



 XUNTA
DE GALICIA

 Xacobeo 21-22

Betanzos



a walk of
history and life

Betanzos



BETANZOS WAS THE CAPITAL OF ONE OF THE SEVEN HISTORICAL PROVINCES OF THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF GALICIA AND WAS CALLED THE CITY "OF THE KNIGHTS" BECAUSE IT WAS THE RESIDENCE OF IMPORTANT NOBLE FAMILIES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. THE TOWN IS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE ARTABRO GULF, ON A HILL ON THE ANCIENT IRON AGE SETTLEMENT OF UNCTIA, FLANKED BY THE RIVERS MENDO AND MANDEO. KING ALFONSO IX DECIDED TO RESETTLE THE POPULATION ON THE HILL IN 1219, WHICH MAKES BETANZOS 800 YEARS OLD.

Essentials

A Praza dos irmáns García Naveira



B Estatua de Diana Cazadora



C Porta da Vila



D Iglesia de Santiago



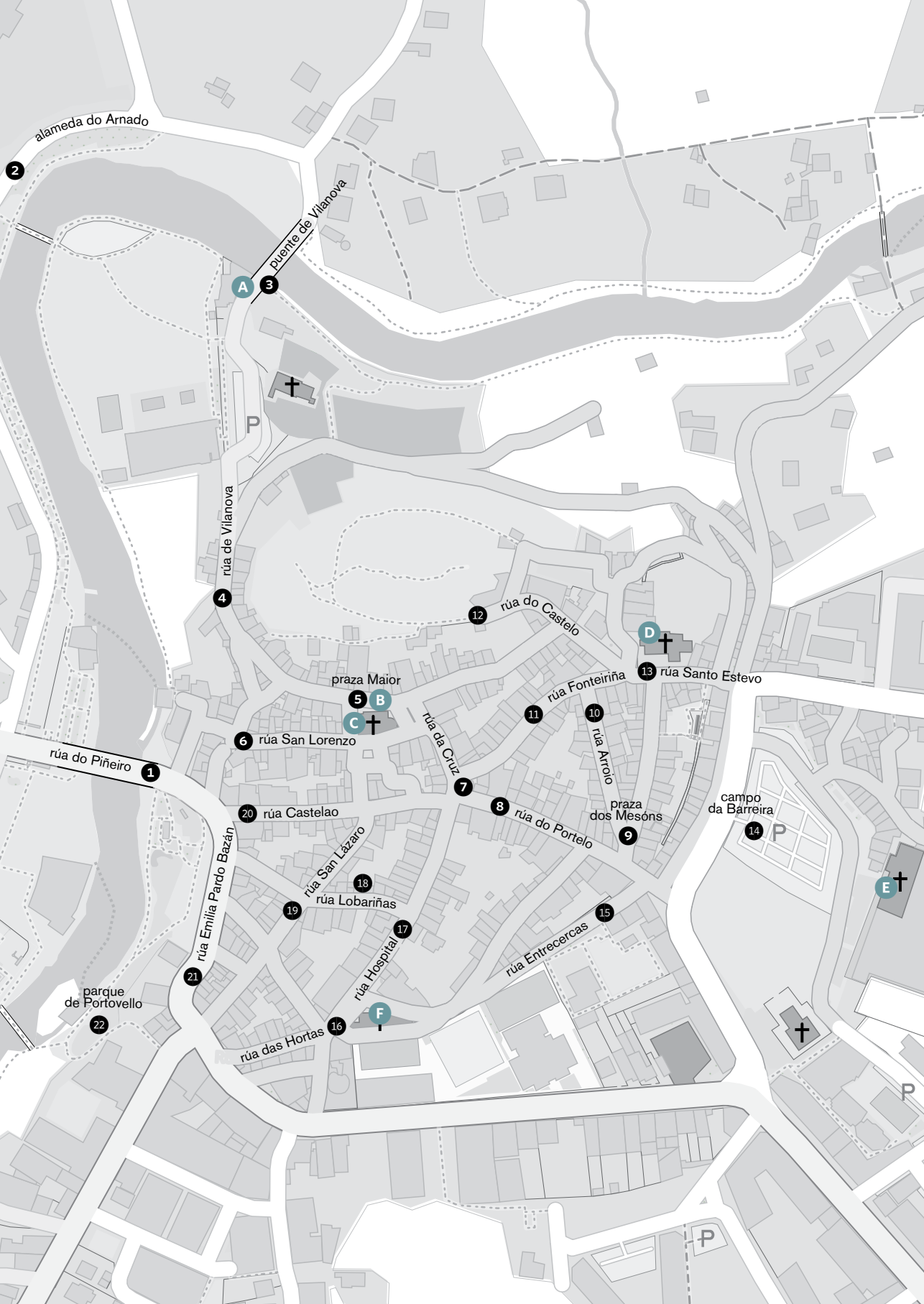
E Iglesia de Santa Maria do Azougue and Iglesia de San Francisco



F Escuelas de Jesús García Naveira



The route



- 1 Praza dos irmáns García Naveira
- 2 Rúa Ferradores
- 3 Claudino Pita district
- 4 Porta da Vila
- 5 Rúa do Castro
- 6 Praza da Constitución
- 7 Rúa Santiago
- 8 Rúa de Roldán
- 9 Rúa da Pescadería
- 10 Praza do Azougue
- 11 Rúa Quiroga
- 12 Rúa dos Cabidos
- 13 Rúa Travesa
- 14 Rúa dos Prateiros



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Our tour begins in the **Praza dos Irmáns García Naveira** ¹ (Brothers García Naveira Square), an easily accessible place with good signposting, public parking, and a bus stop. In the centre of the square is the statue of the brothers Juan and Jesús García Naveira, two indianos (emigrants to America) and philanthropists from Betanzos who emigrated to Argentina at the end of the 19th century. There they managed to amass a great fortune, thanks to their varied businesses, part of which they spent on charitable works to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of their homeland.

The square is also called do Campo (of the Country), as a picturesque market of farm

produce is held on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings as well as the Fair on the 1st and 16th of every month.

The main two monuments in the square are the old HOSPITAL DE SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA (Hospital of Saint Anthony Of Padua), founded in the 17th century to treat the inhabitants of Betanzos and accommodate pilgrims on the English Way to Santiago. Today, after many renovations, it is the seat of the Court of First Instance and Instruction. Opposite lies the IGLESIA Y CONVENTO DE SANTO DOMINGO (Church and Convent Of Santo Domingo), which is noticeable for its Baroque tower, donated by archbishop Monroy from Compostela. On the night of San Roque, the largest paper balloon in the world rises into the sky in a tradition that dates back to 1814. The old monastic buildings also house the MUSEO DAS MARIÑAS (Coastal Museum), which is an essential site to visit for a deeper understanding of the history of Betanzos.



PREVIOUS PAGES Praza dos irmáns García Naveira and iglesia de Santa María de Azougue

FACING Statue of García Naveira brothers

BELOW Betanzos market



In the vicinity of the square is the old [ARCHIVO-LICEO](#) building which is currently home to municipal offices and the tourist information centre. The façade is divided into seven parts in reference to the seven ancient provinces of Galicia. Very close at hand, we can also see the [COLEGIO DE LAS HUÉRFANAS](#) (Orphans' School), a Baroque building of which an exact replica was made for the El Pueblo Español (Spanish Town) exhibition in Barcelona. Today it is the headquarters of the municipal library. Josefa Queipo de Llano, widow of Juan Díaz Porlier, was imprisoned in one of its cells. He was hanged in A Coruña after the liberal uprisings of 1815.

On the nearby [rúa Ferradores](#) ² we can view a group of traditional buildings with porticoes and glass-enclosed balconies, including the [CASA DE JUAN GARCÍA NAVEIRA](#) (House of Juan García Naveira), which was built in a historicist style with French

influences in the mansard roof and was the work of architect Juan Ciórraga.

On the ground floor of the building is the [Café-Vinoteca Versalles](#), which was formally the headquarters of a bank. There is a wine shop in the basement which offers a large collection of more than 200 famous wines, from Rioja, Ribera del Duero, and Rías Baixas, as well as wines from a wide variety of locations, such as Australia, Argentina, and even the United Arab Emirates..



From [rúa Ferradores](#) you can reach “las calexas” (pipes), a generic name given to [rúa Fonte de Unta](#), [Travesía do Progreso](#), and [rúa Venela do Campo](#), which today are well-known locations in the tapas area, where you can savour the famous Betanzos omelette and wash it down with a good local wine.

From [FUENTE DE DIANA CAZADORA](#), a fountain which reproduces the Diana of the Louvre Museum and was made in Paris in grey cast iron, we cross into the [Claudino Pita district](#) ³, where we can see some examples of Galician Modernism, such as the [PALCO DE LA MÚSICA](#) bandstand, the [STREETLAMPS](#) designed by the architect González Villar, and a little bit further on, at no. 4 [rúa Valdonce](#), the [CASA PITA](#) (Pita House).

Before we continue on our tour, we should take a special look at the [BANCO ETCHEVERRÍA](#) (Etcheverría Bank) building, which is now ABANCA. It was founded in 1717 by Juan



Etcheverry and was the oldest bank in Spain until it closed in 2014.

We pass into the Medieval town through the [Porta da Vila](#) ⁴ (Town Gate). Today only the name and the coats of arms remain of the old gate. The coats of arms are those of the Royal family, the city, and Galicia, with a rather unusual set of five ciboria, which show the granting of the title of city to Betanzos in 1465 by a privilege issued by King Henry IV.

We continue our walk along [rúa Nova](#), at the start of which, just in front, we can see the [ANTIGUO HOTEL COMERCIAL](#) (Old Commercial Hotel), one of the most interesting civic buildings in Betanzos which has rows

ABOVE Farmers market

BELOW Streetlamps designed by the architect González Villar

FACING, ABOVE Fountain of Diana Cazadora

FACING, BELOW Modernist buildings



of balconies and glass-enclosed balconies and the only remaining hórreo granary in the old town. Next door we can pay a visit to *Panadería Rabizas* bakery, the oldest in the town, founded in 1928, where they sell their famous empanada pasties and tasty almond biscuits. There is evidence of this bakery dating from the 16th century and it is now considered one of the oldest in Spain.

After that tasty stop, we head towards rúa Castro, a shopping street par excellence, which includes unique shops such as *Concheiro*, an interior design and gift shop founded in 1862 with a special focus on the various Sargadelos collections; *El Rastro de Merce* (Merce flea market), which offers antiques and second-hand items, and *A Cabeza do Cabalo Branco* (The White Horse's Head), a traditional hardware store where you can find everything. This shop is more widely known by the advert on the store front than by its official name of Ferretería Núñez (Núñez Ironmonger); the head of the horse



comes from a 19th century German merry-go-round and the shop itself opened in 1877.

One of the monuments particularly worth mentioning on **rúa Castro** is the *CÁRCERE DO PARTIDO* (Partido Prison), which originally housed the palace of Fernán Pérez de Andrade and was later rebuilt during the reign of Emperor Carlos I. In the 19th century, some of Spain's first political prisoners were held in its cells, and today the Local Police use the site.

CASA NÚÑEZ (Núñez House), built in 1923 by Rafael González Villar, is located at no. 2 rúa Castro. It was the location of the city's first commercial warehouses, where there was a chocolate factory and a household goods and textiles shop, as well as telegraph, banking,



FACING Rúa do Castro
ABOVE A Cabeza do Cabalo Branco
BELOW El rastro de Merce



and post services, currently it is the location of the CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE ESTAMPA CONTEMPORÁNEO (International Centre Of Contemporary Printing, CIEC), a non-profit created in 1997 by Jesus Nuñez in his hometown. You can visit the workshops with their machinery, the library, the temporary exhibitions, and the space where the permanent collection is on display, with works by Picasso, Dalí, Miró, and Luis Seoane.

Our walk takes us to the **Praza da Constitución** 6 (Constitution Square) located in the highest part of the Uncia hillfort, which the historical centre of the city of Betanzos was built on top of. Its most outstanding monuments are the CASA CONSISTORIAL (Town Hall), a neoclassical style building designed in the 18th century by Ventura Rodríguez, which displays the coats of arms of the Porta da Vila on its façade; the PAZO DE BENDAÑA manor house, a 15th century civic building that maintains the old pointed arches of the arcade and the family coats of arms; and the



TORRE DEL RELOJ (Clock Tower), which was employed to summon the town councillors and standardise the working hours of rush cutting in the estuary. The octagonal shape of the building required the apse of the Church of Santiago to be modified.

The IGLESIA DE SANTIAGO (Church of Santiago) is one of the city's three Gothic churches. The main feature inside is the Elizabethan-style chapel of San Pedro y San Pablo (Saint Peter and Saint Paul). It has an iron grille which was made by Guillén de Bourse and an altarpiece made by Cornelis de Holanda. Francisco de Aguiar Seijas y Ulloa, who became archbishop of Mexico in the 17th century, was baptised in this temple. The southern entrance of the church, also



FACING Pazo de Lanzós
ABOVE Torre del Reloj
BELOW Iglesia de Santiago



called the Puerta Santa (Holy Door), was the entrance used by pilgrims travelling to Santiago on the English Way.

In front of the main door of the Iglesia de Santiago is the PAZO DE LANZÓS manor house, which has the coat of arms of the founder, Alonso de Lanzós Novoa y Andrade, carved on its façade, with the five lances marking the family name. The building also features the old tower that served as a watchtower on the ground floor is the Café Lanzós, where you can enjoy home-made cakes and sweets, with a different selection on offer every day of the week. It also has an interesting programme of concerts and exhibitions.

On **rúa Santiago** ⁷ we can stop in at the thoroughly interesting Libería Biblos bookshop, which has quickly become one of the

ABOVE Municipal market
FACING Iglesia de Santa María de Azougue

most active cultural players in the city due to its programme of art exhibitions, conferences and debates, courses and workshops, and publishing a bimonthly magazine for its reading club.

We continue along **rúa de Roldán** ⁸ and at no. 2 we find Alecrin, a shop focusing on Galician design and craft where we can find the popular *Nikis galician* style sweatshirts and t-shirts, which bring some of the icons of Galician culture to a wider audience.

Next door, Calzados Escala is a leading name amongst the shoe shops of the city as it has been open since 1939.

Further down the street we come to the PAZO DE LOS CONDES DE TABOADA (Counts of Taboada Town House), a 19th century town house which prominently displays the family coat of arms on its façade. On the ground floor is Tartaruga, a shop selling clothes, accessories, home and craft decorations, not only from Galicia but also from different places all over the world.

On the other side of the street, we can visit the Casa do Queixo (House of Cheese), which has a startling variety of cheese and wines, and also has a room for guided wine tastings, tasting menus, and events.

At the crossroads of rúas Roldán, Ferreiro (Ironmonger), and Pescadería (fishmonger), we can fully appreciate the steepness of

Betanzos and see the PORTA DA PONTE NOVA (New Bridge Gate) in the distance, which is one of the entry points into the walled city. Although it has undergone much renovation work, Betanzos is the Galician town that conserves the most Medieval gates. The collection consisted of four entrance gates and a wicket gate; the Porta da Ponte Nova is the best preserved and has a structure of pointed arches that can be dated to the 16th century.

Our tour continues along **rúa Pescadería** ⁹ where we come to the MERCADO MUNICIPAL (Municipal Market), which has stalls selling fish, meat, and fresh vegetables. The building was constructed in 1951 by architects Antonio Tenreiro and Peregrín Estellés.

After the Mercado Municipal we head towards the **Praza do Azougue** ¹⁰ (Market Square), whose name comes from the Arabic word meaning place of commerce, as the market used to be held here in the past.

One of the jewels of the Galician Gothic style that we find in the square is the IGLESIA DE SANTA MARÍA DO AZOQUE (Church of Saint Mary Of The Market), which was built by Fernán Pérez de Andrade “o Bo” (the good) in the late 14th century on the remains of an earlier Romanesque church, which belonged to the sailors’ guild. The main entrance features the six-pointed star or seal of Solomon, which also appears on the handles of the coffin of Fernán Pérez de Andrade



in the adjacent Iglesia de San Francisco (Church of Saint Francis), which grants it magical protective qualities. Inside we can admire an altarpiece with fourteen Flemish carvings of the School of Leuven, which were stolen in 1981 by the famous Erik the Belgian and recovered shortly after. Our visit to the atrium would not be complete without an inspection of the north door which has a startling depiction of the Last Judgement on its polychrome tympanum with St. Michael the Archangel holding the scales weighing souls.

From there we make our way to the **Praza de Fernán Pérez de Andrade** (Fernán Pérez de Andrade Square) and on to **rúa Quiroga** ¹¹, where we can find good examples of traditional marine architecture and its colourful balconies. It is a charming spot where we can enjoy the square and have an aperitif at one of the long tables and benches. We should make sure to visit the IGLESIA



DE SAN FRANCISCO, which was rebuilt in the 14th century by Fernán Pérez de Andrade “o Bo” (the good) over a pre-existing monastery. The inside of the building became the pantheon of the Andrades, one of the most powerful families in Medieval Galicia, and hosts an extraordinary collection of burial sculptures, dating from between the 14th and 16th centuries, where the founder’s tomb at the foot of the church stands above the stone figures of a bear and a wild boar, the symbols of the House of Andrade.

On **rúa dos Cabidos** ¹² we can see the main façade of the Iglesia de San Francisco, decorated with curious guild signs belonging, possibly, to the groups that took part in the building of the church: fishermen, oystercatchers, tailors, etc.

A little further on are the ESCUELAS JESÚS GARCÍA NAVEIRA (Jesús García Naveira Schools). Before his death in Buenos Aires in 1912, when he was run over by a carriage, this businessman made clear his desire for the schools to be set up. In 1917 the work was assigned to the architect González Villar who used postmodernist and historicist elements of the Spanish Mudejar style in the design. To this day the old school continues its educational work, now as a municipal nursery.

FACING Colorful balconies in rúa Quiroga
ABOVE Jesús García Naveira schools



Carrying on with our tour, we now return to the Praza do Azougue and turn onto **rúa Travesa** ¹³, the city’s main shopping street which has every kind of clothes, shoe, and haberdashery shop, and much more. These include Zapatería Ramoné, a shoe shop founded in 1931, which also uses a small window as a museum display. The Mercería La Palma haberdashery shop, opened in 1947, and the Confecções Mayfer fabric and sewing shop are also part of the trading history of Betanzos.

A little further on, we come to the striking façade of the CASA DO POBO (House Of The People). It features a jumbled assortment of modernist decoration and was built in 1918 with the patronage of the García Naveira brothers to be used by the Federation of Workers’ Societies of Betanzos. It was the headquarters of the CNT and FAI trade unions and was confiscated after the Civil War. Another good example of Betanzos Modernism is the CASA LIMIÑÓN (Limiñón House), which was built in 1902 and has characteristic glass-enclosed balconies and *costureiros* (sewing box) peep-holes.

We continue our walk along rúa dos **Pra-teiros** ¹⁴ (Silversmiths street), named after the location of the silversmiths’ guild in the



Middle Ages. This street is an essential stop for pilgrims on the English Way to Santiago de Compostela, with various shops selling a wide range of products, such as haberdasheries, painting workshops, wool shops, souvenir shops, etc.

At the beginning of **rúa dos Prateiros** is the *Farmacia Couceiro* pharmacy, which, after nine generations in the same family, continues to offer handmade treatments using the recipes of its founders. There is documentation of this old apothecary dating back to 1719, although it is possible that it is even older, which is why it is considered the oldest commercial establishment in Galicia.

At no. 18 Prateiros, *Aqua* stocks aromatherapy products, generic fragrances, natural cosmetics, and hand-made soaps. Just a little bit further down, *Ana Artesanía en Plata* is a small shop where goldsmith Ana María Martínez Gómez presents her original pieces, which reproduce the rose windows of the Galician Romanesque style. In 2008, she was a finalist in the Galician Crafts Prize.

We end our tour by passing through the PORTA DA PONTE VELLA (Old Bridge Gate) to find a pleasant surprise, the estuary of Betanzos. This gate was linked to the English Way that

FACING Ana Artesanía en Plata
ABOVE Farmacia Couceiro



leads to Santiago de Compostela, as pilgrims would have to pay a toll there after crossing the River Mandeo.

Nearby we can see the CONVENTO DE LAS AGUSTINAS RECOLETAS (Convent Of The Augustinian Recollects), which was built in 1681 on the site of the first pilgrims' hospital founded by Fernán Pérez de Andrade. This convent has kept a tradition alive for more than three centuries which consists of handing over the key to the sanctuary to the mayor on Maundy Thursday, who keeps it until Good Friday, when he or she must hand it back to the nuns.

In terms of the scenery, this spot is a real treat as we can take in the traditional boats, the traditional marine architecture, the riverbanks with terraces full of fruit trees and vineyards. It all makes for a beautiful sight. To get back to our start point, the Praza irmáns García Naveira, we go around the convent of the Agustinas Recoletas along the Paseo da Tolerancia promenade and climb up to the centre of the town.

Para regresar al punto de partida, la **praza irmáns García Naveira** 1, bordeamos el convento de la Agustinas Recoletas por el Paseo da Tolerancia y subimos al centro de la villa.



Parque do Pasatempo

Described as an Encyclopaedic Garden due to its educational and social character, it was designed and financed by Juan García Naveira. Work on it began in 1893 and the first travel guides of the early 20th century noted the importance of the site.

Innovative materials and techniques were used in its construction. It provided work for more than 200 people, most of whom were illiterate, who were allowed to attend two paid hours of classes each day as part of their working day.

The garden shows us the wonders of the world as Juan García Naveira had discovered on his travels: the pyramids of Egypt, the Panama Canal, the Great Wall of China, the hot air balloon, reproductions of works of art... This rounded off the education that was given in his schools.

He was also a pioneer in developing a form of modern merchandising which offered souvenirs to finance the asylum and schools. It has been thought that the García Naveira brothers were Freemasons because of the

symbolism contained in this garden, which features compasses, a pyramid, a set square, the expression of ideas such as freedom, equality and fraternity, and so on, although this is mere speculation that some consider accurate whilst others disagree.

A Ponte das Cascas

The LAVADERO (Laundry) continues to uphold the García Naveira brothers' intentions, it is public and free of charge, and the Town Council works to conserve and guard it. It was built in 1902 for the women who did laundry, with a preference towards those who made a living from such work. The building has two floors: on the ground floor there are two rows of washing places used according to the tides, and on the upper floor there are drying places and some rooms for taking



FACING Statue of La Caridad
BELOW Parque do Pasatempo



nefits-Teaching) to provide shelter, clothing, food, and medical care to the elderly and education and support to the young. This was how the asylum and the school were founded.

If we visit the MUSEO DAS MARIÑAS (Das Mariñas Museum), which contains original photographs and some of the school's furniture, we can get an idea of the advanced teaching system they were using.

care of children, having meals, or cooking.

Next to it is the old Medieval bridge, known as A PONTE VELLA DAS CASCAS (Old Bridge of Shells), which was demolished during the Peninsular War and rebuilt in 1839. As a very narrow bridge, some curious sidings were built to protect pilgrims and pedestrians from carriages.

Escuelas Irmãos García Naveira and Palacete de San Roque

Ever faithful to their philanthropic nature, the García Naveira brothers founded the Patronato Benéfico-Docente (Board of Be-

The old poorhouse building, which also served people who were blind, deaf, and non-verbal, is today known as the PALACETE DE SAN ROQUE and has been converted into a boutique hotel.



ABOVE San Roque palace
BELOW Laundry of As Cascas



galicia