



 XUNTA
DE GALICIA

 Xacobeo 21-22

Allariz



a walk of
history and life



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ALLARIZ IS A SMALL TOWN NEAR THE CITY OF OURENSE THAT WAS DECLARED A HISTORIC-ARTISTIC SITE IN 1971. IT WAS ALSO AWARDED THE EUROPEAN PRIZE FOR URBAN PUBLIC SPACE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND FAITHFUL RESTORATION OF THE OLD TOWN AND THE EXCELLENT PRESERVATION OF ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE AREA AROUND ITS RIVER, THE ARNOIA.

THE TOWN WAS FOUNDED IN THE 6TH CENTURY BY ALARIC IN THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM OF THE SUEBI, WHICH EARNED IT THE NAME "VILLA ALARICII", MEANING TOWN OF THE ALARICI. IT WAS SUPPORTED AND VISITED BY KINGS SUCH AS ALFONSO VI, ALFONSO VII, SANCHO IV, AND ALFONSO X THE WISE, WHO PROMOTED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN AND MADE IT A ROYAL STRONGHOLD IN THE DEFENCE OF THE BORDER WITH PORTUGAL.

TODAY IT IS A BEAUTIFUL AND PEACEFUL TOWN, WITH MUSEUMS, GARDENS, RIVER WALKS, AND A WIDE RANGE OF TOURIST AND SHOPPING OPTIONS. A REAL PARADISE FOR SHOPAHOLICS.

Essentials

A Ponte de Vilanova and Alameda do Arnado



B Praza Maior



C Iglesia de Santiago



D Iglesia de Santo Estevo



E Convento de Santa Clara



F Iglesia de San Pedro





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We begin our tour at the Tourist Information Centre, in an old guardhouse on the bridge over the River Arnoia, on **rúa Piñeiro 1**, and then cross over it to visit the **Alameda do Arnado 2** park. We now come to the **PONTE DE VILANOVA** (Vilanova or New Town Bridge) and take in the views of the river, the town, and the lookout point. On the way we can see some of the old mills and tanneries, now converted into museums, cafeterias, and

exhibition halls, such as the **Centro Cívico A Fábrica** (A Fábrica Civic Centre) and the **Muiño do Burato** (Burato Mill), located on the other bank of the river. There are also new buildings, such as the **Villa de Allariz Hotel and Spa**, which is in total harmony with the landscape and has a wonderful view over the **MEDIEVAL VILANOVA BRIDGE 3**. The Via de Plata pilgrim route passes through here, which is followed by many pilgrims as they walk to Santiago de Compostela. In the 12th century, the bridge was defended by the Knights Templar, who also guarded the nearby **IGLESIA DE SANTA MARÍA DE VILANOVA** (church of Santa María de Vilanova).

On the other side of the bridge is **FÁBRICA DE VILANOVA** (Vilanova Factory), an old 17th century tannery which has been converted into the **Fogar do Santiso museum restaurant**. We can sample organic produce from

PREVIOUS PAGES Monument to Festa do Boi,

Ponte de Vilanova

FACING Ponte de Vilanova

BELOW Lounge room of Hotel y Spa Villa de Allariz







their orchard here, beef from local breeds, and even the wine, sangria, vodka, and gin they make themselves.

As we tread the worn stones of the road on our way to the centre of the town, we come across the [CRUCEIRO DE VILANOVA](#) (Vilanova calvary), one of the few that still stand in their original location and whose main task was to protect *alaricanos* (people from Allariz) against the spread of the plague or other epidemics.



To the right, we have the municipal swimming pool, with its extensive park area, which adults and children flock to in summer for a swim in the pool and river.

Continuing along [rúa Vilanova 4](#), we come to the [Praza Maior 5](#) (Main Square), where we find the wonderfully-located 12th century [IGLESIA DE SANTIAGO](#) (church of Santiago), one of the best examples of traditional Romanesque art. Particularly beautiful are the brackets of the apse, the careful carving of the windows and the main façade, with cylindric archivolt decorated with pre-Roman motifs. The interior has a single nave, with a wooden roof and a triumphal arch, where we should make sure to see the Virgin

PREVIOUS PAGES Iglesia de Santa Maria de Vilanova and cross

ABOVE Praza Maior

BELOW Iglesia de Santiago

FACING, ABOVE Fountain of A Paneira

FACING, BELOW Ring on the town hall building

of Hope, which dates back to the first third of the 16th century and is credited to Juan de Juni.

The square is dominated by the Town Hall building which has a striking large ring, used during the Feast of Corpus Christi in the famous Festa do Boi (Ox Festival).

The collection of emblematic buildings in the square is completed by [A PANEIRA](#) (lit. the basket), which was an old agricultural credit bank that traded between the 15th and 18th centuries. The striking faces on the spouts of the fountain evoke Celtic rituals.

The wide choice of places to go for something to eat around the Iglesia de Santiago includes places such as [A Micalla](#), a wine bar with a focus on wine culture where you can also sample and purchase wines, liqueurs, and tapas. In 2018 they won first prize in the “Tapas de carne de boi” (Ox Meat Tapas) competition, a food event where the star in-



redient is organic Ox meat raised on Allariz farms. [O Pepiño de Allariz](#) is an old shop-bar that had been closed for 30 years and was reopened due to the shooting of the film *La Lengua de las mariposas* (Butterfly tongue), by José Luis Cuerda, which was set in a bygone era. [Casa Fandiño](#), at no. 7 [rúa do Cárcere](#), is the oldest restaurant in Allariz with a hundred years of history behind it. Today, it still serves up traditional Galician cuisine and some of its recipes have been passed down from generation as it has been run by the same family since 1917. Other restaurants, such as [Bule-Bule](#) and [Casa Pepiña](#), also offer wine and tapas.

The [CASA-MUSEO VICENTE RISCO](#) (Risco Vicente Risco House-Museum) is on the nearby [rúa San Lourenzo](#). The Fundación Vicente Risco (Vicente Risco Foundation) organises a wide variety of activities and events throughout the year, such as concerts and poetry recitals.





We now head back to the square and continue our tour along **rúa da Cruz 7** on which Allariz artist [Xabier Varela](#) has recently opened a gallery space at no. 3 where you can purchase his paintings and engravings. What's more, if you are interested in engraving, he is willing to demonstrate how a rolling press works. At no. 5, among the clothing stores, a surprise awaits us in [Maruxairas](#), a bookstore with collector's books, vinyl records, and assorted items that will

quite often take us back to our childhood. Next door is the [Maria Lázuli](#) shop, which was opened by a Brazilian jewellery designer who fell in love with this area and has twenty years of experience in the trade.

This street also contains the [CASA TORRE DOS CASTRO OXEA](#) (Castro Oxea House Tower), an early 16th century building with a coat of arms dated from 1748 on its façade. Inside you can find the [Licores Zirall](#) store, which offers products the González-Ogea family

PREVIOUS PAGES Iglesia de Santiago
ABOVE Licores Zirall
BELOW O Pepiño de Allariz



have been making for three generations and still looks like the old apothecary it used to be. Here we can pick up the famous herbal and coffee liqueurs, aguardiente spirit liqueurs, and white aguardiente spirits. Those who are keen for a challenge can pick up the herbs needed to make their own liqueurs.

The shopping and outlets area of Allariz is centred around this crossroads. On the most central streets, such as Portelo, Fonteiriña, Hospital, Santo Estevo, and Cruz, the buildings have been carefully refurbished. Here we can find a wide range of well-known clothes, footwear, and accessories firms, including prestigious Galician designers such as [Adolfo Domínguez](#), [Roberto Verino](#) and [Florentino](#).

If we go up **rúa do Portelo 8**, at no. 4 we can visit the unique [MUSEO GALEGO DO XOGUETE](#) (Galician Museum Of Toys) in an old manor house that used to be the Courthouse of Allariz. It was founded in 1995 thanks to a



donation by collector Alberto Oro Claro who, with the help of other locals, amassed almost 1,500 toys. This building reminds us that it was the site of the trial of Romasanta the werewolf, who confessed to having committed 13 murders whilst under a curse when he was captured in 1852 in Nombela (Toledo).

At no. 3 you can find the [MUSEO DA MODA](#) (Fashion museum), which is fun, entertaining, and interactive and is based in an old 12th century manor house. We recommend a visit to anyone who is interested in finding out about old sewing workshops, fashion in the past, or seeing a recreation of an old shopping street. On the ground floor is the [Bar-Tapería F'ío de Liño](#), where the decoration is in the style of an old tailor's shop. We have another fashion shop in [Sira Domarco](#) (no. 10), which stocks exclusive women's clothes and accessories and provides advice on everything from recycling old clothes to personalised make-up tips.

A range of other shops make this a lively street: antique shops, bars, clothes shops, restaurants, and the [Hotel Rural Portelo](#). Two gourmet foodie shops deserve special mention: [A Despensa do Alarico](#), which offers organic produce and products from the

BELOW Museo Galego do Xoguete

Allariz Area Biosphere Reserve and [A tenda do Pepiño](#), which stocks 100% Galician local products from their own range.

From here we make our way to the **Praza dos Mesóns** ⁸ (Inn Square), where the [Café-Cultural Roi Xordo](#) awaits. This is one of the places with the greatest history and tradition in Allariz and bears the name of the *irmandiño* hero. It used to be a restaurant, a bar and a place for drinks, until it became the present-day premises, where it also offers an enticing programme of shows.

We continue our walk along **rúa Arroio** ¹⁰ and then onto **rúa Fonteiriña** ¹¹, where we

find innovative shops, such as [Rei Zentolo](#), where t-shirts are the main attraction with their hilarious messages from Galician popular culture combined with Anglo-Saxon pop aesthetics.

Another of the important monuments we find on our walk is the Romanesque [IGLESIA DE SANTO ESTEVO](#) (church of Saint Steven), which was restored in the 16th century using stones from the old fortress. On the south side there are three tombs bearing the cross of the Order of Santiago, which highlights the passage of pilgrims through Allariz, on one of the stages of the Via de la Plata Jacobean pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.



Rúa do Castelo ¹² leads us to the [ATALAIA](#) (lookout point), the site of a fortified pre-Roman settlement where the town's castle would later be built. The castle is no longer standing but from the top we can take in a unique view of the historical-artistic site and the countryside in and around Allariz.

Climbing back down, we retrace our steps back to the [CASA DA CULTURA](#) (cultural centre), which is in the old prison. From here we go along **rúa Santo Estevo** ¹³ to the Campo da Barreira (Barreira Field) square. On the way, we can see the archaeological remains of the bridge on an old road, [A PONTE DO FOXO](#) (Ditch Bridge), A stone's throw away, inside the [A](#)

[Muralla](#) cafeteria (no. 13 rúa Pepe Puga), we can also see the remains of the old walls, which once protected the town of Allariz.

Nearby, at no. 5 **Xunqueira road**, is the recently restored façade of the old Baroque [IGLESIA DE SAN LORENZO](#) (church of Saint Lawrence). At the top, above the door, is a depiction of the saint with the firepit that was used when he was martyred.

We now come to the **Campo da Barreira** ¹⁴ square where the fair is held on the 1st

FACING Roi Xordo culture cafe
BELOW Iglesia de Santo Estevo





and 15th of each month around the ornate [BAROQUE FOUNTAIN](#) made by the master Lucas Ferro Caaveiro. This is where the imposing [CONVENTO DE SANTA CLARA](#) (convent of Saint Claire) stands, founded in the 13th century by Queen Doña Violante, wife of Alfonso X the Wise. This king spent his childhood in Allariz and learned Galician-Portuguese, the noble language used in the *Cantigas de Santa María* (late 13th century), which is one of the most important monophonic song

collections in Western Medieval literature. The building was rebuilt in the 18th century after a fire, which explains its Baroque appearance. Nowadays, a cloistered convent still lives there and the culinary secrets of the melindre sweet breads, *almendrados* (almond biscuits), and typical sweets of Allariz, which we can purchase in numerous shops in the town, have been kept behind its walls. The 364 m² convent cloister is considered the largest in Spain. In the convent farmyard, the nuns raise the so-called *pulardas* of the convent, chickens which yield delicate and juicy meat. They are well regarded in the haute cuisine which was



served to Pope Francis as Christmas Eve dinner in 2013.

From an artistic point of view, we cannot leave without visiting the [MUSEO DE ARTE SACRA](#) (Museum of Religious Art), which houses two jewels of Spanish art from the Late Middle Ages: the odd ivory Virgen Abrideira and the Rock Crystal Cross.

Elsewhere on the square, we can see the shrine to the town's patron saint and the Baroque [IGLESIA DE SAN BENITO](#) (church of Saint Benedict) flanked by two calvaries. The devotion to San Benito is so great that as soon as we step over the threshold, we can see the plaques of gratitude from parishioners for the prayers answered by the saint.

We move on from here to [rúa Entrecercas](#) ¹⁵ to discover part of the Medieval wall built between the 12th and 15th centuries, which at some points stands up to 20 metres tall. Built into the wall is [Penedo da Vela](#), a bar



where you can take a break from the tour and get something to eat or a coffee. If you like larger spaces with a garden area, the [Fogar dos Maiores](#) restaurant is also on this street and is a small oasis of green in this area full of monuments.

On our way we come to a startling group of young people running alongside an ox. This is the monument to the [FESTA DO BOI](#) by sculptor Arturo Andrade, which alludes to the conflicts between Christians and Jews. In 1317, an Allariz nobleman, Xan de Arzúa, rode through the streets of the town on an ox scaring away the Jews who were mocking the Corpus Christi procession. Oddly, he left

FACING, ABOVE Convento de Santa Clara
FACING, BELOW Baroque fountain
ABOVE Iglesia de San Benito
BELOW Cross of Iglesia de San Benito



money in his will for this event to be repeated annually.

A little bit further down is the IGLESIA DE SAN PEDRO (church of Saint Peter), consecrated in the 12th century, where a military style bell tower, which is so characteristic of Allariz churches, rises proudly.

At the intersection (**rúa das Hortas** ¹⁶, **rúa Hospital** ¹⁷, **rúa Sur**), we can see an example of traditional Ourense architecture in the Hotel- Restaurante Pallabarro, which was built in 1860. It used to be the Casa de la Música (music school) and now has just four bedrooms and a charming restaurant with an internal courtyard. At no. 7 rúa das Hortas is the shop-workshop of artisan textile workers Rir & Co, where they sell unique

ABOVE Iglesia de San Pedro
BELOW MOA craft shop

garments handmade by Inés Rodríguez and her collaborators.

From here we now head to **rúa Hospital** ¹⁷ and, at no. 8, we come to the permanent exhibition of paintings and sculptures by local artist José Famos López. Next door is the Moa workshop, a Galician craft shop where they have prominent collections of pieces made by enamel firing which include reproductions of archaeological findings of Celtic goldsmithery and pottery.

We head back a few steps to rúa Lobarriñas and then carry on along **rúa San Lázaro** ¹⁹ where we can see the CASA DO BOI (Ox House) on the corner, which “houses” the ox during the celebrations and is the main office of the Fundación Xan de Arzúa (Xan de Arzúa Foundation).

From **rúa San Lázaro** we make our way to **rúa Castelao** ²⁰ and, almost at the end of our journey, we come to **rúa Emilia Pardo**



Bazán ²¹, where we can see numerous bakeries and sweet shops, including Confitería Luisa, Fina Rei, and O Forno do Tomás where empanada pasties and sweets are made under the certification of Allariz Artisan Product. The five star items in the town’s patisserie range are almendrados (almond biscuits), almendras de Pico almond sweets, Cazo doughnuts, Torta Real cake, and Yema doughnuts. After adding a bit of sweetness to our day, we can step into the colourful and pleasant Aira das Letras bookshop which, as they themselves say, specialises in “beautiful books”, with more than 4,000 volumes in stock, and illustrated books and toys. Next to it is The Cosmethics, where the Xabón de Allariz handcrafted soaps made from donkey milk are sold.

We make our way from here to the PRAZA DE ABASTOS (food market), where the Mercado da Reserva (Reserve Market) is held every Saturday morning, offering local produce from the Allariz Biosphere Reserve.



If we are in a group and have made a reservation, we can round off our visit by going to the MUSEO MUIÑO DO BURATO (Burato Mill Museum), which is part of the Rio Arnoia Ethnographic Park along with the nearby MUSEO DO COIRO FAMILIA NOGUEIRAS (Nogueiras Family Tanning Museum).

From the museum, we head down to **Parque do Portovello** ²² (Old Port Park) to reach the old mill which has been converted into the Acea da Costa restaurant. Another unique establishment stands next to it; the Torre Lombarda (Lombard Tower) is an old defensive tower that was a tannery long before it was turned into lodgings.

ABOVE Fina Rei
BELOW The Cosmetics



On the other bank of the River Arnoia, which we can cross on a footbridge, is the [MUSEO DO COIRO FAMILIA NOGUEIRAS](#), an old tannery that today houses a leather museum. A craftsman does his work live in front of us here and we can view an exhibition of his pieces and buy any we like. The building also houses the [Restaurante Portovello](#), which is in the part of the factory where the jars were stored and drying took place.

Every year from May to October, this wonderful location hosts the Allariz International Xardíns Festival, where renowned gardeners, designers, and landscapers compete to show off their plant creations, which focus on or are inspired by a different theme every year. Very close at hand, at no. 25 rúa Portovello we have the [Raúl Diniz](#)

ABOVE Parque do Portovello

FACING Muiño do Burato



[house-workshop](#), where we can purchase artworks by this Sao Paulo artist who is a member of the Arte-Mud collective and was the winner at the third Allariz International Xardíns Festival.



O Rexo Nature Area

A little over four kilometres from the centre of Allariz, in the direction of the town of Xunqueira de Ambía, is a green area that is home to an artistic project by Basque artist Agustín Ibarrola, who unites nature and art in harmony using stones, trees, and the environment as his canvases. The space also includes an Environmental Education Centre, a sheep farm-school, and a cheese factory, where O Rexo cheese, the first sheep's milk cheese to be made in Galicia, is produced.

Santa Mariña de Augas Santas

Six kilometres outside Allariz, we can visit the Historical and Artistic Centre of Santa Mariña de Augas Santas (Saint Marina of Aguas Santas). According to legend, the Galician Saint Mariña, who was martyred during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, is buried here. She was chained, burned, and finally decapitated. It is said that her head, after it was separated from her body, bounced three times on the ground, which created the three fountains we find here today. We can also see the furnace she was burned in and the tank into which she was thrown. In the nearby area we can also visit the Armeá hillfort and the remains of a Roman road.

DERECHA Fountain of Santa Mariña de Augas Santas
IZQUIERDA Iglesia de Santa Mariña de Augas Santas

The church still preserves all the 12th century Romanesque features, including the false triforium, the well-carved capitals, and the rose windows. The size of the building gives us an idea of the large numbers of pilgrims who came to worship the relics of the saint. A village sprang up around the church, which was restored in 2007, and is a place worth visiting where nature, traditional architecture, and legends all come together perfectly.





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