west gate of the space before the acropolis.

Walk and rest

This proposal ties together the Way of St James with Galicia's seaside wealth so that body and spirit can make the best of both. The French Way is the best-known pilgrimage route to Santiago, and has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, a European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe and has received the Prince of Asturias Award for Concord. Each day we'll combine a stretch of the pilgrimage route through Galicia with some rest and relaxation in spas that bring back the golden age of hot spring therapy with their modern wellness facilities adapted to the twenty-first century demands.



START_ Palas de Rei
END_ Santiago de Compostela
DAYS_ 5

MORE INFORMATION_

- Pambre Spa (Palas de Rei)_ www.balnearioriopambre.com
- Los Caminantes hostel (Arzúa)_ www.albergueloscaminantes.com
- Arzúa-Ulloa cheese_ www.arzua-ulloa.org
- Compostela spa (Brión)_ www.arzua-ulloa.org
- Cathedral of Santiago_ www.catedraldesantiago.es



> Río Pambre Spa Hotel

7 EXPERIENCE

- day 1|
Palas de Rei
- 1_ Río Pambre spa
- 2_ Pambre Castle

- day 2|
Palas de Rei
- 3_ Hamlet of San Xulián do Camiño
- 4_ Ponte Campaña
- 5_ Casanova
- Melide
- 6_ Leboreiro
(granary and Church of Santa María)
- 7_ Furelos bridge
- 8_ Praza do Convento square
- 9_ Carballal
- 10_ River Catasol
- Arzúa
- 11_ Ribadiso hostel
- 12_ Town of Arzúa
- Palas de Rei
- 1_ Río Pambre spa

- day 3|
Arzúa
- 12_ Town of Arzúa
- O Pino
- 13_ Hamlets of A Calzada – Ferreiros –
A Salceda – A Brea – Santa Irene –
A Rúa – Arca
- Brión
- 14_ Compostela spa

- day 4|
O Pino
- 15_ Pedrouzo hostel
- 16_ Hamlet of Santo Antón
- Santiago de Compostela
- 17_ A Lavacolla
- 18_ River Sionlla
- 19_ Monte do Gozo
- Brión
- 14_ Compostela spa

- day 5|
Santiago de Compostela
- 20_ Rúas de San Lázaro – O Valiño –
As Fontiñas – Os Concheiros –
San Pedro streets
- 21_ Porta do Camiño
- 22_ Casas Reais – Praza de Cervantes
square – Acibechería
- 23_ San Martiño Pinario Monastery
- 24_ Praza da Inmaculada square
- 25_ Praza do Obradoiro square
- 26_ Cathedral of Santiago
- 27_ Rúa do Franco



> Pambre Castle



> Río Pambre Hotel Balneario

| day 1 |

Hot springs surrounded by nature in Palas de Rei

Our starting point will be the town of Palas de Rei, in the district of A Ulloa, right in the geographic centre of Galicia. Two main roads pass through it: the LU-231 and the N-547. The latter connects Lugo with Santiago de Compostela.

A spa on the banks of a river

It will be advisable to arrive in the early afternoon in order to enjoy its heritage, thermal spa facilities and local gastronomy. This is an emblematic point along the French Way, so it has hotels, rural tourism houses, inns, hostels and the three-star **Río Pambre Spa Hotel**, where the local hot springs are located.

You'll find the exit well signposted from the N-547. As soon as you arrive, you'll notice the traditional local architecture. The spa's main building is made of stone, wood and slate. The construction of the other two, which are smaller, imitates

pallozas with their circular thatched roofs. The complex, located on the banks of the **River Pambre**, is surrounded by gardens and areas that invite taking a stroll, all surrounded by a native forest with the river's crystal clear waters flowing in the background.

Tour of Pambre Castle

Pambre Castle can be seen from the facilities. From here, you can enjoy excellent views of its large, three-storied square tower, flanked by four others that are shorter, all crenellated in points or triangles and joined by a wall. This fort – an icon of mediaeval military architecture in Galicia and one of the few survivors of the *Irmandiñas* revolutions, peasant uprisings against feudal power that took place during the fifteenth century – is worth a visit. You can get there by walking from the resort under the shade and protection of centuries-old trees.

A series of thermal treatments before dinner

After your tour, we recommend that you return to the spa and enjoy a thermal circuit in its sulfur-, fluoride- and bicarbonate-rich waters. These are prescribed to improve locomotor and respiratory functions, and are highly recommended for dealing with the first stage of the Way the next day. Afterwards, you can relax in the rest area with views to the forest and the river until just before dinnertime.

The king of the local cuisine is the **cheese with the Arzúa-Ulloa Designation of Origin**. A platter combining aged cheese and farmer's cheese – milder and creamier – can be an ideal starter for an excellent locally sourced steak as livestock farming is predominant in the area.



> Río Pambre Hotel Balneario

The Way between Palas de Rei and Arzúa

There are travel agencies in Galicia that can arrange transfers between accommodations and thermal spas and the beginning and end of each stage as well as provide transport for your luggage and hire you a support vehicle for the entire route. We recommend you check with them or make your own arrangements using taxi or car hire services.

Any Way itinerary begins with a fairly early start that will be better tolerated with a good breakfast. During the day, we'll follow the French Way between Palas de Rei and Arzúa. A vehicle will take us to **San Xulián do Camiño**, where we start off our walk next to its Romanesque church and *cruceiro*. Until Melide, it will not be an easy stretch, but we will be rewarded by its beauty.

A circular thatched granary

Between **Ponte Campaña** and **Casanova** we'll be amazed at the path among a spectacular forest of twisted branches that seems to recreate Tolkien's imaginary world. The hamlet of **Leboreiro** is the first A Coruña parish of the stage, a milestone in the Way due to its *cabazo*, a circular granary that looks like an enormous plaited basket with a thatched roof. With the Romanesque Church of Santa María in the background, it makes the perfect scene to immortalise our presence here with a photo. The "foyer" to Melide is the **mediaeval Furelos bridge**, considered a jewel of the civil architecture along the Way.



> Leboreiro Bridge

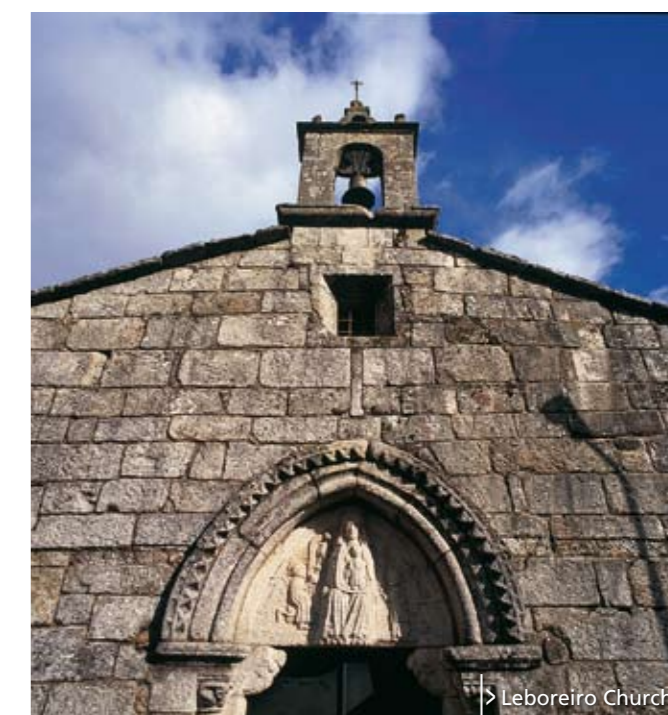
In Melide, octopus á feira-style and typical sweets

Once in Melide, we'll reach the beautiful cobbled square of **O Convento**, centre of the Old Town and location of the old pilgrims' hospital, the convent of Sancti Spiritus and an eighteenth-century pazo housing the Town Council. If we've got a good sense of smell, we'll notice the aromas of traditional bakeries, where they turn out the typical local sweets known as *melindres*, *ricos* and *almendrados*. Reserving these delicious sweets for dessert, we cannot turn our backs on the custom of enjoying a few plates of octopus á *feira* style, which is famous for being one of the tastiest of Galicia.

We visit a nice hostel in Arzúa

We left Melide behind via the Rúa Principal with the intention of completing the stage up to Arzúa. It's an easy stretch in good condition which alternates paths and small roads between hamlets. At times, we'll feel like we're in a postcard, for example after passing **Carballal**, where the landscape is filled with eucalyptus trees, deciduous species and meadows all the way to the stone walkway over the **River Catasol**.

In **Ribadiso**, we suggest you visit one of the most beautiful hostels along the French Way comprising a group of restored cottages and a large garden with stairs leading directly to the river, where you can take a dip in the summer. Once in Arzúa, the vehicle can pick us up at the agreed spot and return to the spa in Palas de Rei, where we suggest you accompany your thermal treatments with a massage that will make you feel like new before dinner and ensure a good night's rest.



> Leboreiro Church



> Melindres from Melide

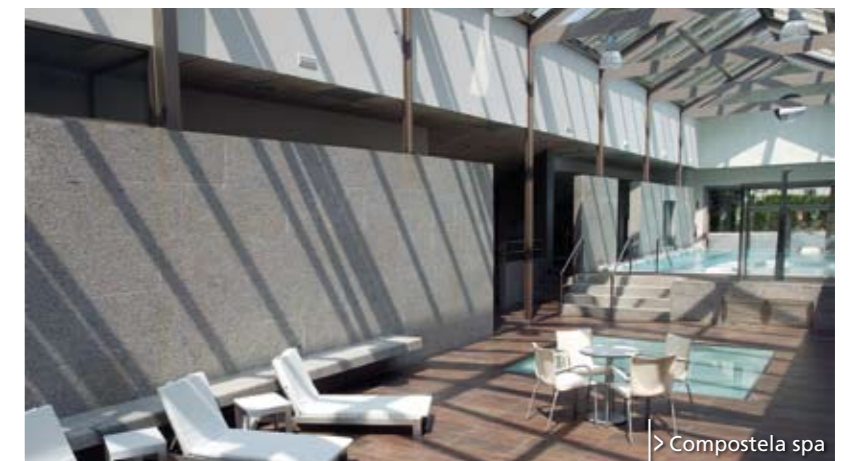


In the past, pilgrims washed in the River Sionlla before reaching Santiago

> Way of St James. O Pino



> Compostela spa



> Compostela spa

| day 3 |

The Way, from Arzúa to Arca

After breakfast, we'll take the car to the beginning of the stage in Arzúa with the aim of reaching the village of Arca, located in the municipality of O Pino. Most of the Way passes through this municipality, with many sections running through meadows, oaks, eucalyptus trees and maize fields around small hamlets such as **A Calzada**, **Ferreiros**, **A Salceda**, **A Brea** and **Santa Irene**. Here, we can visit its charming hermitage dedicated to the Portuguese saint next to a fountain with healing waters that is surrounded by lush trees.

After the village of **A Rúa**, we'll reach Arca, the capital of **O Pino**, with lunchtime well upon us. Traditional eating spots, restaurants and grills feature native products on their menus, including the meat of the *Piñeira* hen, a breed whose taste has been said to lie between that of free-range chicken and wildfowl, and is perfect for stewed, sautéed and oven-baked dishes.

We relax from our walk in the Compostela spa in Brión

After lunch, you'll surely fancy an afternoon of relaxation and rest. One of the closest thermal spas is in **O Tremo**, in the municipality of Brión. It can be reached in a half-hour by car via the N-634, then the AP-9 to bypass Santiago and, lastly, the AG-56 towards Noia.

The spa is located in the facilities of the Hotel-Balneario de Compostela and were built over the historical Our Lady of the Angels spring. Its hot springs treatment series is suitable for improving circulation in the legs, which may be of great relief to us after our hike. You can also request a specific treatment or a massage.

Afterwards, a little siesta will serve to fully restore us from our efforts. In addition to the hotel, quality local rural accommodation is on offer. For dinner, you can stay in the hotel or dine in one of the restaurants and bars in the nearby town of **Bertamiráns**.

| day 4 |

The Way, from O Pino to Santiago

After breakfast, we'll drive to the **hostel in Pedrouzo**, in the municipality of O Pino, the departure point for the last stage of the French Way to Compostela. After the village, a leaf-covered path will lead us into a eucalyptus forest to the hamlet of **Santo Antón**, where we'll ascend to Santiago via another forest of pine and eucalyptus trees that appear lined up close together, along with some oak trees.

After the last village of O Pino, a monolith carved with staff, calabash and scallop shell announces the entry into the municipality of Santiago. After circling the perimeter of Compostela's airport, it begins a descent towards **A Lavacolla**, where we'll cross the **River Sionlla**. In times past, pilgrims shed their clothes here and washed themselves before reaching the city of the Apostle.

The towers of the Cathedral can be first seen from Monte do Gozo

Now we're close to Monte do Gozo, an elevation from where the towers of the Cathedral of Santiago fill the eyes of the pilgrims for the first time on the Way. To celebrate Xacobeo 93, the area was converted into a large and beautiful site that provides all kinds of services to pilgrims.

It has a large hostel, restaurants, hotels, bars, a chapel and a fountain. It will be just the right place to sit back and rest, eat and share our feelings and experiences along the Jacobean route with dozens of pilgrims. A farewell photo next to the **monument to the pilgrim** standing on top of the rise will be a nice memento.

With the excitement and image of the cathedral in your eyes, we suggest that you to return to the **spa** and spend the remainder of your afternoon enjoying the spa's leisure areas or a hydrotherapy or massage therapy treatment culminating in a short *siesta* before dinner.

The last stretch of the French Way in Santiago

We stroll delightful streets and squares

After breakfast, we suggest that you limit your morning to the urban stretch of the French Way in Santiago, which begins on the prolonged **Rúa de San Lázaro**, which we'll link with the *rúas* (streets) of **O Valiño**, **As Fontiñas** and **Os Concheiros**, which connects to the **Rúa de San Pedro**. This street has a real mediaeval flavour due to its low-rise stone buildings darkened by time and rain. However, you'll find it cheerful and full of life, enlivened by very active, high-quality businesses featuring handicraft shops and cafés, and where traditional bars and taverns share the pavement with the latest trends in restaurant fare.

Afterwards, we'll pass through the **Porta do Camiño**, which still retains the name of one of the gates of the now-disappeared mediaeval wall that surrounded Santiago. We'll ascend the **Rúa das Casas Reais**, where houses with noble crests and the **Church of As Ánimas** flank the street. Look at the bas-relief on its façade showing an expressive image of the burning souls in Purgatory.



> Rúa de Fonseca

We reach **Praza de Cervantes** square, which is usually bustling with activity because one of the busiest shopping streets in the Old Town – **O Preguntoiro** – ends there. Later, we'll take the **Rúa da Acibechería**, which owes its name to the craftsmen who used to carve jet. Today, there are still beautiful pieces of this stone in display in the shop windows. Further on, to our right stands the **Monastery of San Martiño Pinaro** and **Praza da Inmaculada** square, which reveals the cathedral's north façade, at the left.

The magical descent down the stairs under the arch of the **Pazo de Xelmírez** – usually accompanied by music played by artists seeking shelter here – is the step before entering **Praza do Obradoiro** square. And here, at last, before our eyes looms – as though suspended in the sky – the magnificent baroque facade of the **Cathedral of Santiago**. By then, the emotion – probably shared with dozens of pilgrims – will be difficult to describe.



> San Martiño Pinaro

The Pilgrim's Mass is celebrated at noon

We'll arrive in time to hear the Pilgrim's Mass – officiated every day at noon – celebrated inside the church. If it happens to be on certain liturgical dates, the marvellous spectacle of seeing the *botafumeiro* – a giant censer – flying will be a lasting memory. We can also give the traditional embrace to the Apostle, ascending to the niche of the high altar, and visit his relics in the crypt beneath it.

The best Galician cuisine, concentrated in the Rúa do Franco

Our last day in Santiago can conclude with us enjoying the delicacies of Galician cuisine. On the nearby Rúa do Franco, we'll find a distillation of the best steaks, seafood and fish, displayed in refrigerated cases at the doors of the restaurants. Besides eating a full meal, it's a local custom to order a variety of plates to share, which allows us to enjoy many flavours and preparations.

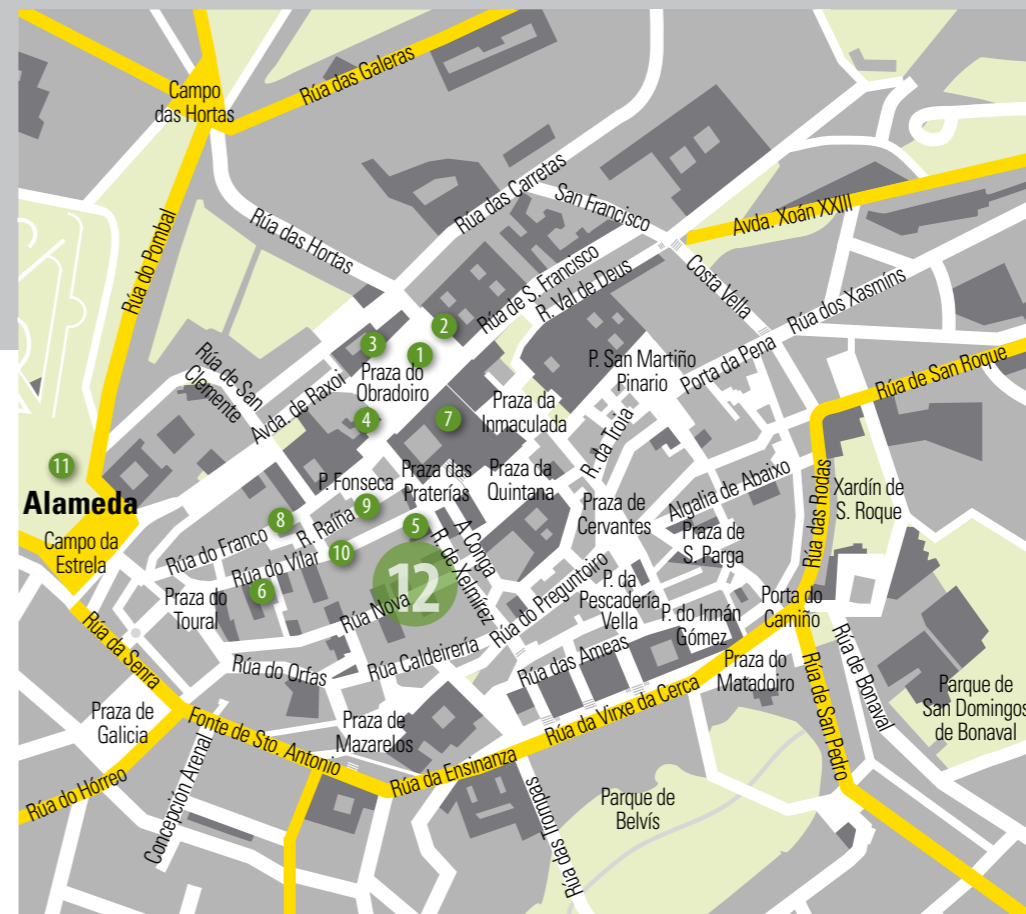
Compostela has still got many shops dedicated to jet

Pilgrim - End of the Way spa treatments

The last day on the Way of St James, when we reached the city of the Apostle filled with emotions, deserves a special place in memory. We propose an experience that will connect you to the city in a deep, joyful and fun fashion and then allow you to rest the body and mind, leaving behind the hardships of the pilgrimage.



> Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela



EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Santiago de Compostela
- 1_ Praza do Obradoiro square
 - 2_ Hostal dos Reis Católicos
 - 3_ Pazo de Raxoi
 - 4_ Pazo de San Xerome
 - 5_ Pilgrim's Office
 - 6_ Municipal Tourist Office
 - 7_ Cathedral
 - 8_ Rúa do Franco
 - 9_ A Raíña
 - 4_ Pazo de San Xerome
 - 10_ Rúa do Vilar
 - 11_ Alameda
 - 12_ Old Town
- day 2 |
Santiago de Compostela
- 7_ Cathedral (roofs)

START_ Santiago de Compostela
END_ Santiago de Compostela
DAYS_ 2

MORE INFORMATION_
→ Pilgrim's Office_ www.peregrinosantiago.es
→ Cathedral of Santiago_ www.catedraldesantiago.es



| day 1 |

Stone, gastronomy and the soothing power of water

Praza do Obradoiro square, the arrival point of all the Ways

As we enter Compostela via the urban stretch of the Way of St James, we'll inevitably feel how our excitement grows until we reach Praza do Obradoiro square. Once here, any efforts made during the pilgrimage will be rewarded. The centre of the square is marked as kilometre zero, the arrival point for all the Ways. There is a plaque carved into the ground where you can read the Declaration of the First European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in 1987. This is the point where all of the radiating paths that form a star shape covering the square come together.





> Rúa do Vilar

The majesty of the cathedral and surrounding buildings

From here, we are in awe of the beauty of the cathedral's façade lifted up into the sky by its baroque towers, next to the grandeur of the buildings surrounding it. To our left is the Hostal dos Reis Católicos, an ancient pilgrims hospital and today a state-owned hotel; behind us stands the Pazo de Raxoi, the seat of the municipal government and the Presidency of the Xunta de Galicia, and on the right is the Pazo de San Xerome, the headquarters of the rectorship of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

One baroque, another transitional Gothic, another neoclassical and another Renaissance... all existing in the harmony provided by the granite. They all are also united by the omnipresent figure of the Apostle St James in different representations: as Santiago Matamoros – the warrior on his horse – as a pilgrim – a walker with a scallop shell and staff – and as Apostle.

We receive the “Compostela” in the Pilgrim’s Office

We suggest that you visit the inside of the cathedral at noon, when the Pilgrim’s Mass begins. Before that, you can go to the Pilgrim’s Office to leave your backpack in the baggage check and make it more comfortable to get around the city.

In the Office, you can also seal the “pilgrim credentials”, which you will also be able to get discounts in some of the places you visit and request the traditional pilgrimage certificate, the famous mediaeval “Compostela”. It’s awarded to those who have travelled the last 100 kilometres of the Way on foot or by horseback, or the last 200 miles on a bicycle and who state, at least, that it was done for religious reasons. The Office is located near the Obradoiro, in the Rúa do Vilar, adjacent to the cathedral’s Praterías square.

The Municipal Tourism Office is on the same street. It might be a good idea to go there and get an audio tour of the city, an option that allows you to enjoy the afternoon discovering it at your own pace.

The magic of the cathedral’s botafumeiro

If your arrival coincides with certain liturgical dates, you’ll have the chance to enjoy a unique and exciting experience: see the swinging flight of the botafumeiro. On other days, it can be requested in advance, with the costs charged to the person requesting it. With strength and precision, eight men – the *tiraboleiros* – pull the rope from which hangs the huge incense burner in order to raise it up and make it touch the dome of the transept, while the fog of incense permeates the air with a magical atmosphere and a distinctive odour.

Please note that taking pictures and making videos in freely accessed areas is allowed, but without a flash or tripod. Apart from the church’s most universal work – the Pórtico da Gloria – inside is great artistic wealth that we will discover. It’s a tradition to visit to the Saint by climbing up to the high altar and giving his statue the usual embrace. Next, go down to the crypt where the relics which tradition says belong to the Apostle and are preserved in a carved silver urn are kept.



> Botafumeiro in the Cathedral

Plates of the best cuisine with Galician wine

If it’s time to have lunch when we leave the cathedral, we can head over to the Rúa do Franco or A Raíña. Both are full of restaurants where we’ll always find the typical Galician dishes of octopus á *feira*-style, savoury pie, raxo, ears, ao *caldeiro*-style meat, sardines, xoubas and Padrón peppers – in season – plus mussels, cockles and all kinds of seafood. We can accompany these delicious morsels with any of the Galician wines of the five designations of origin and for dessert try the famous Santiago cake and the filloas.

The place with the most “spirit of Compostela”

After lunch, we’ll take our time and visit the streets around the cathedral and the main points in Santiago’s Old Town. With the audio guide chosen, we’ll discover the meaning that these places have for the residents of Compostela which – in addition to their great artistic appeal and attractiveness to tourists – are very much their own.

Near the cathedral – on the side of the Pazo de San Xerome facing Rúa Fonseca – we can perform the same ritual usually carried out before the “tree of knowledge” by every university student who reaches Santiago for the first time: point with your arm ← with your back to the tree – at one of its branches of knowledge. As we turn around, we’ll see which discipline of the arts, letters and sciences we are best suited to, based on the tree’s system.

A century-old hat shop

Then we can walk the central and bustling Rúa de Vilar, where the beloved Cine Yago used to be located. Early films from the Lumière company were shown here and vaudeville shows were put on as well. One of the oldest stores in Santiago – a charming, century-old hat shop – can be found here, still retaining its authentic vintage touch.

Next, our steps will take us to the Alameda. From here, we'll have one of most beautiful views of the city. We'll also have the opportunity to try out the special acoustics of a semi-circular bench next to the bandstand – as lovers did in the nineteenth century to send words of love over a distance, but sounding almost as if they were spoken directly into the ear.

On the Alameda, there is a semi-circular bench with special acoustics used by lovers since the nineteenth century



> Colexio de San Xerome

We'll relax body and mind in an urban spa

After touring this World Heritage Site city, we propose that you devote the remainder of the afternoon to relaxing. There are several urban spas in Santiago that take into account Compostela's nature as a place of pilgrimage. Some have programmes specifically designed to relieve the fatigue gathered on the Way. They focus on relaxing the body and mind and improving any potential muscle and joint discomfort using thermal treatments and massages.

Meat, fish and seafood

Now restored to perfect condition, we can find a place to eat before going to bed at the hostel. Right next to each other in the Old Town, we'll find a variety of establishments, from select restaurants and signature cuisine to traditional eateries of various types, taverns and tempting seafood restaurants. All options are open: do a wine and tapas route or opt for more elaborate dishes, like fish *caldeirada*-style or steamed and seafood, not to mention the excellence of Galician beef.

| day 2 |

A one-of-a-kind walk over the roofs of the cathedral

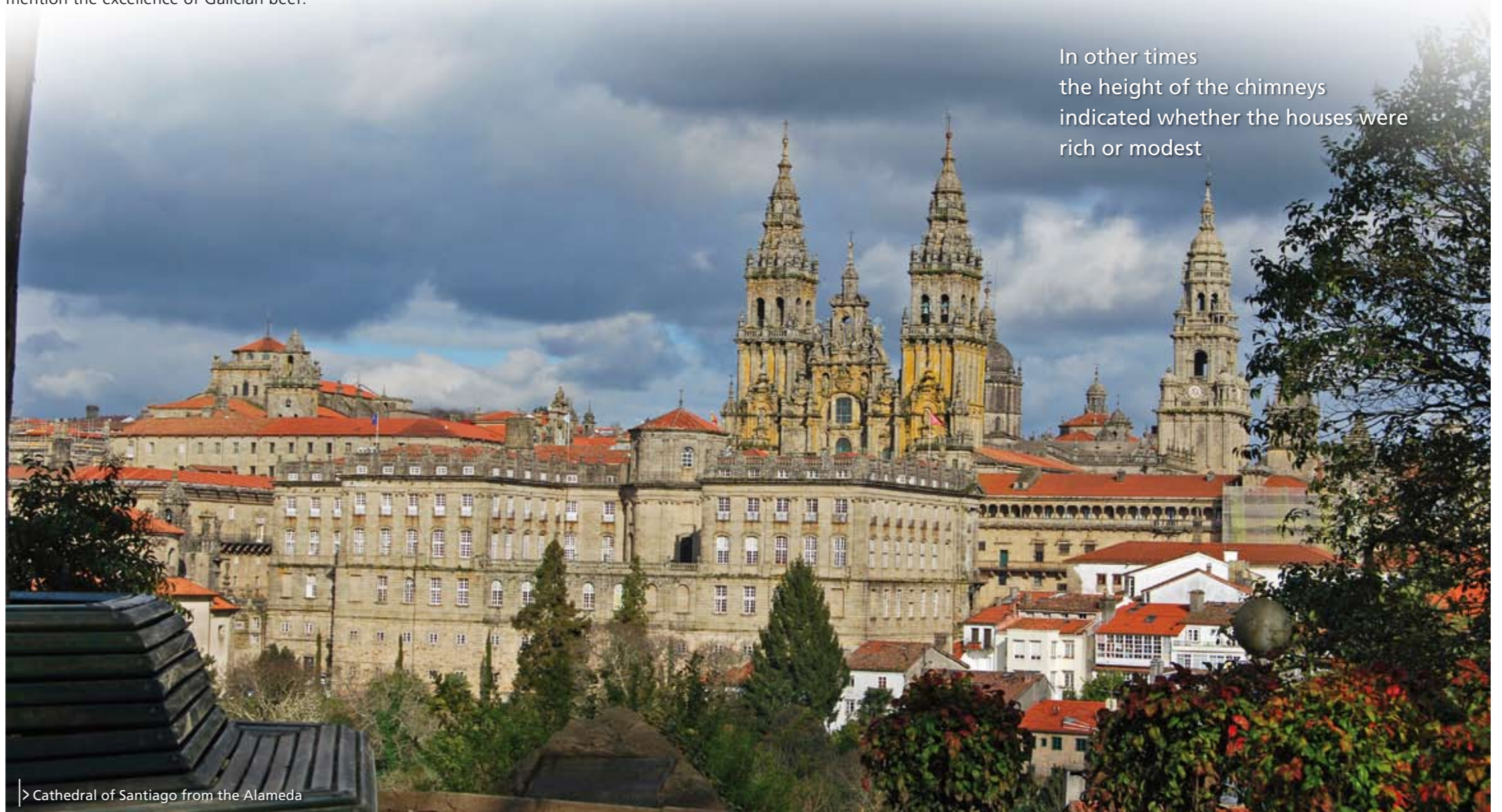
After breakfast, we recommend that you bid Santiago farewell with an amazing bird's-eye view of the city by scheduling a visit to the cathedral's roofs. This unique experience in which you will be accompanied by a guide will take you to rooms of the Xelmírez Palace, jewel of civil Romanesque.

Afterwards, we'll go up and walk across the roofs of granite covering its naves and see the towers overlooking the Obradoiro up close. The Berenguela – which marks the hours in the city – stands out, as does the so-called Cruz dos Farrapos, moved here from its original location and where pilgrims in time past left their old clothes and the City Council provided them with new ones.

We can also take a look inside the cathedral through the rose windows that open to the south and north and – if we're lucky – see the botafumeiro "fly". This tour will give us a whole new perspective of the squares surrounding the cathedral complex and the roofs of the buildings that make up the city's Old Town, from the most imposing roofs of San Martiño and San Paio de Antealtares to those of the more modest – but no less rich – homes. Chimneys – which we'll see everywhere – once indicated the wealth of the house: the bigger the chimney, the better the food and, therefore, less hunger was suffered inside.

In addition to this urban landscape, the roofs offer the green horizons of the mountains surrounding Compostela, such as O Pedroso, a gorgeous natural viewpoint for the region, easily accessible on foot from the cathedral.

In other times the height of the chimneys indicated whether the houses were rich or modest



> Cathedral of Santiago from the Alameda

Family enjoyment in Guitiriz



In Guitiriz, water floods the senses: seeing it running in rivers and crystal-clear streams, hearing it fall in small waterfalls, drinking it and smelling it in its springs or bathing in its thermal spas. Its rich aquatic ecosystem makes it a Site of Community Importance (SCI) and the river basin to which it belongs is a Biosphere Reserve. The beautiful and serene landscapes created by this liquid element are perfect for enjoying hiking and swimming with the family.



> Guitiriz spa



START_ Guitiriz
END_ Guitiriz
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_
→ Guitiriz spa_ www.balneariodeguitiriz.com
→ Marcelle Natureza Zoo_ www.marcellenatureza.com



9 EXPERIENCE

- day 1|
Guitiriz
- 1_ Town of Guitiriz
- 2_ Sete Muíños recreational area
- 3_ Guitiriz spa
- day 2|
Outeiro de Rei
- 4_ Marcelle Natureza Zoo
- Frial
- 5_ San Paio Narla Fort
- day 3|
Guitiriz
- 3_ Guitiriz spa
- 6_ San Alberte bridge
- 7_ San Alberte Chapel
- 8_ Fonte da Fala
- 9_ Fonte de Valdobín
- 10_ Village of Parga

| day 1 |

The value of the water in Guitiriz

We suggest reaching Guitiriz – which is located in the district of A Terra Chá in the province of Lugo – around noon, in order to make the best of the day getting in touch with nature and water. Our destination is one of the most renowned spas in Galicia, famous for its unique micro-medical water because it emerges cold and is suitable for the digestive and renal systems.

The name “Guitiriz” has become known across borders thanks to its spa hotel which, after having been shuttered for a long time, has shared in the rebirth of hot spring therapy in Galicia. In 2003, it underwent a major reform which preserved the stunning original appearance of the building, and a new one was built that houses the spa and hot springs club. The forest surrounding it – which extends more than 40 hectares – contains a golf course, which increases the feeling of being immersed in nature.



> Guitiriz spa

Potatoes, turnip tops and cheese, star products of the local district

Once settled in, we suggest that you eat at a traditional eatery, grill or local restaurant. A Terra Chá is a kitchen garden of fine Galician products with geographical designations and indications protecting many of its products, such as potatoes, turnip greens or the delicious San Simón da Costa cheese. For this reason, pork with turnip tops, a Galician stew – also with turnip tops – or even a simple Spanish omelette are a gift to the palate if, in addition, we top it off with the typical corn cake of Guitiriz.

The Route of the Water

The value that water has in Guitiriz allows us to leverage this resource in many ways. Its lands belong to the Upper Basin of the River Miño called “Terras do Miño”, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. Within this, they are in the Parga-Ladra-Támoga Site of Community Importance (SCI).

After lunch, we suggest you start off the afternoon with a bit of hiking through this landscape of great environmental value following the official PR-G 99 route, known as the “Route of the Water”. It runs along the banks of the **Rivers Parga and Ladroil**, joining the three most important local springs with healing waters: **Valdobín, San Xoán de Lagostelle** and **Fonte de Santo Domingo**. The trail’s level path makes it perfect to do with the children.

Watermills on the shores of the river

The total trip is nearly twenty kilometres long. For this reason, we suggest that you limit it this time to the part that connects the area around the **Guitiriz Spa** with the **Sete Muíños recreational area** where the “little ones” will feel right at home after the hike. We’ll reach it in just a kilometre and a half after passing through the municipal capital. You’ll find a natural area of great beauty with watermills on the banks of the **River Escádebas** which lends significant ethnographic value to the recreational area.

The alders, birches, oaks, chestnuts and pines along the shore seem to walk along with us. Wooden bridges and overpasses crossing the river enable us to walk through this area safely and see the waterfalls that form before falling into a pond, now converted into a natural swimming pool. If time permits, we can take a dip in it. The younger crowd can enjoy themselves playing in the playground located in this area.

A session at the spa for children and adults

After our hike, we can finish off our afternoon in the spa’s leisure areas. The children will love the children’s hot springs pool and playground. Meanwhile, the adults can relax with a thermal circuit and enjoy the benefits of the micro-medicinal properties of the water before dining in the hotel restaurant.



Fonte da Fala and Santo Alberte Chapel



Santo Alberte de Parga Bridge

| day 2 |

Untamed nature in Outeiro de Rei and mediaeval history in Friol

Animals from different continents in one natural environment

After breakfast, we suggest that you head over to **Outeiro de Rei** to spend the morning at the **Marcelle Natureza Zoo**. The trip lasts a half-hour by car via the N-VI. The zoo is a natural space where we can get close to animals – both indigenous and from other parts of the world – and learn more about the biodiversity surrounding us, both fauna and flora.

In this setting, we’ll find South American llamas and rheas, bison and wapiti from North America, Australian kangaroos and emus, African zebras and elands and European mouflon

and boreal lynx. We may see bears and wolves from safe vantage points enjoying a small forest set aside just for them. We will also be amazed by the snakes and giant turtles in the reptile centre.

The park has covered picnic areas which are ideal for resting and regrouping in order to continue with the visit. We can bring our own picnic – prepared by the hotel restaurant – and enjoy it here, weather permitting. If not, the park has a snack bar and a restaurant whose menu includes exotic meats.

We visit a mediaeval fortress

In the afternoon, we suggest that you visit the **San Paio Narla Fortress** – popularly known as the “Torre de Xiá” (Xiá Tower) – which rises on a hill next to the **River Narla** in the municipality of Friol. It’s located a half-hour away via provincial roads LU-234 and LU-232.

We’ll ensure an entertaining afternoon with the children touring this great fourteenth-century fortified complex, which consists of the Keep, central body, fortified tower and chapel. Victim of some of the *irmandiñas* revolts – peasant rebellions against oppression by feudal lords in the Middle Ages – it was rebuilt in the sixteenth century. Today, it opens its doors as a historical and ethnographic museum.

Everyone’s interest will be piqued by the huge variety of items on display: looms, antique furniture, farm implements in the cellar, saddles in the stables and a large collection of knives and firearms on the third floor of the Keep, including plate armour and samurai armour. We’ll also notice the originality of a Renaissance fireplace decorated with elements resembling animals and plants.

Bread, cheese and trout for dinner

If we plan to dine locally after our tour, don’t forget to accompany the meal with bread from Ousá and order a platter of artisan cheese from Friol – two of its culinary delights – along with trout from the River Narla.



> Guitiriz spa



> San Paio de Narla

| day 3 |

We say goodbye to Guitiriz at the spa

The last thermal circuit

After breakfast, we can enjoy an aesthetic or health treatment, get a massage or immerse ourselves in the hot tubs with jets and bubbles, aromatherapy spray or the soapy massage area included in the thermal circuit. The children will enjoy themselves in the play area and by taking their last dips in the mineral water pool, making the most of the water slide.

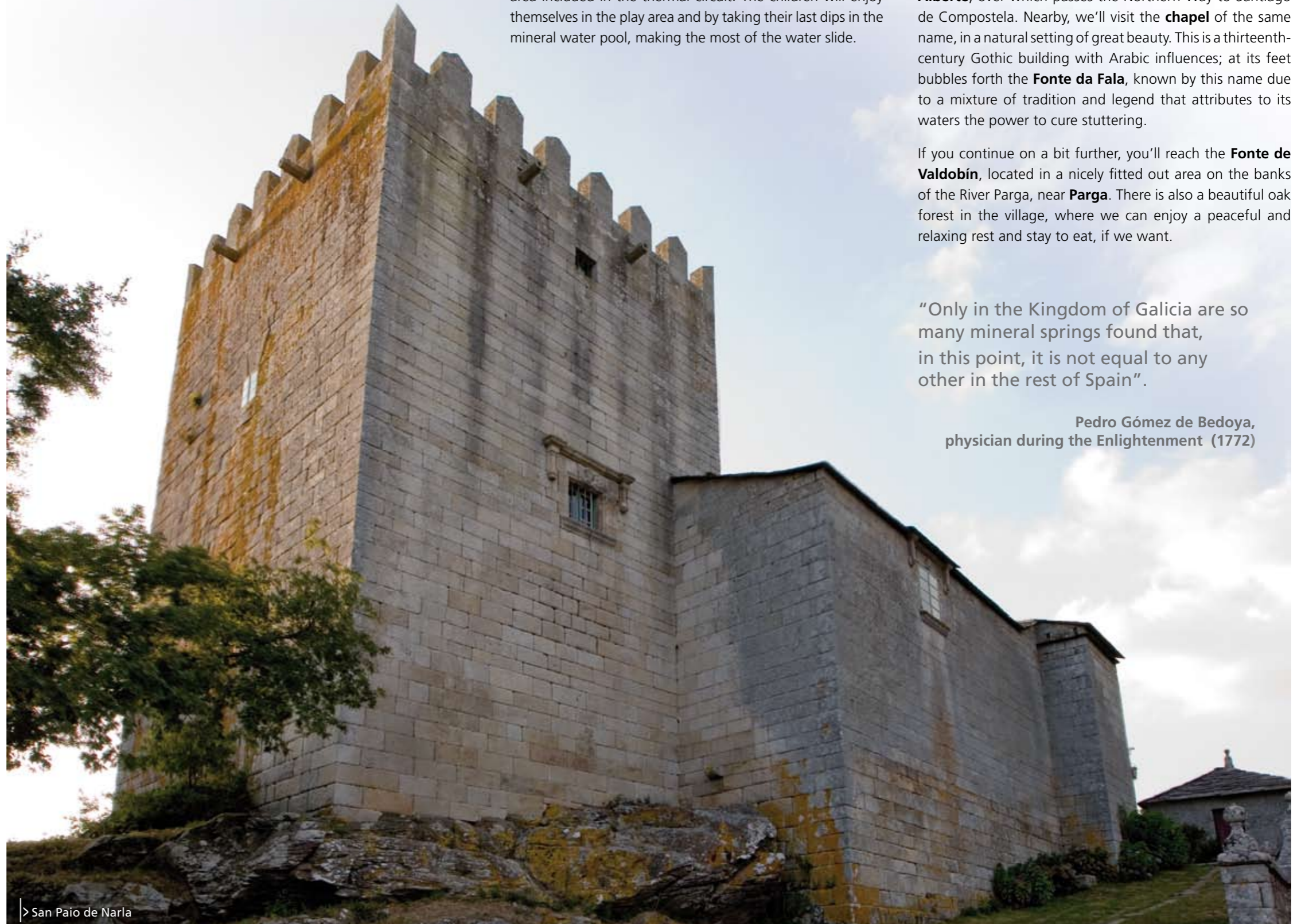
A walk among curious springs

If you wish to further delay your departure, you can walk another stretch of the “Route of the Water”. We suggest that you start at the magnificent **mediaeval bridge of San Alberte**, over which passes the Northern Way to Santiago de Compostela. Nearby, we’ll visit the **chapel** of the same name, in a natural setting of great beauty. This is a thirteenth-century Gothic building with Arabic influences; at its feet bubbles forth the **Fonte da Fala**, known by this name due to a mixture of tradition and legend that attributes to its waters the power to cure stuttering.

If you continue on a bit further, you’ll reach the **Fonte de Valdobín**, located in a nicely fitted out area on the banks of the River Parga, near **Parga**. There is also a beautiful oak forest in the village, where we can enjoy a peaceful and relaxing rest and stay to eat, if we want.

“Only in the Kingdom of Galicia are so many mineral springs found that, in this point, it is not equal to any other in the rest of Spain”.

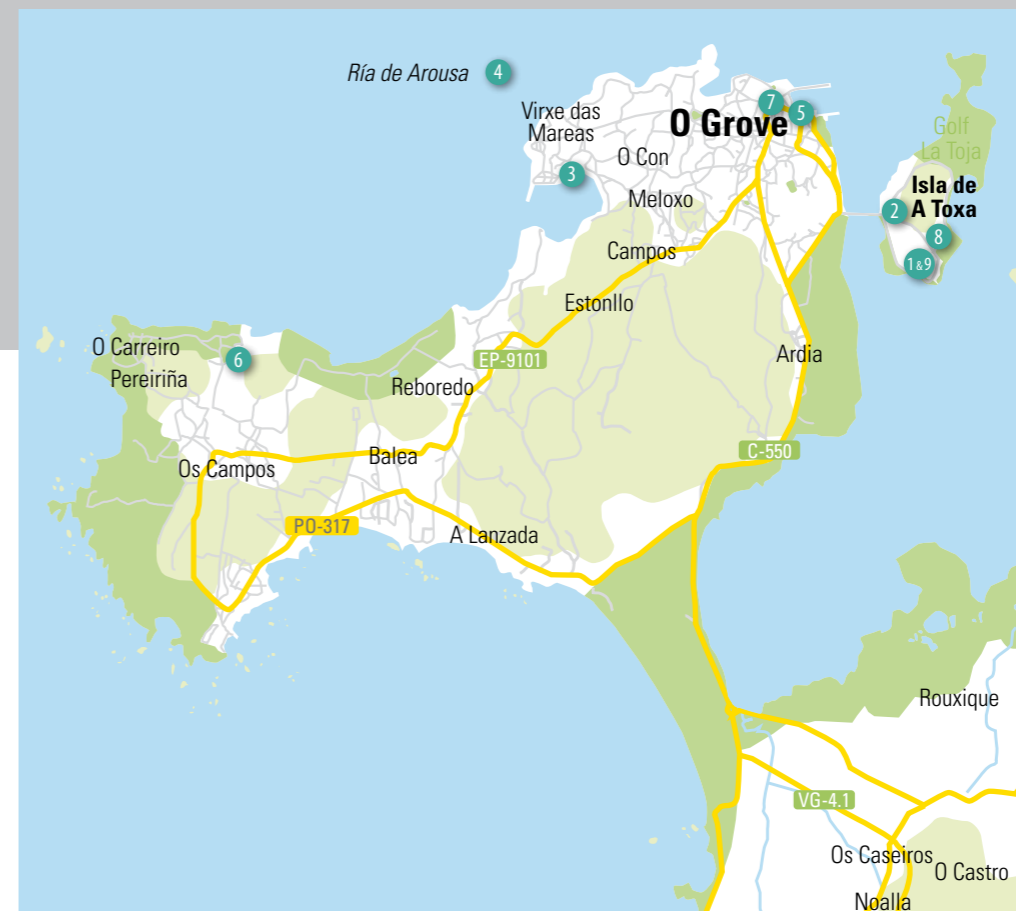
Pedro Gómez de Bedoya,
physician during the Enlightenment (1772)



> San Paio de Narla

An ocean of relaxation in A Toxa

A Toxa Island is a haven for an in-depth experience with the sea. You can take advantage of its beneficial effect on health, enjoy the delicacies fished from its depths or become engrossed in its coastal and underwater scenery. We'd like to propose a couples' getaway to its thalassotherapy centres. Here, you can combat stress, beautify your body and spirit, have fun or relax... as well as enjoy its splendid cuisine and admire the intense blue of the horizon.



10

EXPERIENCE

day 1 |
Isla de A Toxa
1_ Talaso Hotel Louxo La Toja
2_ A Toxa Island (walk around the island)

day 2 |
O Grove
3_ Marina
4_ Arousa estuary
5_ Port
6_ San Vicente
7_ Town of O Grove
Isla de A Toxa
1_ Talaso Hotel Louxo La Toja

day 3 |
Isla de A Toxa
8_ Capela das Cunchas
(Chapel of the Shells)
9_ Museum/shop

START_ A Toxa
END_ A Toxa
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_
→ Talaso Hotel Louxo La Toja_ www.louxolatoja.com
→ Hotel Balneario Hesperia Isla de La Toja. Tel_ 986 730 050
→ Gran Hotel La Toja_ www.granhotellatoja.com



| day 1 |

The tranquillity of the island

The most common way to reach the island of A Toxa is to follow the O Salnés AG-41 motorway in the direction of Sanxenxo-Cambados-O Grove. Once we've reached this town, we'll cross the bridge joining it to the island.

The peninsula of O Grove embraces the island of A Toxa, protecting it from the worst of the raging sea; it also is blessed by the mild climate that dominates the entire valley of O Salnés. Both of these foreshadow the serenity that we've come looking for. This feeling of tranquillity will be accentuated in the hotel chosen from among the luxurious choice of accommodation on the island. In addition to the thalassotherapy spa hotel, there are two hot springs spa hotels.



> Hesperia Isla de La Toja Spa Hotel

The soothing, health-enhancing powers of sea water

We recommend that you arrive early in the afternoon. As soon as we drop our luggage, we can head to the hotel's spa and thalassotherapy areas. We'll find a very large programme of relaxation, beauty, slimming, health and even rehabilitation therapies on offer.

We can now start verifying the health-enhancing power of thalassotherapy, based on treatments that use primarily sea-based components. Sea water is warmed to body temperature so that, when we immerse ourselves in it, our skin becomes permeable to the minerals making it up. At the same time, the density of this liquid element relieves us of a great deal of bodyweight.

We can accompany our bath with the different manual massage techniques offered at these facilities. Some are applied by several professionals simultaneously. Their hands intertwine in perfect sync, relaxing us from head to toe. At the end, we'll really notice the effects on our body and spirit.

At this point, we're in a total state of relaxation, so to top off the treatment, enjoying a little siesta is recommended – and even highly desirable – so that we can fully assimilate the benefits of the thalassotherapy as a part of our spa experience.



"The waters and baths of A Toxa cure horrible ailments, ailments that it terrifies us to name".

"As augas e baños da Toxa curan dos males horribles, dos males que estarrece nomear".

Emilia Pardo Bazán

A walk around the island

After a good rest, allowing the island to invite us to take a walk is an exhilarating option. Its shores offer spectacular views of the estuary, sometimes from white balustrades. Its palm- and pine-tree-dotted paths stimulate our mind and thus we'll notice – more intensely if possible – the flavours of the seafood from the Ría de Arousa. Its quality is justly famous and, accompanied by local Albariño wines, is usually an indispensable choice.



In the thalassotherapy spa, the seawater is warmed to body temperature so that the minerals composing it can penetrate into the skin

| day 2 |

In O Grove we enjoy the sea and its seafood

We ply the Arousa estuary

After such a relaxing evening last night, we're full of energy. We can spend the morning doing an exciting activity, such as exploring the seabed and coastline of the Ría de Arousa, which can be done on sailboats, catamarans or glass-bottomed boats that set off from the **O Grove marina**.

It will take us just over five minutes by car after crossing the bridge linking the island with the town. At the first roundabout, we'll take the first turnoff towards Avenida Beiramar and continue until we see the dock to the right.

Galicia's estuaries have one of the planet's largest deposits of phytoplankton, which makes the seafood grow rapidly

Once we're on board, the boat will leave its wake on the profile of the estuary and its islands. If a catamaran is the option chosen, it will anchor alongside authentic forests of algae, which are easy to observe from the glass at the bottom of the boat. Let us not forget that Galicia's estuaries have one of the largest deposits of phytoplankton in the world, according to the FAO. This feature lends an exceptional quality to the water, enabling the bivalves raised in them grow with record speed. We'll confirm this by stopping at some of the shellfish rafts, wooden platforms floating on the sea, where mussels, oysters and scallops are raised.

Work on the shellfish rafts

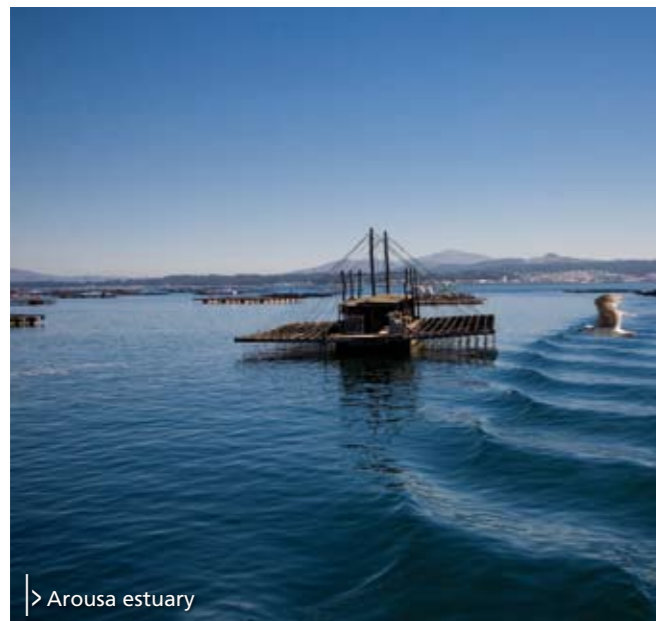
It's easy to find a sailor working on the rafts, since this activity is one of the area's economic powerhouses. Despite mechanical support, the difficulty of the work is noticeable. Each rope holding the bivalves can weigh up to three hundred kilograms, and it has to be handled in order to clean it of algae or parasites. It is also necessary to split the ropes as the bivalves grow larger. You can see from inside the boat how the ropes hang from the rafts to the seafloor.

As we follow our route, we will with all probability cross shoals of fish, where we'll find boga or bream, among others. The vivid colours of some – such as the triggerfish – make them very striking. And – if we're lucky – we may spot a family of dolphins close to shore, ready to entertain us for a while with their songs and antics.

Products from the sea

Once we've disembarked at the port of O Grove, we'll think about enjoying the high-quality local cuisine. Seafood restaurants and **harbour** eateries are good options. They are stocked with products from the estuary, such as mussels, oysters, scallops, clams, cockles, spider crab and king crab. Also worthy of note is the fish from its inshore fleet that are auctioned off at the wholesale fish market. If you prefer meat, we'll find products related to pork and beef slaughters.

If what we are seeking is signature cuisine and an avant-garde atmosphere, towards **San Vicente** we'll find restaurants recognised by the bible of restaurants: the Michelin Guide. Sampling flaked king crab or a cuttlefish rice crisp is proof that the relationship with native products is never lost.



Walking by the sea

After lunch, we can continue the route via the same district road to San Vicente itself, at the other end of the peninsula. It is perfect to fill our bodies with fresh air with a walk on its wooden paths, such as **Con Negro**, running among the steepest cliffs in the municipality.

If we prefer something with a more relaxed activity, before returning to the island we can take a short stroll through the streets and squares of O Grove and admire a network of over 50 granite sculptures which grows every year thanks to the participants in the Sculpture Symposium, one of the activities that take place in early October during the celebration of the **Festa do Marisco** (Seafood Festival).

Treatments based on wine or chocolate

Back in A Toxa, we suggest you try out some new treatments to refuel your energy. We'll find numerous proposals based on wine, seaweed, aromas, colours or chocolate, always in combination with seawater.



| day 3 |

We say goodbye to the island between seashells, salts and soaps

A chapel covered with scallop shells

Before ending our trip, we must not miss out on a visit to one of Galicia's most unique buildings, known as the **Capela das Cunchas** (Chapel of the Shells), right in the middle of the island. It continues venerating Saint Caralampio and the Our Lady of Mount Carmel as it has from the twelfth century. The interior, with a certain fishing village flavour, is modest, but the true attraction is its outside, completely covered with scallop shells.

A Toxa, as an insignia of hot springs therapy, extended this natural alchemy to the production of one of Spain's most traditional soaps. Where the factory once stood there is now a **museum and shop** featuring "La Toja" brand products, whose history is displayed on explanatory panels. We'll find salts, soaps, creams and beauty and health-related products.

The picturesque necklace-peddlers

The peddlers selling shell necklaces have just as much tradition as the soaps. During decades, their hands have threaded the sinuous forms that the Atlantic brings to them and their coast. Stationed along the road under their parasols, they both welcome us to and see us off the island.



Mondariz-Balneario

The “Very Hospitable Town” of Mondariz-Balneario is an excellent destination for enjoying a hot-springs relaxation experience. This tiny municipality – just 2.4 km², the smallest in Spain – has a plethora of economic, historical and natural wonders, and a rich collection of anecdotes about hot springs-related culture. Here, we’ll relive echoes of the *Belle Époque* and the golden years of hot spring therapy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Mondariz was a *de rigueur* model of luxury and grandeur.



START_ Mondariz-Balneario
END_ Tui
DAYS_ 3

MORE INFORMATION_
→ Mondariz Spa_ www.balneariodemondariz.es
→ Sobroso Castle (Centro de Recuperación da Cultura Popular [Centre for the Recovery of Popular Culture]). Tel_ **986 654 305**
→ Soutomaior Castle_ www.hotelpousadadelcastillo.com



11 EXPERIENCE

- day 1|
Mondariz-Balneario
1_ Mondariz Spa
2_ San Pedro recreational area
3_ Tres Cruces dolmen
4_ San Pedro Chapel
5_ Old Grand Hotel
6_ Enrique Peinador Vela Memorial Monument
7_ “Baranda” and “Antonio Palacios” Buildings
8_ Gándara Spring
9_ Troncoso Spring
10_ Mondariz-Balneario riparian beach
11_ Mondariz Spa
- day 2|
Mondariz-Balneario
1_ Mondariz Spa
Ponteareas
12_ Fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village of Troña
13_ Doce Nome de Xesús Chapel
Mondariz
14_ Sobroso Castle
Soutomaior
15_ Arcade
16_ Port of Arcade
17_ O Peirao beach
18_ Soutomaior Castle
Mondariz-Balneario
1_ Mondariz Spa
- day 3|
Mondariz-Balneario
1_ Mondariz Spa
19_ Cernadela riparian beach
Tui
20_ Cathedral of Tui
21_ Monte Aloia Nature Park
22_ Casa do Enxeñeiro Areses



A stroll through the surroundings of Mondariz Hot Springs Spa

Mondariz is nestled in the peaceful River Tea Valley, located in the district of O Condado in the province of Pontevedra, just 30 km from Vigo and very well connected due to the proximity of major road arteries such as the AP-9 and the A-52 or the N-120 and the N-550.

We recommend that you arrive early in the afternoon and get settled in Mondariz's Spa Hotel. Once you've dropped your luggage, it will be time to start soaking up this setting featuring medicinal mineral waters housed in spectacular buildings, monuments, statues, gardens and riverside promenades.

We propose a just-over-two-hour stroll that will help you get to know the surroundings as you are led by an audio guide you can download free from the town council's website. This way, we'll discover the most outstanding things in Mondariz-Balneario and enjoy pleasant and entertaining historical explanations and some interesting anecdotes.

A curious dolmen

From the door of the Spa Hotel, the virtual voice will lead you to the vicinity of the **San Pedro Recreational Area** to see the **Dolmen das Tres Cruces**, curious megalithic remains that were Christianised in the Middle Ages when three tilted crosses were driven into their stones. Depending on when your visit takes place, you may run into pilgrims who have stopped to pray on their pilgrimage to the **Sanctuary of the Virxe da Franqueira**. This festival in honour of the Virgin is celebrated on Whit Monday and on the eighth of September in the neighbouring municipality of A Cañiza. Next on our tour is the **Chapel of San Pedro**. On the way – if the day is clear – you'll even get a glimpse of **Sobroso Castle**, which we'll reserve for tomorrow.

The Grand Hotel played host to distinguished personages such as Rockefeller, Primo de Rivera and the Infanta Isabel de Borbón



> Mondariz Spa



> Old Grand Hotel in Mondariz

The ruins of the old Grand Hotel, a model for hot springs spas in Europe beginning in late nineteenth century

The next stretch runs from the chapel to the fence of the old Grand Hotel, from where we'll be able to have a look at the spa's gardens. You'll be amazed by the ruins of the buildings and the old bathing facilities coexisting with plants and trees.

Following the signposted path, we'll end up back at the heart of Mondariz-Balneario in front of the **granite monument to Enrique Peinador Vela**. This doctor – a "favourite son" of the town – was the person who devised the colossal project for Mondariz-Balneario, elevating it to a reference point for hot springs in Europe beginning the late nineteenth century. When he learned of the dramatic rise of people coming to the town for hot springs treatments, he set out to build an imposing hotel, which opened in 1898.

The Grand Hotel – designed by architect Genaro de la Fuente – and known for its luxury and grandeur, became world-famous and attracted renowned guests like the magnate Rockefeller himself. Other guests included Primo de Rivera, the Infanta Isabel de Borbón, Luis Peral, Emilio Castelar and Ramón Cabanillas who also climbed the stunning imperial staircase leading to one of its 250 rooms. The hotel even came to mint its own currency, have its own programme of operas and publish a newsletter. These are but a few of the many examples that will help you to imagine the magnitude and significance of the complex.

In April 1973 a fire ravaged the spectacular building, leaving standing only the stones that allowed a faithful reconstruction of the original façade to be built. Today, a high-rise building of flats stands behind it. Sitting in the music stand, near the monument to Dr Enrique Peinador, we can take a moment to admire the reconstruction of the original façade.



> Mondariz Spa



> Gándara Spring



> Troncoso Spring

The healing properties of the Gándara Spring

You'll see the "Baranda" and "Antonio Palacios" Buildings on adjacent streets. The former housed a theatre; today it is the site of the spa, part of the hotel rooms and a shop for products from the hot springs centre. We can distinguish the latter by its tower, which is the location of the hotel's "Mirador Suite" and conference centre.

Make sure you don't miss the Gándara Spring, housed in an exquisite Classical-style temple designed by architect Antonio Palacios. We suggest that you enter inside the cupola and take advantage of some of the benches at the entrance to have a rest.

The curious shape of the spring will surely catch your eye. Walk down to it and you'll see the water's ferruginous tinge. There's always a glass next to it for tasting: don't let its smell discourage you; it tastes like any sparkling water. Its ferruginous composition containing carbonated gas and calcium bicarbonate is suitable for metabolic, locomotive, respiratory, nervous and cardiovascular illnesses, among others. If you take a look at the plaque on the left wall, you'll be amazed how many ailments it is good for.



> Gándara Spring

The origin of the Mondariz-Balneario's micro-medicinal waters

And after one mineral spring, we'll head off to another known as **Fonte de Troncoso**. The route runs parallel to the bed of the River Tea and is ideal for enjoying the sound of water and the colour and coolness of the vegetation. On the way, you'll run into a bridge. Cross it, if you fancy visiting the **Mondariz-Balneario's riparian beach** of fine white sand. Dipping your feet in the river's clear water will certainly feel nice.

After this refreshing break, you'll have to go back over the bridge and then straight on to the spring, which you'll be able to identify due to its wrought iron structure and bluish corrugated roof. This is the source of the first micro-medicinal waters discovered... and from this discovery came the origin of a history of glory and a landmark for hot spring therapy in Galicia. If we're in the mood, we can continue along the promenade to the resort's 18-hole **golf course**.

A thermal circuit in the Water Palace

Another appealing option is to finish the walk back at its starting point, at the door of the Mondariz Spa Hotel and enjoy a thermal circuit in the Water Palace so you feel like new. The space holds about 3,000 square metres dedicated to leisure and relaxation, but also to specific play areas for children where their enjoyment and care are ensured.

The large (300 square metres) central swimming pool – under a huge glass dome that floods the room with natural light – is the star of the show. There are also panoramic mini-pools upstairs, saunas with different temperatures and humidities and a large number of resources that complete the circuit. By the time we've finished, it will almost be dinnertime. We recommend staying at the hotel and enjoying something from the menus of its restaurants.



> Mondariz Spa

A trip through history in castles and fortified pre-Roman Iron Age villages

After a hearty breakfast, we suggest that you explore the area's rich heritage by following a route that allows us to stop off at two different times in history: two thousand years ago, in the fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village of Troña and in the Middle Ages, with a visit to Castle Sobroso. Once again, you can download an audio guide of this route through the council's website.

Life in a pre-Roman village

From the hot springs resort we take Ramón Peinador Street – which is the PO-254 – in the direction of Pontearreas. Four well-signposted kilometres separate us from the **fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village of Troña**, located at 225 metres of altitude on Mount Doce Nome de Xesús. After leaving the car, we'll stop in front of the information panels located at the entrance to the fort and began to climb to the middle of the ramp, then take a path on the left. We'll follow the panels – which make a circular path – at all times in order to see the fort better and avoid a disorganised tour.

As we climb, we'll notice right away the architectural solutions such as ramps and stairs its ancient inhabitants used to cope with the uneven terrain. We'll first find the excavations of dwellings on the hillside, circular structures that are all similar to each other. You'll also be able to pick out storage buildings, stairs, retaining walls and tiled floors that will give you an idea of what life was like in pre-Roman villages.

Following along, we come to another steep incline descending to the forest, where you will find a *cruceiro* wrapped in legends about snakes stealing cattle from the locals. And, on top of the mountain, we'll find the beautiful baroque **Doce Nome de Xesús Chapel**. It can be visited inside only on the days of the festival in honour of Jesus (the second month of January and the sixth of August), when the grounds fill with people and the faithful leave their offerings in the mantle of Jesus's image, which they carry in a procession around the exterior of the church.

Sobroso Castle

After this trip, we'll resume driving and head to Sobroso Castle. Three kilometres after crossing A Ermida in the municipality of Pontearreas, we'll find the main access with the castle's name. From there, we'll enter a forest-filled park that spans 30 hectares of mountains covered by up to 40 different species of trees and wildlife living in semi-freedom.

We'll continue on with our vehicle along the track that runs through the park; we can stop whenever we see something that catches our attention, such as a granary surrounded by chestnut trees or recreational areas. We suggest that you park near the intersection that indicates the way to and from the castle and walk the circular path until you reach the fortress, whose outline will be gradually revealed to us, and from where the roads connecting the inland and the city of Tui were watched over in mediaeval times.

There is evidence of the existence of the castle from 1117, when Queen Urraca was surrounded here by supporters of her son, Alfonso VII. The legend tells of her escape through a passage (today the "Paseo de Troncoso" in Mondariz-Balneario) in the direction of Compostela as she sought protection from Archbishop Xelmírez.

During our ascent, we can take note of its architectural structure. The outer wall is 140 metres in circumference and characterised by irregular walls. When you cross the threshold of the wall we see the **Keep** – its stones bear the marks of the stonemasons who shaped them – and the castle's residential area, converted into a centre for the recovery of popular culture. Awaiting us inside are four exhibition halls dedicated to clothing, to the preparation of flax, the traditional crafts of the district and the reproduction of rooms in a typical Galician home with all its elements.

The oysters of Arcade

Take your time to enjoy this interesting museum. When you've finished, we suggest that you head to the coastal town of Arcade, famous for its oysters, which – accompanied by an Albariño wine with the D.O. Rías Baixas – make the perfect match for our meal. And, after lunch, there's nothing better than a walk along the dock of the **port and O Peirao beach** to catch a glimpse of the interior of Vigo's estuary.

In 1117, Queen Urraca fled to Santiago de Compostela after being besieged in Sobroso Castle by the supporters of her son, Alfonso VII



> Sobroso Castle



> Bridge over the River Tea



> Fortified pre-Roman Iron Age village of Troña

A botanical expedition through the gardens of Soutomaioir Castle

In addition to its culinary and scenic attractions, we chose this place for its proximity to Soutomaioir Castle and its gardens. We recommend that you pay your visit in the afternoon as they are just ten minutes away by car. The botanical part is located outside the castle walls, and boasts the title of “International Camellia Garden of Excellence” awarded by the International Camellia Society.

The garden has a highly pampered collection of more than 500 specimens from 25 different species of camellia, known as the “winter flower”. These include the oldest camellia tree, with 18 trunks growing from its base, making it the largest in Galicia.

Palms and sequoias, a native forest with an 800-year-old chestnut tree, a plantation of fruit trees and the panoramic view of the *Albariño* vineyards terraced on the hill turn this stroll into a delicious botanical expedition. At the entrance, you'll find brochures to guide your tour, which is open and free-of-charge to the public.

To access the walled complex, we'll cross a drawbridge, on whose gate we'll see the coat of arms of the Marquises of Mos. This fortress was the fief of Pedro Madruga – a key figure of fifteenth-century Galicia, both in terms of revolts by peasants and revolts against the Catholic Monarchs. The main parts are the Keep and the Palace, with its fully renovated rooms. The entrance inside to see the Sal3n do Tapiz (Tapestry Hall), the Sal3n of Batalla (Battle Hall) or the Galer3a de Damas (Ladies' Gallery) is subject to morning and evening opening hours, except Monday, when it is closed.

A therapeutic and relaxing session in the spa

After having immersed ourselves in culture and nature, we suggest that you return to the Mondariz Spa Hotel to try out one or more of the health, relaxation or beauty treatments or one of the wide range of massages, both therapeutic and relaxing. A short siesta is the perfect way to conclude your hot springs experience before dinnertime.

| day 3 |

From Mondariz-Balneario to Tui

After breakfast, we encourage you to enjoy one last swim in the Palacio da Auga (**Water Palace**). However, if you fancy stretching your legs, you can take a short walk over to **Cernadela riparian beach**, at the point where the River Tea is crossed by the bridge – an excellent Romanesque construction with five gothic arches and a middle, semicircular arch – of the same name.

Tui Cathedral, the River Mi3o and its eels

When we return, it will be time to pick up our luggage and bid farewell to Mondariz-Balneario. If we have time to do something in the morning and early afternoon before returning home, we suggest heading over to the town of Tui, which is located just over a half-hour's drive away and is accessible from the A-55.

Tui was one of the seven capital of Galicia until 1833 and has a fortress/cathedral – the only one in the province of Pontevedra – which crowns the rise on which the town is located. You'll enjoy a jewel of the Spanish gothic style, plus a great view of the riparian landscape of the River Mi3o, tinged with the green of the forest on its river bank and that of the other side, Portugal.

When lunchtime rolls around, remember that Tui is known as the “capital of the *meix3n*” (eel), though it is also famous for other river delicacies, such as lamprey and shad, which pair perfectly with O Rosal wines with the R3as Baixas Designation of Origin.

Monte Aloia Nature Park

If the day is suitable, another option is to order a picnic and enjoy it in the nearby Monte Aloia Nature Park, which we can access via the local PO-340 road. We can enjoy our repast there, protected by the shade of a century-old forest of native and exotic species while contemplating waterfalls and brooks. The “Casa do Enxe3eiro Areses” Visitors' Centre – a picturesque stone and wooden building located at the park entrance – can help to organise our visit so that we can make the most of our time.



The gardens at Soutomaioir Castle have more than 500 specimens of camellia from 25 different species, including the largest in Galicia

> Soutomaioir Castle



> Monte Aloia

