



Noia



a walk of
history and life



Noia

DISCUSSING THE HISTORY OF NOIA MEANS TRAVELLING BACK TO THE GREAT FLOOD AND THE TOWN'S TIES, WHETHER REAL OR FICTIOUS, TO NOAH AND THE ARK. THE GOLDEN AGE OF THIS NOBLE TOWN CAME IN THE MIDDLE AGES, MAINLY DUE TO ITS CLOSENESS TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA. DURING THIS PERIOD, IT WAS KNOWN AS "PORTUS APOSTOLI", THE PORT OF THE APOSTLE, WHICH WAS USED BY PILGRIMS IN THE PAST ON THEIR WAY TO SANTIAGO. TODAY THE PORT HAS DISAPPEARED DUE TO A PROCESS OF SEDIMENTATION IN THE ESTUARY, WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE 19TH CENTURY.

Essentials

Jardines de Felipe Castro
and Iglesia de San Francisco

A



Iglesia de Santa María a Nova

B



Cementerio de Santa María a Nova

C



Casa García Suárez

D



Teatro Coliseo Noela

E



Praza do Tapal
and Iglesia de San Martiño

F



The route



1 Jardines Felipe de Castro

2 Rúa Porta da Vila

3 Rúa do Curro

4 Praza da Constitución

5 Praza do Tapal

6 Rúa da Pelegrina

7 Malecón Gasset

8 Rúa do Cantón



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Our tour begins in the **Jardines Felipe de Castro** (Felipe de Castro gardens), an easily accessible place with good signposting, a public park, and a bus station 400 metres away. The main square contains the CASA CONSISTORIAL (Town Hall), which was constructed in the 20th century partly on the site of the old CONVENTO DE SAN FRANCISCO (convent of Saint Francis). The main façade includes a neo-Gothic tower with a large arched entranceway and a carved coat of arms of Noia, which features Noah and the ark because several legends link the founding of the town to the great flood.

Inside the building we find the CLAUSTRO DE SAN FRANCISCO (Saint Francis Cloisters), in a late Gothic Renaissance style, decorated with sculptures and family coats of arms that commemorate the historical importance of the town, including those of the Bermúdez, Caamaño, and Mariño families, who are important families in Noia.

The 16th century IGLESIA DE SAN FRANCISCO (church of Saint Francis) is Renaissance in style and was built thanks to donations from the nobility in the area. Inside, the chapel on the Epistle side (looking towards the altar on the right) houses, under diminished arches, the tombs of Francisco Bermúdez de Castro,



PREVIOUS PAGES Iglesia de San Martiño
FACING Jardines Felipe Castro
BELOW Cloister of San Francisco



a knight of the Order of Saint John of Malta, and Pedro Losada, a member of the Royal Guard. The main chapel is dominated by a colourful 20th century altarpiece with an image of the Immaculate Conception alongside images of Santa Clara and San Francisco (Saint Clare of Assisi and Saint Francis of Assisi), and 26 figures from the Franciscan calendar of saints and list of martyrs.

Also on the main square is the PALCO DE LA MÚSICA (bandstand), from 1950, and the



headquarters of the *Sociedade Liceo*, which was founded in 1928 and is currently highly active in the cultural activities of the county. The society has close to 3,200 members and the building which has housed it since 1961 was built on the old “Hort dos Frades” orchard.

Leaving the square behind, we move into the Medieval old town along **rúa Porta de Vila** (Town Gate street), which takes its name from the fact it stands on the site of one of the twelve gates of the now disappeared city walls that protected the old town in Noia. On the corner with rúa Rodríguez Cadarso, we can see the archaeological remains of the 15TH CENTURY AQUEDUCT. Next to it stands an 1829 building that has been refurbished for “seafront” tourism: *Casa Mar da Vila*.

ABOVE Palco de la Música

BELOW Rose window of Santa María A Nova

FACING, ABOVE Santa María A Nova

FACING, BELOW Pilgrim tombstone

This hotel has a restaurant, cafeteria, and spacious 320 square meter terrace in the courtyard of the old house.

At no. 11 on the same street we find the *Verea* watch and jewellery store, which opened in 1920 and over these last one hundred years has been run by the same family, which now has a third generation at the helm of the business.

Very close at hand, on rúa Ferreiro is the IGLESIA DE SANTA MARÍA A NOVA (church of Saint Mary the New), known for its cemetery with over 500 guild tombstones and its original Gothic maritime style. It was built in 1327, as can be read on the inscription on the tympanum on the south door. However, the church has been renovated multiple times since then as shown by the Plateresque Capilla dos Carneiro (chapel of the ram), covered by a scallop shell-shaped vault.



Inside it houses an exhibition of guild tombstones, dating from the 12th to the 19th century, which have symbols representing the trade the deceased person worked in, such as anchors for sailors, scissors for tailors, prints for shoemakers... The most noteworthy of them all is the one belonging to the ribeira boat builder known as the Lápida del Peregrino (Pilgrim’s Tombstone), as it depicts a figure holding a pilgrim’s staff and wearing the clothes of a pilgrim. The tomb of Ioan de Estivadas is also worth mentioning. This trader and important winemaker from 16th century Noia, was the inspiration for Javier Sierra when he wrote his successful *El ángel perdido* (The lost angel) novel.

Outside we can take a walk through one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Spain and find, amongst the guild tombstones and tombs, one of the few calvaries with a baldachin in Galicia.



Just opposite the church is [CASA GARCÍA SUÁREZ](#) (García Suárez House), an 18th century mansion with an imposing aristocratic coat of arms. On the ground floor we can find Mesón Senra, a good place to sample the star local dish: the corn and cockle pasty.

From here we head to **rúa do Curro 3** (Corral street), which is named after the bullfighting that used to take place there. Today, it is the main shopping street in the old town and a picturesque street market is held there every Thursday and Sunday, which adds to the shopping options for traditional shops, such as haberdasheries, florists, shoe shops, fashion and clothes shops, and greengrocers.

The [PAZO DO BISPO](#) (Bishop Manor House, rúa Oviedo Arce) is a 15th century Gothic build-

ABOVE Casa García Suárez
BELOW Teatro Coliseo Noela

ding with all the typical traits of buildings in the area: it is robust, tall, and has porticos with pointed arches.

Another important building on rúa do Curro is the [ANTIGUO HOSPITAL DE ADENTRO](#) (old inside hospital), which was established in 1467 to house pilgrims and, years later, would become known as the Casa de Gramática (lit. House of Grammar). The early building is preserved in the pointed arch portico, decorated with spheres and nailheads and shells on the tympanum, which are the symbol of the archdiocese of Compostela.

A little but further on, we come to the [TEATRO COLISEO NOELA](#) (Noela Colosseum Theatre), opened in 1921, which is one of the best examples of modernist architecture and began as a venue for zarzuela performances, theatres, conferences, and concerts, before being turned into a cinema in 1966. After several years of disuse and then a painstaking restoration, it has opened its doors once



again and has recovered the splendour of its past. We cannot leave this street without visiting the [PRAZA DE ABASTOS](#) (food market) and sampling the wide variety of fresh produce from the Muros and Noia estuary on offer.

Our stroll takes us to the **Praza da Constitución 4** (Constitution Square), where we can find Bar Lelé, the oldest bar in Noia, which opened in 1925 and has hardly changed since. Noia residents of all ages go there to read the papers, play cards, or have a wine.

The [Librería Blanco](#) bookshop is next door, which as well as selling books, newspapers and magazines, also stocks toys and gifts. It was established in the 15th century Casa da Xouba (House of Xouba) building which has three floors and large stone walls. The façade features striking pointed arches and a portico with an iron balcony.

Nearby is the **Praza do Tapal 5** (Tapal Square), which takes its name from the Fortaleza



ABOVE Bar Lelé
BELOW Iglesia de San Martiño



do Tapal (Tapal fortress), a fortified site pre-dating the walls that stood in the higher part of the town. It used to be the site of the Carcel de la Mitra (Bishop's jail) and the Palacio de los Churruchaos (Churruchaos Palace), of which a small Gothic window remains. On the ground floor of this Gothic palace we find [Bar Tapal](#), which is the perfect place for a quick stop and a coffee with views of the majestic Iglesia de San Martiño (church of Saint Martin) that we will visit later. The Tapal calvary stands in the middle, with its highly decorated capital and cross. The cross is topped off with floral motifs.

The [IGLESIA DE SAN MARTIÑO](#) was built in the 15th century and is one of the crown jewels of Galician Gothic architecture. It resembles a fortress, has a large rose window, and beau-





tiful door, on the side of which the twelve apostles are depicted. The top arch features a depiction of Christ accompanied by elderly people carrying Medieval instruments. The lack of a steeple, which has been left unfinished for six hundred years, has given rise to many legends. It is also known as the cursed church because the *La Campana del Infierno* (The Bell from Hell) film was filmed here in 1973 and one of the main scenes in it depicted the main character falling from the bell tower. This fictitious scene came true when the director, the famous filmmaker Claudio Guerín, fell to his death when working on the film.

Continuing down **rúa da Pelegrina 6**, we reach the **malecón Gasset 7** (Gasset esplanade) and the **malecón Cadarso**, where we can see the new cable-stayed bridge in the distance and what, at one point, was the port of Compostela, where pilgrims would land on their journey to Santiago.



We head back into the old town along rúa Arcebispo Lope de Mendoza where remains of the old town walls are visible. Following along rúa Condesa and rúa Arcebispo Berengel de Landoira, we reach **rúa do Cantón 8**, which is known as the local tapas area. *Tasca Típica* was opened here, in a majestic Gothic building called the **PAZO DACOSTA** (Dacosta Manor House), which was built in the 14th century and is noteworthy for its four Gothic arches and the coats of arms shown on the main façade. Next door is *Adega do Pazo*, which specialises in cocktails and has a charming inside terrace.



No. 13 houses one of the few gun shops in Galicia, *Armería Romani*, one of the oldest businesses in Noia, which has been trading

ABOVE Armería Romani
BELOW La Tasca Típica
FACING Droguería Luma

for more than one hundred years after it was opened by Severo González in the early 20th century. It was originally an ironmonger's that sold all types of products and then it expanded into selling gunpowder and weapons. It has remained a family business and now, Rodrigo Romani, the fourth generation of the family, has been in charge of the store for more than twenty years, which still has some of the original furniture, such as the wooden counter.

Another historic business in Noia, which has been open for more than 70 years, is the [Droguería Luma](#) pharmacy, which is located at

no. 6 rúa do Cantón. Today it sells souvenirs alongside cosmetics, toys, and retail products. Just opposite is another business with history and tradition, [Confecções Taboada](#), which has been dressing the men of Noia since it opened in 1936.

The adjacent **rúa do Comercio** (Trade street) can be considered, as its name suggests, a small open-air shopping centre due to the high number of family businesses, some of which have been providing their services to residents and tourists for more than a century. These include Rasgos which is now in its third generation of family mana-

gement, the [Lencería Delfina](#) lingerie shop, opened in 1928, the [Joyería-relojería Allut](#) watch and jewellery shop which opened its doors in 1914, and [Tejidos Lama](#) fabric shop, founded in 1938. Especially prominent are the [Farmacia Antonio Busto](#) pharmacy, the second oldest pharmacy in Galicia, which opened in 1750 and still retains the shelves and jars from when it opened, and the [Librería Loroño](#) Laciaña bookshop, which has been run by the same family since the early 19th century. This shop started as a grocery and general store, before becoming a printing house - we can still see the poster at the entrance - and then finally grew into a shop selling books and newspapers, where we can find a good collection of books on the town of Noia and the county.

Noia is known for its shoemakers, a trade with very deep roots in the town which, however, has been gradually lost over the years. What is mostly left today are shops selling shoes on almost every corner, such as [Calzados Rama](#), at no. 16 on rúa do Comercio, a family business founded in 1929, which boasts refurbished premises.

Our visit ends where it started, in the **Jardines Felipe de Castro**, which is presided over by a bust of the famous 18th century sculptor from Noia. In the same gardens there are also the sculptures of the two famous

FACING Felipe Castro gardens

poets who were honoured by the 2003 and 2007 Galician Literature Days, Antón Avilés de Taramancos and María Mariño, nicknamed "A Costureira" (The Seamstress).

In the surrounding area, at no. 8 rúa Galicia, we can see the old [CASINO DE NOIA](#) (Noia Casino), which was a well-known site in the county and was visited by illustrious figures such as Otero Pedrayo, Álvaro de las Casas, and Antón Avilés de Taramancos. This building, constructed in 1928 by the stonemason Pedro de Agulla, was recently renovated and the Noia tourist information centre is located on its ground floor.

Nearby, at no. 2 rúa Galicia, is one of the most famous sweet shops in Noia, [Pastelería Domíngua](#), where, during the summer celebrations, they make odd sweets in the shape of a *sancosmeiro*, a type of straw hat that is part of the county's traditional dress. We can also have a coffee or a tea in their modern cafeteria and try out the house speciality: the *doblado*. Baked puff pastry filled with pastry cream that has been made using the same family recipe since the shop opened in 1956. In front, at no. 2 rúa Montero Riós, is the librería [Sementeira](#) bookshop, linked to the Toxosoutos publishing house, which was set up to promote the historical and cultural heritage of Noia and Galicia. This bookshop, a pioneer in the promotion of Galician literature, sells the famous Sargadelos porcelain as well as books..



Eiroa calvary

Less than 3 kilometres from the centre of Noia, on the AC-550 road to Muros, stands one of the best carved calvaries in Galicia. The scene we can see is the Descent from the Cross of Jesus before his body was given to the Virgin Mary. On the capital four angels hold the symbols of the Passion of the Christ and there is an inscription on the base reading: “Dedication made by Agustín Pérez in 1879”, who was one of the industrialists linked to tanning. In Noia, tanning was very important given that between 1940 and 1960 there were around fifty factories employing over 300 people as the process required a lot of labour. The last factory closed in the 90s.

Muíños de Pedrachán

The Pedrachán neighbourhood is a small treasure trove of natural beauty and ethnographic value. It is known for its Medieval mills, which were owned by the count of San Bernardo, Antonio Cortés de Mendoza y Soutomaior. The mills stood on the right bank of the River Traba beyond the walls to prevent work at the site disturbing the residents.

FACING Hiking along the San Xusto river
BELOW Old Tambre Hydroelectric Power Station

The area has been restored to look essentially the same as it did in the past and has become an ideal place to go for a stroll among the mills, canals, lock-gates, and washhouse.

Shores of the Tambre

Just a few kilometres from Noia, we can visit the mouth of the River Tambre, which forms the Muros and Noia estuary. There are several hiking trails in the area that are a great way to enjoy the natural beauty of Devesa de Nimo forest and the industrial heritage of the old Central Hidroeléctrica (hydroelectric power station), which was built in 1924 by the prestigious architect Antonio Palacios. Workers from the factory lived in the site accommodation which was renovated and converted into the [*Hotel de Naturaleza Pesquería del Tambre*](#).





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