



Pazo da Trave

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Viveiro, Galicia, tel. 982 598 331

Excursions by car through the region

The interior of Da Mariña, along the Pardo de Cela Route

We must take the C-640 road towards Lugo and turn off at the roundabout in the Mondoñedo direction. We will soon arrive at Ferreira de Valadouro, a typical hamlet in the zone, and a few kilometres farther on we will reach Alfoz, with its outstanding Torre del Homenaje¹ del Mariscal Pardo de Cela, which was constructed in the 10th Century. The Pico da Frouxeira² lies close by, with its beautiful views of the coastline between Ribadeo and Burela. If we drive on as far as Vilanova de Lourenz, we will find the a 10th Century Benedictine Monastery, the Tovar Manor House (Isabel I Gothic) and the Museo de Arte Sacro³. But Mondoñedo is outstanding where the ecclesiastical hierarchy is concerned, being the main religious centre since the 12th Century. It is a historical and artistic heritage centre, and one

¹ Torre de Homenaje means Tower built in homage to

² Pico means mountain peak

³ Museo de Arte Sacro means Art gallery of Religious Works

cannot leave the area without having paid a visit to the cathedral, the museum, the Ponte do Pasatempo, the Barrio⁴ dos Muiños and the Cueva do Rei Cintolo. And anyone with a sweet-tooth will have to try the typical Mondoñedo cake.

Heading off towards Foz, and running along the coastline, we now take a turning that leads to the pièce de résistance, the small Romanesque church of San Martín de Mondoñedo, famous for being the first cathedral in Spain and a wonder of 10th Century Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque from 11th – 12th Century. That alone is worth a visit.

The East Coast, the cathedral of the sea

After that first excursion, one can then drive back from Ribadeo or covering this section in one stretch from Viveiro along the C-642 road in the Gijón direction to reach the As Catedrais Beach at low tide.

From there, we can retrace our stems to visit the Ribadeo Ria, which is of special importance to birdlife, the town of Foz with its Celtic village of Fazouro dating back to the 2nd century, lying 4 Kilometres from Foz and right by the roadside, the tuna fishing port of Burela (the Tuna fair is held on the first Saturday of August), with its Reina del Carmen museum ship, given over to the sea culture and tuna fishing.

The next stage of the excursion runs through the Borough of Cervo, with the fishing village of San Cibrao and its spectacular lighthouse and the well-known ceramics factory of Sargadelos, which is open to the public from Monday to Saturday.

And if there is still time left, we can finish the trip at Xove, also along the beach, this time the Esteiro Beach, a haven for surfers, to see the sunset from Monte Faro, one of the most spectacular panoramas in Galicia with colours ranging from emerald green to cobalt blue, with its lighthouse that could well have been painted by Edward Hopper.

⁴ Barrio means neighbourhood and muiños means mills in Galician

Always heading westward, along the San Andrés de Teixido Route

This time we take the C-642 road in the La Coruña direction to first pay a visit to Vicedo, almost at the mouth of the ria and close to O Barqueiro, a small fishing village almost literally hanging from the cliffs, from which it is possible to make out the beautiful islands of San Martiño and Coelleira, formerly a refuge for monks, Templars according to popular belief.

The northernmost point on the Peninsula, Estaca de Bares now awaits us; this is the point where the bay of Biscay and the Atlantic Ocean come together, or to put it more accurately, collide. It is a place of exceptional beauty, with an incredible natural force of attraction, on a coast that is completely savage and wild and an important refuge for birdlife. It has been declared a Protected Zone. The port and harbour date back to the Phoenicians around 7th Century B.C.

We pass through Ortigueira, venue of the most important Celtic music festival in Europe, with another ria that stands out for its care of wildlife and a passing point for thousands of migrating birds, until we reach Cedeira, the world capital of the barnacle, which is famous for its high cliffs and the sanctuary of San Andrés de Teixido, wishing wells, superstitions, myths and legends, whose monastery was founded in the 12th Century by Knights of the Order of Malta.