

Cabo Ortegal

Geopark

Guide



Cabo Ortegal Geopark

General maps

This map shows the numbered points of interest, detailed information on which can be found throughout this publication.



00

Cabo Ortegal:

Geopark

a journey into the
deepest parts of
the Earth

Welcome to Cabo Ortegal Geopark.

We are delighted that you have decided to visit our land. The declaration of the Cabo Ortegal landscape as a UNESCO Global Geopark on 24 May 2023 is proof of the exceptional nature of this place. Open your senses, because here the Earth will tell you its most ancient history, and the living traditions of our villages will reveal a territory that is not only visited, but felt. Walking around Cabo Ortegal is like walking between two worlds: the planet's geological past and a landscape teeming with life.

Here you will find the highest cliffs in continental Europe. If you make it to Vixía de Herbeira, you will be more than six hundred metres above sea level. The view stretches out into the vastness of the ocean as we walk over rocks that emerged to the surface from the depths of the planet more than 350 million years ago. The colossal collision of tectonic plates that gave rise to the Pangea supercontinent left us with these geological materials, which in most parts of the world are found at a depth of seventy kilometres. Here they are, within your reach.



European Shag

If anything sets the pulse of this ancient land, it is the sea. The Atlantic Ocean, immense and ever-present throughout Galicia, is an essential character here. And not only because since time immemorial the waves, wind and salt have sculpted every corner of this incredible coastline, but also because the pounding of the sea has shaped the lives of the people who inhabit the ports of Cariño, Espasante and Cedeira, to name but a few. Here, the air smells of salt and hard work, of freshly gathered nets and stories of sailors passed down through countless generations. But it's not just tradition: seafaring history blends with modernity through surfing. Lovers of this sport know that Pantín beach provides the extraordinary conditions that have made it world famous.

Inland, the rugged landscape of the cliffs transforms into a pleasant and understated setting, tailor-made for the peaceful life that goes on in the villages of this territory. The small, simple and welcoming villages are linked by a network of rural paths that wind their way through meadows and *fragas*, between centuries-old granaries and stone walls built with a lot of effort and respect. Here, time slows down and invites you to forget about the clock and immerse yourself in a leisurely way of life connected with nature, in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of the outside world.

And if, in front of the sea or along the inland paths, your view is filled with beauty and your ears are delighted by the silence, punctuated only by the sounds of nature, your taste buds are not to be outdone. Ortegá is also a land of flavours, a gastronomic feast that honours quality and authenticity. This is the result of a job well done using local products. If you love seafood, don't miss the cockles cooked in the Cariño style, goose barnacles harvested from the foot of the cliffs or surprising scrambled eggs with seaweed and sea urchins. And if you prefer mountain dishes, treat yourself to a delicious



O Picón (Ortigueira)

raxo, perfectly cooked *zorza* or a hot Galician stew on a cold day.

Cabo Ortegal Geopark welcomes visitors with a variety of interests. From those seeking to further their scientific interest in geology or bird watching in more detail, to those who want a relaxing trip, a family experience, the thrill of riding the Atlantic waves on a surfboard, or a destination to mark a special moment; this Geopark has something for everyone.

Cabo Ortegal is not just a destination; it is a life-changing experience just waiting to be discovered. Your journey begins here. Make it memorable.

The Geopark at your reach

This guide includes a detailed map of the area to make your trip to Cabo Ortegal Geopark even more enriching. It shows the seven municipalities that make up the Geopark, the main natural and cultural resources, recommended routes, interpretation centres and other highlights that are not to be missed. This map will be your travel companion, helping you find your way around and plan your route.

If you are passionate about geology and want to further your understanding of the Cabo Ortegal Complex, we encourage you to explore the specific geological maps. A geological map shows the distribution of rock types on the surface, based on topographical data.

For an even more interactive experience and to take the Geopark with you wherever you go, scan the QR code on this page. This will give you direct access to our interactive online map, which offers up-to-date information and additional resources to make your visit unforgettable.



Scan the code with your
mobile phone or tablet.



Seafaring district of Cariño

01

Keys to understanding the **Geopark** landscape

The landscape of the Cabo Ortegal Complex is the result of a process that has developed over a time-scale that is beyond our comprehension. Our brief and ephemeral existence, compared to the history of the Earth, fires our imagination to glimpse the rhythm of the geological clock, which does not count time in years or centuries, or even millennia, but in millions of years.

The name “complex” is due to the nature of the geological units that form it. These are characterised by their different origins and contain geological histories of varying characteristics and ages. The upper terrains of Cabo Ortegal are considered to be allochthonous in nature — not originating from the place where they are found — precisely because they were displaced to their current position from various sources, sometimes from hundreds of kilometres away. These upper terrains lie on top of other terrains of autochthonous or parautochthonous nature (little or no displacement).

The origins of the Cabo Ortegal landscape

Looking at this landscape is like looking through a window that invites us to imagine our planet's most remote past.

The solid surface layer of the Earth is called the **lithosphere**. It varies in thickness of between fifty and one hundred kilometres and is broken up into different tectonic or lithospheric plates, which interact continuously with each other as they move horizontally. These movements represent a mechanism called convection, which is caused by the Earth's internal heat.



Granulite

Now we must go back almost four hundred million years, to the dawn of the collision of the plates that gave rise to the Pangea supercontinent, the last supercontinent on Earth, and perhaps the largest. This period corresponds to the **Devonian**, the fourth period of the Palaeozoic era.

At this time, the **paleocontinents** of Laurasia, located in the northern hemisphere, and

Gondwana, which originated in the southern hemisphere, collided, initiating the assembly of Pangea. At least one ocean was wiped out during the continental convergence. During these processes, the areas of interaction between the plates recorded the highest seismic and magmatic activity, and it was there that phenomena such as **subduction** and large lateral displacement faults originated. During the **Devonian** and Carboniferous periods, enormous geological deformations occurred that would last for about 100 million years. Some of the participating terrains were displaced thousands of kilometres. In Europe, these processes are described as the **Variscan orogeny**, responsible for the formation of a large mountain range that stretched over 3,000 km, from the Iberian Peninsula to the Balkans. Over time, this mountain range gradually collapsed until it was completely destroyed and generally covered by Mesozoic marine sedimentary sequences and other more recent Cenozoic sequences. The mountain ranges that have survived to the present day are generally of more recent age (Alpine), although it is true that in the unique case of Galicia, the oldest materials have not been covered by more recent deposits, and the oldest landscape may be preserved to some extent. The Cabo Ortegal cliffs represent the westernmost point of the ancient Variscan mountain range. The exceptional nature of this landscape is due to the fact that the rock formations created during the **Variscan orogeny** rose from a depth of about seventy kilometres, from the Earth's mantle to the surface, where they have remained to this day. It is therefore a unique landscape, offering the opportunity to observe tectonic structures, rocks and minerals that are rare and not usually found on the surface in most regions of the world. The continuous emergence of **eclogites** at Cabo Ortegal is one of the largest known to date. The same is true of the **peridotites** and **pyroxenites** of the Serra da Capelada.

An exceptional and diverse landscape

The unique geological characteristics of Cabo Ortegal have given rise to a remarkable diversity of landscapes that have in turn favoured the development of a wide variety of ecosystems.

The high cliffs of Cabo Ortegal are the last remaining evidence of what were once mountains of extraordinary height. The erosion of the Variscan mountain range created in this area, a diverse and discontinuous landscape of mountains, estuaries, coves, islets and rocky arches along the coast. The beaches also accumulate this great diversity in their sands, in the form of grains originating from the rocks of the now disappeared Variscan mountain range.

Inland, the diversity of the landscape only intensifies. The great variation in the terrain throughout the area gives rise to a combination of mountains and valleys, with rivers and streams dotted with waterfalls that have facilitated the development of forests of great value for the conservation of biodiversity. Of particular note is the Atlantic woodland in the river Mera valley, one of the few that still survive in Europe, with numerous native tree species.

Ecosystems and protected areas

The Geopark is a haven for biodiversity, with several areas enjoying special protection. Valdoviño lagoon and sand dunes, known as the A Frouxeira lagoon, form a protected wetland of international importance (**Ramsar site**) and an essential spot for watching aquatic birds. Its unique ecosystem is created by the mixture of fresh water from streams with the influence of the

sea. The extensive sandy area of Valdoviño, with its Grande and Pequeña beaches and sand dunes, is crucial for the protection of the lagoon and is home to flora and fauna that are adapted to the coast.

The Ortigueira and Ladrado estuary is also a protected area within the Natura 2000 network, a Ramsar Wetland and a Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPA**). In its central area there are marshes and vast mud and sand flats, a crucial habitat for bird life. The Ortigueira-Mera Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) includes Cariño, Ortigueira and Cerdido. Inland, the Xubia-Castro SAC protects the river Grande de Xubia and its tributaries, which act as a valuable ecological corridor. The cliffs of Herbeira and Cabo Ortegal belong to the Costa Ártabra SCI (Site of Community Interest).

Flora

The diversity of the Geopark's ecosystems is reflected in its flora, with species ranging from those in coastal areas to forests. The sand dunes of A Frouxeira are home to vegetation adapted to coastal conditions. On the banks of the river Cerdido, alluvial woods of alders (*Alnus glutinosa*) and oak groves are preserved. Similarly, in the Xubia-Castro SAC, the riverine woodlands along the banks of the river Xubia are extensive ecological corridors with alders and ash trees, providing refuge for amphibians and home to rare species such as the *Woodwardia radicans* fern.

The Geopark also has large areas of wet and dry heathland that form characteristic landscapes in inland and elevated coastal areas. Among the most unique and endangered plant species are rock samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and sea holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) in coastal areas, as well as others in danger of extinction such as *Rumex rupestris* and *Antirrhinum majus* subsp. *linkianum*.

Fauna and birdlife

The Geopark is a landmark for observing sea birds and aquatic birds. The main sighting points include the A Frouxeira lagoon, the cliffs of Cabo Ortegual and Herbeira, the Ortigueira and Ladrado estuary, and the port of Cariño.

Birds

- **Emblematic marine species:** The Geopark is crucial for birds such as the European shag (which nests on the cliffs), the European storm petrel and the Balearic shearwater, the most endangered sea bird in Europe. It is also a migratory corridor for the razorbill and the Atlantic puffin.

- **Wetland birds and birds of prey:** The Geopark's wetlands are home to the common reed bunting (listed as "endangered"), the Kentish plover and the Eurasian oystercatcher. The cliffs are breeding grounds for birds of prey such as the peregrine falcon and the red-billed chough.



Shearwater

- **Rare and migratory species:** The port of Cariño is ideal for twitching (observing migratory species), with 18 species of seagulls recorded, including the Iceland gull and the glaucous gull in winter. Rare birds have been recorded in the Cariño-Ortigueira estuary in autumn, such as the American black duck, the spotted sandpiper and the greater yellowlegs. The dunes of Cariño are home to the only reliable specimen of Pine

bunting observed in Galicia, a small, rare bird of Siberian origin. The Geopark is also an important migratory corridor, with more than a million sea birds passing through the area during the summer and autumn.

Amphibians, reptiles and mammals

The Geopark is not only home to birds. In the riverine woodlands and wet heathlands, unique amphibians such as the gold-striped salamander (*Chioglossa lusitanica*), endemic to the north-west of the Peninsula, can be found.



Otter

Among mammals, otters are an indicator of the good water quality of the river Xubia, while endangered species such as water voles and horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus*) also inhabit the Geopark. It is also a refuge for other mammals such as wildcats, wild boar, roe deer and wolves, attracted by the herds of semi-wild horses and cows in the Forgoselo massif and the Serra da Capelada.



Atlantic Puffin

Marine life and other animals

In addition to sea birds, cetaceans are commonly sighted off the coasts of Cedeira and Valdoviño, and dolphins often venture into the estuaries, making boat trips a unique experience. Among the invertebrates, the geopark is home to endangered molluscs such as *Elona quimperiana* and *Geomalacus maculosus*, classified as “endangered” and “vulnerable”, respectively.



Goose barnacles

Geology, nature and culture: an inseparable trio

In short, in Cabo Ortegal, geodiversity and biodiversity are two sides of the same coin in a territory that has had a profound impact on the lives of the local communities that have inhabited it over the centuries. The natural heritage — which includes geological heritage (as recently recognised by the 2025 Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature) — and cultural heritage form an inseparable triad of values to be protected.

The coastal villages show the efforts of their people to make a living from fishing and shellfish gathering. Traditional shellfish gathering infrastructures of great ethnological value are still preserved today, such as the **cetarias** of Punta Sarridal: marine nurseries

built of wood and stone that were used to raise crustaceans and keep fish alive.

In inland areas, traditional farming and livestock activities are deeply rooted in production methods inherited from ancient times, while embracing new technologies to continue offering high-quality natural products. Inland, we also find traces of traditional mining operations that sought to exploit the rare geological materials of commercial interest found at ground level or at very shallow depths in this region.

Finally, the defensive constructions are worth highlighting, especially those from the 18th century, which are scattered throughout the Geopark and remind us of the importance of protecting the north-western tip of the Iberian Peninsula in the context of the war tensions between Spain and England, which lasted until well into the 19th century.

Some notes on the history of the place

The human history of Cabo Ortegal is a story of adaptation and resilience in an imposing and challenging natural environment. For more than 6,000 years, human communities have left their mark on this territory, as evidenced by the numerous burial mounds from the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and early Bronze Age periods scattered between the Serra do Forgoselo and the coast.

During the Iron Age, the so-called Castro culture was developed, with fortified settlements in strategic locations. In recent times, sites such as Forno dos Mouros, Punta dos Prados and Sarridal have been excavated and restored. This is how an archaeological heritage that is now enjoying growing recognition is being revalued.

Romanisation, although less intense on the rugged coast of Ortigueira, brought profound changes: new agricultural techniques, new models of habitat and new ways of exploiting the environment, such as salting factories that transformed the territory under the organisational logic of the Empire. However, the Castro culture persisted until the end of the 1st century.

After the fall of Rome, Germanic raids plunged the region into a period about which we have little information in the Geopark area. Over time, the consolidation of feudalism and the emergence of monasteries and parishes boosted a timid recovery. An example of this religious and territorial continuity is Santo André de Teixido sanctuary, a centre of pilgrimage and a living symbol of the spirituality and popular legends of the area.

From the 16th century onwards, the introduction of crops of American

origin such as corn and potatoes led to population growth and improved nutrition. Fishing and traditional shipbuilding led to greater connections with the outside world and encouraged migration.

In the 18th century, threats from pirates and military conflicts led to the reinforcement of castles such as those of Moeche and Naraío, and the construction of new coastal defences, such as A Concepción castle in Cedeira, which offers one of the best views of the estuary.

The 19th century brought with it confiscation of church property, which changed land ownership and generated social tensions. At the same time, improvements in infrastructures facilitated connections with other areas of Galicia and stimulated the development of industries such as canning, especially in places like Cariño.

During the 20th century, electrification and public services transformed daily life, but emigration to America left a deep mark on the population and local identity. Rural depopulation became one of the main challenges of the 21st century.

Today, the future of this territory is being built on the appreciation of its cultural and natural heritage. The promotion of sustainable tourism, local products and the recent designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark reflect the collective commitment to preserve this unique territory and ensure its development in harmony with its legacy.



A Concepción Castle (Cedeira)



Punta do Limo (Cariño)

02

Journey to the **geological heart** of the Geopark

Main points of geological
interest

Cabo Ortegal Geopark's motto, "Journey to the Centre of the Earth" is no metaphor but a statement of what this destination offers: the chance to see some of the rarest geological features on the planet, which are normally found many kilometres below the surface.

Here are the most important and representative geological points of interest in the Geopark, without overlooking other places that are well worth a visit.

O Picón (Ortigueira)

The remote and glacial memory of Gondwana



360°
Panoramic
view



In the vicinity of O Picón, more than a hundred metres above sea level, is the so-called 'the best bench in the world.' From this viewpoint, to the east you can see Estaca de Bares, the northernmost point of the Iberian Peninsula, and to the west, Cabo Ortegal. The bench sits on 450-million-year-old rhyolites, pink-coloured rocks that emerged from a volcanic arc during the **Ordovician** period. Its original volcanic texture is still recognisable, helping us to identify the eruptions of this ancient continental margin.

One kilometre to the east is O Picón beach, which contains slate rocks and stones belonging to the autochthonous domain, so called because its rocks, unlike the allochthonous materials of Cabo Ortegal Complex, were formed in this same location. The most surprising thing about these rocks is that they tell us about a glacial past. These are **glaciomarine deposits** formed in the **Ordovician** period, some 450 million years ago, on the Gondwana margin. They contain fragments of rocks transported by icebergs in a primitive ocean. The original clays from which the slate originates were part of a sedimentary basin on the Gondwana margin. The continent was covered by a large ice cap. The icebergs that broke off from this cap contained blocks of rock torn away by the flowing glaciers. As the drifting ice melted, it dropped blocks of rock of varying sizes onto these clays. These are the **drop stones** that have made this slate a world-famous formation, studied by numerous specialists. The cold **Ordovician** period seems to linger in some way on this beach in O Picón.

As a place of geological interest, these rocks are exceptional witnesses to Galician Palaeozoic volcanism, later transformed by **Variscan orogeny**. At sunset, when the golden light caresses the rhyolites, the contrast between the colour of the rock and the blue of the sea creates a spectacle that justifies the fame of this viewpoint.

San Antonio beach (Ortigueira)

The chaos of a subduction channel



This beach, located on the north-east edge of the town of O Porto de Espasante, is like a natural laboratory: the Somozas **Mélange** exposes a matrix of **serpentinites** that includes a large tectonic block of crystalline marble, which may contain microfossils. The **serpentinites** represent a mantle subduction channel, formed on a plate that was sinking towards the mantle in a peri-Gondwanan oceanic domain. Fragments of the descending plate were torn away to form a gigantic breach between the **serpentinites**, a tectonic **mélange** that mixes materials of very diverse origins. The tectonic blocks detached in the active **subduction** channel are subject to an upward flow dynamic. The sight of crystalline marbles embedded in the matrix of **serpentinites** amazes and fascinates both geology experts and

laymen alike. This outcrop is unique in the Iberian Peninsula and probably in the whole of Europe. It is visited by geology students every year.

The tides reveal this geological puzzle at every low tide, inviting visitors to touch the rocks that once stood at the boundary between plates. Although their beauty is immediately apparent, a visit to this site is one of those that really requires the services of a geological guide, who will help us to understand and enjoy the history of the formation of this amazing natural treasure.

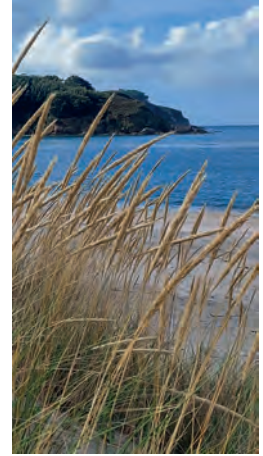
Morouzos beach (Ortigueira)

A beach and an island from a vanished ocean

3

Opposite Morouzos beach, we can see the island of San Vicente, which at low tide seems to emerge from the seabed and grow taller. Low tide is actually the best time to visit, as you can walk to the island. It is an oval-shaped mass, formed by 500 metres of green schist, rocks of plutonic and volcanic origin that belong to the oceanic crust unit known as the 'Moeche Ophiolite', which dates back 395 million years and is the most recent unit to appear in the Cabo Ortegal Complex.

The Cabo Ortegal Complex preserves the remains of an ocean basin that opened on the periphery of Gondwana 410-395 million years ago. The extent of this ocean is unknown and the subject of intense scientific debate. The island of San Vicente is a remnant of the crust of this ocean, so walking here is like walking on the floor of a vanished sea. The rocks we see at the Cabo Ortegal Complex tell us about the continental collision that closed this ocean. This is a place where geology becomes tangible, and where each tide reveals a new fragment of its history.



Fornos beach (Cariño)

The folds that trace the collapse of Gondwana

4

The **gneisses** on Fornos beach, located on the left bank of the mouth to the Cariño-Ortigueira estuary, feature large folds that seem to twist like ribbons of rock. These rocks belong to the unit found at the highest structural position in the entire Cabo Ortegal Complex, known as the 'Cariño gneisses', and form part of the core of a large **recumbent** fold, the recumbent synform of the Serra da Capelada.

The precursors of these gneisses (**protolithes**) were Cambrian greywacke sandstones, which were deposited in a sedimentary basin on the periphery of Gondwana. The original sedimentary rocks were buried and **metamorphosed** into **gneisses** during the Variscan continental collision, and were subsequently uplifted. These large folds reflect the most recent Variscan history of this formation, as they were generated in advanced stages of its exhumation.



5

Cala do Peiral

The echo of a Cambrian ocean



In the peaceful cove of Cala do Peiral, the murmur of the sea accompanies a rugged, rocky coastal landscape, carved out of **gneisses** that hold secrets from 500 million years ago. Once again, these are the **gneisses** of Cariño. In these outcrops, these rocks reveal a marked banded character. Alternating layers, originally of varying clay-sand content, reveal their origin in a **greywacke flysch**: deep marine sedimentary materials that were later compacted under colossal pressures during the formation of Pangea.

Despite the obvious distance, this Cambrian flysch is reminiscent of the famous flyschs of another northern UNESCO geopark, the Basque Coast Geopark. However, in the case of Cabo Ortegal, deformation and metamorphism have obscured many primary features, but offer opportunities for another type of observations and studies.

For visitors, this spot is a window into a time when complex life was beginning to flourish in the oceans. The Cambrian period is characterised by an extraordinary increase in biological diversity. The metasedimentary rocks of the Cabo Ortegal Complex are considered to be **Cambrian** in age and could be suitable to search for fossils from this period. However, deformation and Variscian metamorphism have eliminated these possible remains. As you walk along the cove, you can see striking minor folds that tell of the intense deformation suffered, while the Atlantic today laps at the rocks like an indifferent witness to the passage of geological time.

6

Cabo Ortegal lighthouse (Cariño)

A lighthouse overlooking the abyss of geological time



The Cabo Ortegal lighthouse offers an impressive panoramic view: the cliffs stretch out to Punta do Limo, sculpted by rocks that were once part of the Earth's crust. But the uniqueness of this place lies not only in what you see, but also on what you walk on. Beneath the lighthouse lies one of the world's largest deposits of **eclogites**: rare, dense rocks that originated 400 million years ago at a depth of more than 70 kilometres.

These rocks were formed during the **subduction** of the peripheral crust of the ancient Gondwana supercontinent into the interior of the planet during the collision of continents that formed Pangea. Under extreme conditions, some fragments of the crust were transformed into **eclogites** and, after millions of years, emerged on the surface.

Today, these deep rocks are within sight and touch, and reveal a fragment of the Earth's interior that normally remains hidden.

Opposite Cabo Ortegal itself, a geological balcony from which we can peer into our planet's past, the large sheet of **eclogites** that we see disappears into the sea on the islets of Punta dos Aguillóns, which in turn display large folds.



360°
Panoramic
view



Punta do Limo (Cariño)

Where the Earth's mantle kisses the ocean

7

The cliffs of Punta do Limo, sculpted by wind, water and saltpetre, reveal a particular geological rarity: they are formed by **peridotites** and **pyroxenites**, which once formed part of the Earth's mantle, dozens of kilometres below the surface, thus showing us a deep section of the Earth's **lithosphere**. These dense rocks, rich in iron and magnesium, emerged as a result of the formation of the Variscan mountain range. The origin of these cliffs is therefore largely tectonic, caused by the break-up of this supercontinent approximately 200 million years ago.

The contrast between the dark rock and the blue sea creates a breathtaking landscape, ideal for reflecting on the titanic forces that shaped the Earth. A coastal path allows visitors to admire these rocks, whose rough texture and shiny veins of pyroxene and amphibole reveal their origin in the deepest layers of the Earth's crust. The area around Punta do Limo remains one of the most isolated places on the Iberian Peninsula. The descent down its cliffs is extremely dangerous and only suitable for specialists. Extreme caution should be exercised when walking on these landscapes.



360°
Panoramic
view



Vixía Herbeira viewpoint (Cariño-Cedeira)

A balcony overlooking the materials exhumed from the Earth's mantle

8

As at Punta do Limo, at the Vixía Herbeira viewpoint, located between Cariño and Cedeira, our feet tread on **peridotites** and **pyroxenites** that emerged from the upper mantle. At this point, we are 613 metres above sea level. The cliffs of Herbeira are the highest in continental Europe and form a rocky tapestry that plunges into the sea on vertiginous slopes, offering us an impressive panoramic view. The heterogeneity of the materials that make up this mantle massif raises significant uncertainties in determining their geological age, especially in the case of **peridotites**. The Earth's original peridotite mantle is very old, vital, but has been subject to continuous episodes of modification. **The pyroxenites** in these massifs are younger and are considered to be of Cambrian age.

In the Herbeira massif, looking westwards, there is a privileged spot to watching the sunset over the Atlantic. The highest



360°
Panoramic
view



point of Herbeira is considered by some authors to be a partial remnant of the fragmentation of Pangea that led to the opening of the Atlantic Ocean.

9

Teixidelo viewpoint (Cedeira)

The enigma of the Bacariza granulites



The Teixidelo viewpoint, in the heart of Serra da Capelada, at an altitude of 337 metres, offers more than just a spectacular view: it is a window onto the **granulites** of the Bacariza Formation, **metamorphic** rocks that withstood extreme pressures and temperatures when they were buried to a depth of approximately 55 km during the **subduction** process caused by the collision that led to the formation of the Pangea supercontinent. These are lithologies formed under conditions somewhat less extreme than **eclogites**, but overall they have been formed under metamorphic conditions known as 'high pressure' and 'high temperature'. This type of **granulite** is rare on the planet and is one of the most characteristic features of the Cabo Ortegal Complex and of the **Variscan orogeny**.

The massif and cliffs that can be seen from the Teixidelo viewpoint are visual proof of the enormous force of the tectonic movements. The Bacariza **granulites** show significant deformation, visible in the tectonic structures that define their banded appearance, known as 'foliation'. This foliation is the main tectonic feature of the materials in the Cabo Ortegal Complex. Isotopic dating of the minerals formed in these bands allows us to determine the age of the structures and the metamorphism.



360°
Panoramic
view



10

Punta Candeeira lighthouse (Cedeira)

A path between two lithospheric plates



The Punta Candeeira lighthouse marks the point of contact between the upper units of the Cabo Ortegal Complex and the Purrido Ophiolite, two lithospheric plates that were initially different. This **ophiolite** is the same age as the Moeche Ophiolite, which outcrops on the island of San Vicente. Together with this ophiolite, it forms the remains of the Rheic Ocean, a sea that during the Palaeozoic era was located between the Gondwana supercontinent and the northern continents (essentially Laurasia), before the tectonic shifts that would form Pangaea.

The path that leads us on foot to the lighthouse allows us to observe spectacular folds and other ductile type structures.

In this type of deformation, developed at high temperatures and under strong confining pressure, **gneisses** and amphibolites are deformed, as if they were plasticine, forming structures that allow us to reconstruct the history of the burial and exhumation

of these rocks. The deformation throughout the Cabo Ortegal Complex is ductile-type, although at this point, the observation of this type of structure is particularly striking. These rocks are seemingly silent, perennial witnesses to the sensational tectonic movements that caused entire oceans and continents to appear and disappear.

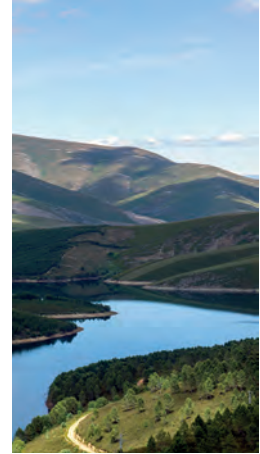
Vilariño viewpoint (Ortigueira)

A contrast of colours swaying in the wind

11

The Vilariño viewpoint is located at the foot of one of the wind turbines in the Couce do Penido wind farm. From this point, 467 metres above sea level, you can enjoy beautiful views of the Cariño-Ortigueira estuary, from the mouth of the river Mera to its end opposite Cariño. You can also see further east to the tip of Estaca de Bares. The reddish colour of the rocks contrast with the green of the forests and the blue of the sky and, in the distance, the sea.

But the real treasure of this place is beneath our feet. We are on the south-eastern flank of Serra da Capelada, on an outcrop of massive **eclogites**, characteristic of high-pressure and high-temperature metamorphism, formed at depths of 70 km. These rocks are denser than granite and are very rare on the Earth's surface. But here they have emerged to tell us the remote history of their formation.



Port of Cedeira

The seafaring woman who reigns over rocks folded like paper

12

On the promenade along the coast of the port of Cedeira, we find ourselves next to the monument to the Fisherman's Wife (*A Muller do Pescador*) created by sculptor Guillermo Feal in 1985. The rocks on which the sculpture stands and those around it are an outcrop of high-temperature amphibolites, which show tight folds and shear bands (strong ductile deformation).

These rocks folded under colossal pressures during the collision between Gondwana and Laurasia, giving rise to complex structures of progressive deformation and superimposition as Pangea was assembled.



13

Punta Sarridal viewpoint (Cedeira)

Where the rocks of the monument to the Fisherman's Wife form a cliff



Punta Sarridal viewpoint offers one of the most impressive panoramic views of the Cedeira coastline. Here, the bench sits on the same rocks as the monument to the Fisherman's Wife in the port of Cedeira.

From a geological point of view, these rocks are known as 'Candeira amphibolites', which emerge in a long strip on the westernmost part of the complex. Although this area has undergone rigorous UNESCO control and it is difficult to find little-known formations, this rock formation is one of the least studied.

What is known is that the protoliths of these amphibolites were formed around 500 million years ago (Ma), like most of the lithologies in the Complex, with the exception of the **ophiolites** and **peridotites** of the ultramafic massifs.

14

O Baleo beach (Valdoviño)

The amphibolites that trace the Rheic Ocean



O Baleo beach is a 400 metre shell-shaped sandy beach surrounded by cliffs, located next to Pantín beach, a must-see for surf lovers. The rocks that frame Baleo beach are amphibolites belonging to the Purrido Ophiolite, corresponding to the oceanic crust of the now disappeared Rheic Ocean.

The dating of amphibolites from the Purrido Ophiolite has led to an interesting scientific challenge. These rocks contain minerals (zircons) initially dated as the oldest in the Cabo Ortegal Complex, between 1,100 and 1,600 million years ago (Ma). However, it was later discovered that the same amphibolites also contain younger zircons, dated at 395 million years. Bringing these two ages together sparked an interesting debate at the limits of scientific knowledge. It is currently believed that the **ophiolite** rocks were formed 395 million years ago, an age consistent with the rest of the Complex. The older zircons probably come from the lithospheric mantle, from the area where the precursor magmas of the amphibolites were generated.

15

Moeche Castle

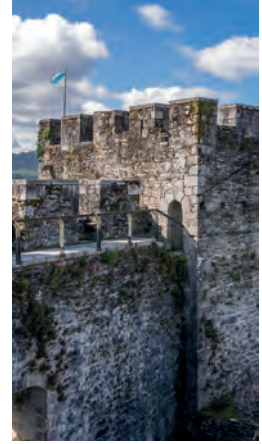
A castle on an oceanic crust

Moeche Castle sits within the valley of the same name. This is a flat-bottomed valley created by Alpine tectonic activity, which houses the continuation of the ancient oceanic crust

known as the 'Moeche Ophiolite'. It is made up of green schists and **serpentinites** which, 395 million years ago, formed the **lithosphere** of the ocean that disappeared during the formation of Pangea.

The medieval castle of Moeche is a privileged vantage point from which to observe the history of this valley. From the battlements, the landscape reveals how geology is the true architect of this territory, a petrified ocean on which a fortress was built for surveillance and defence.

The Moeche Ophiolite contains low-grade copper pyrite deposits that have been mined in the past. Some of the old mines are part of Galicia's industrial mining heritage and are very impressive, but they are not open to the public.



360°
Panoramic
view



Moeche/Somozas quarries

The earth's mantle as ornamental rock

16

The Galician Mining Chamber suggests a Ruta do Toelo (Toelo Route) on its website, to discover the observation points and quarries where **serpentinites** (**toelo** or Moeche stone) is extracted from the Somozas **Mélange**, mantle rocks that travelled from the Earth's interior to the surface 350 million years ago. Moeche stone has traditionally been used as an ornamental rock due to its striking appearance. The main quarries, which are very attractive, are located on private estates, so permission is required to visit them. A beautiful recent statue made from **toelo** located in front of Moeche castle pays tribute to the women who worked in the old quarries and allows visitors to admire the beauty of carved **toelo**.

Also of special interest is the old quarry of A Caleira, an open-air quarry that was used to extract marble, a rock that is very rare in Galicia, and even more so in this area. Once again, this quarry is located on private property, so permission is required to visit it.

On the tour of this area, you can also see San Xurxo church and altars dedicated to the souls of the deceased, **cruceiros** (stone crosses), lintels and **petos de ánimas** (altars dedicated to the souls of the deceased) carved from **toelo**.



360°
Panoramic
view





Moeche Castle

03

A territory with identity: **between the human and the natural**

Main cultural and
natural points
of interest

The Cabo Ortegal Geopark is a natural and cultural treasure, a destination where the history of the Earth intertwines with human history, offering a unique experience of connection with nature, culture and tradition.

This route brings together a selection of places that capture the essence of the Geopark and that combine nature and culture. They are not the only ones, but they are an invitation to continue exploring.

Each of these places not only tells its own story, but together reveal the fascinating geological narrative that defines the Cabo Ortegal Geopark, a territory where the Earth itself has shaped the cultural and natural uniqueness of each site, influencing its culture, landscape and biodiversity.

Historic centre of Cedeira

The town's seafaring and defensive past



The historic centre of this town is a place full of charm and tradition that invites you to stroll through its seafaring past. Its heart is the Praza da Rectoral, where the old town hall once stood, now the municipal library. Nearby, the Santa María do Mar church stands out due to its architecture.

The Ruta das Portas da Vila (Route of the Town Gates) takes you on a tour of the remains of the medieval wall, while we discover the old gates such as Porta da Vila and Porta de Ribeira, which connect us with the town's defensive history. The Praza do Peixe, on the banks of the river Condomiñas, is another spot that reflects the essence of the town. The riverside walk takes us directly to A Magdalena beach, an urban sandy area perfect for leisure and relaxation, connecting the history of the old town with the vastness of the coastal landscape.

Cedeira Sea Museum (Cedeira)

A window into Cedeira's identity



This museum, strategically located near the port, is designed to illustrate Cedeira's deep connection with the ocean, not only as a source of livelihood, but also as the shaper of its cultural and human landscape. Its main aim is to preserve and honour the legacy of the seafaring people who, generation after generation, have dedicated their lives to the sea and fashioned the identity of the town.

The Cedeira coastline is key to understanding its rich natural diversity, with characteristic rock formations such as schists, **gneisses** and amphibolites that emerge from the cliffs and intertidal zones. These rocks, formed during intense tectonic processes, have given rise to a rugged coastline with steep cliffs, sandy beaches and small coves. The variety of reliefs and landforms, such as fractures and folds visible in the cliffs, contributes to the diversity of coastal habitats.

A Concepción castle (Cedeira)

Forged between rocks and the sea



360°
Panoramic
view



A Concepción castle is an 18th century military fortress strategically located on Punta Sarridal, near the port of Cedeira, on a rocky promontory. Its construction, begun in 1747, was part of a larger defensive system designed to protect the Cedeira and Ferrol estuaries from enemy attacks, especially during the wars with England.

Its interpretation centre immerses us in the defensive history and life of the soldiers who guarded it and offers a key understanding of its historical and strategic context.

Its location makes it a great spot to enjoy a panoramic view of the Cedeira estuary, with the village at our feet, the nearby beaches and the Atlantic Ocean.

In addition to its historical value and impressive views, the castle's construction took advantage of local natural resources for its walls, such as granite rock, proof of the close relationship between humans and the environment. Its location overlooks the Cedeira estuary, an area of great natural value that, recognised as a Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest, exemplifies the sustainable management of marine resources, a pillar of the Geopark.



Sarridal Castro (Cedeira)

After centuries of occupation

20

This archaeological site located at Punta Sarridal is an enclave with a long history spanning from the Iron Age to later periods. Recent archaeological excavations have revealed occupation dating back to at least the 5th century B.C. and continuing until the 5th century A.D. In addition to its imposing walls, one of the most unique and significant finds is the *monumento con forno (sauna castrexa)* (Megalithic monument used as a sort of prehistoric sauna).



360°
Panoramic
view



Santo André de Teixido Sanctuary (Cedeira)

A mystical place of profound popular devotion

21

Santo André de Teixido sanctuary is undoubtedly one of the most unique and mystical places in Galicia, where devotion, legend and breathtaking natural scenery come together. It is nestled in a small valley in the Serra da Capelada, right above the imposing cliffs of Cabo Ortegal.

Beyond its architectural value, what really defines this place is its surroundings and its deep roots in popular legend. Tradition has it that “a Santo André de Teixido vai de morto quen non foi de vivo” (those who have not gone to Santo André de Teixido in life will go after death), a belief that anyone who does not visit the sanctuary in life will have to do so after death, reincarnated as an insect, a reptile or a soul in torment. This has made the sanctuary the second most important place of pilgrimage in Galicia, surpassed only by Santiago de Compostela.





360°
Panoramic
view



Those who make the pilgrimage to the sanctuary, upon fulfilling their promise, usually purchase *sanandresiños* (breadcrumb figures) and sometimes place stones in the *amilladoiros* as a symbol of a fulfilled promise, a wish or an act of faith. These piles of stones, located in a UNESCO geopark, highlight the cultural and historical connection between the people and the geological environment.

22

O Porto do Cabo and Casa da Bastona

The heart of the Camiño Vello



O Porto do Cabo is an ethnographic and historical meeting point where three municipalities come together: Valdoviño, Cedeira and Cerdido. This enclave, of great scenic value, stands as an emblematic point on the Camiño Vello (old road) to Santo André de Teixido sanctuary, where tradition and nature merge.

Within this area, Casa da Bastona should be mentioned, an old inn that offered shelter and sustenance to pilgrims, and which still retains its essence. Here there is a medieval bridge alongside other traditional buildings that reflect life in days gone by. This place was also home to the *caldufeiras*, women who offered broth to travellers to relieve their fatigue on the journey.

Its location at the crossroads of three towns makes it a unique geographical and cultural link. Beyond its ethnographic and heritage wealth, the surroundings offer views of a valley of great beauty, which perfectly complements the experience of immersing yourself in the history and traditions of this ancient route.



360°
Panoramic
view



23

Seafaring district and port of Cariño

A labyrinth of houses hanging above the sea



The seafaring district is the oldest part of this town, a unique group of houses clinging to the landscape, perched high on the cliffs between A Concha beach and Punta Gabeira.

Strolling through its narrow, winding streets is like stepping into a village shaped by the sea. Most of the houses, painted in vibrant colours using the same paints for their windows and balconies as the boats, feature traditional balconies, galleries or corridors that give them a unique, picturesque character.

These narrow streets lead to lively squares, such as Praza da Porta Pulida and Praza da Mariña, which are hubs of social and economic activity. Its privileged location on the cliffs offers numerous natural viewpoints from which to gaze at the grandeur of the estuary and the immense ocean.

The rua do Campo, in particular, offers spectacular views and access to the secluded Cala do Peiral.

Close to this historic centre, the fishing port keeps traditions alive with its constant comings and goings of boats bringing in seafood. In addition to offering panoramic views of the seafaring district and the estuary, it is the starting point for those who wish to explore the coastal landscape from the water on boat trips.

The breakwater at the port of Cariño is built with large blocks of eclogite, extracted from a quarry opened for this purpose. It is probably the only *eclogite* harbour in the world, an additional asset for this Geopark.

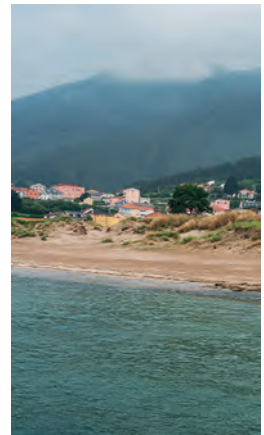
A Concha and A Basteira beaches (Cariño)

A safe, peaceful refuge on the estuary

24

The urban beaches of Cariño, located on the sandy areas of the estuary, offer calmer waters than those of the open ocean, making them ideal for swimming and family fun.

Both beaches offer a space where urban life blends harmoniously with the serenity of the estuary, inviting you to relax and enjoy the coastal landscape in a safe, accessible environment. In addition, they also have the added convenience of nearby restaurants and cafés on the seafront promenade



La Pureza canning factory (Cariño):

A living vestige of the town's industrial heritage

25

Built in 1924, this factory was one of the main canneries in the area and is still dedicated to the production of seafood products today. Its imposing structure stands as a remarkable example of industrial heritage that reflects the profound importance that the canning industry had for the local economy and society during much of the 20th century and has ended up shaping a distinctive part of the Cariño landscape.

The factory is open to visitors and offers the opportunity to learn about the production process and the history of canning, with a small shop where you can purchase its products. In addition, its seafood preserves, along with vegetables and hand-crafted jams from local companies, can be found in specialist shops, gourmet shops and online platforms selling Galician products.



San Xiao do Trebo Hermitage (Cariño)

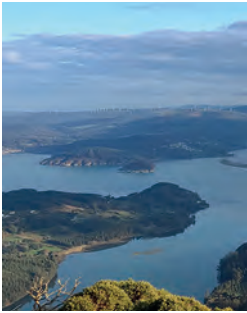
A place of pilgrimages and legends



The hermitage stands on the remains of a Roman village and hosts a traditional pilgrimage in January. It is linked to local legends and the Camiño dos Mortos (Way of the Dead) route to Santo André de Teixido. Its surroundings, overlooking the Cariño estuary, offer a beautiful natural heritage ideal for hiking.

A Miranda viewpoint (Cariño)

A 360° balcony overlooking the Geopark



This viewpoint, located at the summit of Monte da Miranda, offers a spectacular 360 degree view of some of the most iconic landscapes in the Geopark.

From here you can see the Cariño-Ortiguera estuary, the entrance to the estuary, Punta de Estaca de Bares and Serra da Capelada, Serra da Faladoira and Serra da Coriscada. It is an ideal place to appreciate the magnitude of the Geopark's landscape.



360°
Panoramic
view



Puntal de Feás (Cariño)

A natural viewpoint that connects the community and ocean



Puntal de Feás is a coastal enclave offering spectacular views of the coastline, as part of the impressive maritime landscape of the area. From here, the view encompasses a wide stretch of coastline, allowing one to appreciate the estuary's outlet to the sea and offering unique viewpoints to watch aquatic birds. Like many points along the Galician coast, this headland evokes the close relationship between local communities and the sea, both for fishing and for observing natural phenomena.

Historic centre of Ortigueira and seafront promenade (Ortigueira)

A stroll through traditional architecture

29

The historic centre of Ortigueira invites you to stroll through its streets, where traditional architecture and Indiano-style buildings coexist, reflecting the history of emigration. Its urban layout, which descends towards the estuary, shows the town's close relationship with the sea.

The route passes through the praza da Isabel II, the heart of local life, Santa Marta church, with its imposing tower, and the complex formed by the former Dominican convent, now the town hall, which houses the Teatro de Beneficencia. The nearby streets, full of activity, reflect everyday life in Ortigueira. The seafront promenade offers views of the estuary, the port and the natural surroundings, perfect for walking and bird watching. At the end of this walk, you will find the Borde Litoral trail, perfect for enjoying the landscape and the biodiversity that is hidden along the estuary.

The local geology, with its relief and type of rocks, determines the soil and micro-climate and favours a great diversity of species and ecosystems.



Castro de Punta dos Prados (Ortigueira)

The erosion of time

30

The **Castro** de Punta dos Prados is an important coastal archaeological site located in Espasante (Ortigueira), although today it is quite deteriorated due to erosion. It is an excellent example of a maritime **castro**, strategically located on the coastline to defend against sea raids and take advantage of the sea's resources. The settlement, occupied from the 4th century B.C. and later between the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., was heavily protected by two moats and a double line of walls. As in Sarridal **castro**, one of the most important and unique finds is a *monumento con forno* (*sauna castrexa*) (Megalithic monument used as a sort of prehistoric sauna).



Muíño de Mareas de Senra (Ortigueira)

Traditional engineering driven by the tide

31

This mill, built between 1905 and 1910 to harness the power of the tides for grinding grain, is the last of its kind in Galicia. Its construction was promoted by an emigrant who returned from Cuba and involved stonemasons from Pontevedra and local carpenters.



32

Garita da Vela (Ortigueira)

Facing the immensity of the Atlantic



360°
Panoramic
view



The Garita da Vela, in Espasante, is a coastal observation point whose name evokes its historical function as a lookout post or watchtower. It is believed to have served as a base for a military detachment dedicated to guarding the Loiba coast and the entrance to the estuary against possible invasions and marine incursions during the 18th century.

Today, this function has been transformed into a privilege for visitors, who can enjoy spectacular views of the coastline, the cliffs and the immensity of the Atlantic, with the profile of the Ortigueira estuary, in the distance.

33

O Casón castle viewpoint (Ortigueira)

The tower that dominates the estuary



360°
Panoramic
view



The O Casón castle viewpoint, also known as Miradoiro do Casón, is a place of great historical and scenic interest. Here, on top of an ancient **castro**, you can find the remains of an old medieval fortress, whose origins date back to the late 9th or early 10th century. The structure of what was once a watchtower with three walled enclosures and a moat has been preserved.

The views from here are spectacular, taking in the entire Ortigueira estuary, from the mouth of the river Mera to Punta de Estaca de Bares.

34

Océano Surf Museum (Valdoviño)

Waves, history and community



The Océano Surf Museum, the only one of its kind in Spain, is entirely dedicated to the surfing culture and its connection with the ocean, the environment and coastal communities. Beyond the sport itself, its cultural, historical and natural impact should be of particular mention, which makes it an essential destination for lovers of surfing and the sea.

Located next to A Frouxeira beach, a place with exceptional conditions to surf all year round, this museum allows you to learn about this sport, its history and its deep connection with the maritime environment. It is a clear example of the interaction between geology and human activity.

With large windows facing the sea, the Museum offers a unique visual experience that combines knowledge and landscape.

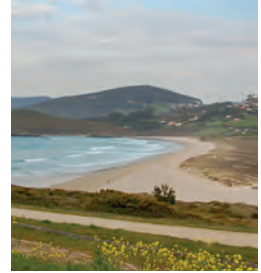
Pantín beach (Valdoviño)

International surfing paradise

35

Pantín beach is one of the most internationally renowned surfing beaches. Thanks to its exceptional surf conditions, it has established itself as a prime destination for surfers of all levels throughout the year.

This beach is home to the Pantín Classic Galicia Pro, the most important surfing event in Spain and an essential stop on the World Surf League (WSL) world circuit. This championship is usually held between the end of summer and the beginning of autumn and attracts the world's surfing elite to the coast of Valdoviño.



Punta Frouxeira lighthouse and coastal battery (Valdoviño)

Testimony to defensive history

36

The Punta Frouxeira lighthouse is a distinctive feature of the coastal landscape and one of the most important maritime landmarks in the area. It stands on a rocky platform and blends harmoniously with the Punta Frouxeira coastal battery, an old 20th century military installation.

This battery was part of the defensive network of the Ferrol estuary, with the aim of protecting a stretch of coastline and the entrance to the estuary from possible naval attacks. Although no longer in use, its structure is a testament to the strategic importance of this site over the course of history.

From this point, you can enjoy spectacular panoramic views of the Atlantic, the cliffs and the coast of Valdoviño, making it a place of great scenic beauty. In addition, a trail starting from the lighthouse allows you to explore Punta Frouxeira itself, walking through breathtaking landscapes.



360°
Panoramic
view



A Frouxeira lagoon and sand dunes (Valdoviño)

Sanctuary for migratory birds

37

The A Frouxeira lagoon and sand dunes form a unique and highly valuable natural enclave. This area, protected as a wetland of international importance (**Ramsar site**), forms part of the “Costa Ártabra” Special Area of Conservation (**SAC**) and the “Costa de Ferrolterra - Valdoviño” Special Protection Area for Birds (**SPA**).

The lagoon is a crucial ornithological ecosystem, which serves as a resting place for migratory birds and a breeding ground for species such as the mallard. Fed by the rivers Vilar and Castro and separated from the sea by a sand dune system, its variable salinity creates a diverse habitat for flora and fauna, which includes otters.



A footpath allows visitors to observe birds and enjoy this natural environment of great biodiversity.

A Frouxeira sand dunes, a long beach with fine sand, is renowned for its ideal conditions to practice surfing and windsurfing, attracting European sports enthusiasts with its strong waves and winds. It is a perfect beach for walking and enjoying the wild nature of the Galician coast.

38

A Virxe do Porto hermitage (Valdoviño)

Small chapel for seafaring devotion



A Virxe do Porto hermitage, also known as A Virxe do Porto or Nosa Señora do Mar, is a small, white-walled chapel standing on a rocky islet on the cliffs of Valdoviño, very close to A Frouxeira beach. From its privileged location, the hermitage offers spectacular panoramic views of the coast, the cliffs and the nearby Punta Frouxeira lighthouse.

The most unique feature of this hermitage is its accessibility, as it can only be reached on foot at low tide, walking over the rocks from O Porto beach. Local legend has it that sailors decided to build the temple here after repeatedly finding a sculpture of the Virgin Mary returning to the rocks after being taken ashore. A popular pilgrimage is held every 11 July, bringing together numerous faithful to honour their patron saint, a symbol of protection and devotion for the people of the sea.



360°
Panoramic
view



39

Fraga dos Casás (Cerdido)

Ecosystem that preserves the human footprint



The *fraga* dos Casás is one of the last remaining and most valuable vestiges of Galicia's native Atlantic woodland. It is located next to the river Mera, forming a privileged enclave between the *fragas* do Eume and the Grañas do Sor.

This woodland stands out due to its lush richness and diversity of trees, creating a unique micro-climate that favours the presence of countless species of birds and fungi and forms an ecosystem of great natural value.

In addition to its ecological importance, this *fraga* preserves signs of ancient human interaction with the environment. Examples of this are the Cova dos Ourizos, an old chestnut storehouse or *ouriceira*, and the remains of the old charcoal kiln at Foia do Carbón. It is a highly recommended destination for nature lovers and hikers, with trails that invite you to lose yourself in a landscape that evokes times gone by.



360°
Panoramic
view



O Castro Recreational Area (Cerdido)

History, nature and leisure within the walls

40

This recreational area is a leisure and nature spot of particular mention due to its unique historical and cultural value, as it is located within the walls of an ancient **castro**, while also offering modern facilities. These types of prehistoric settlements are essential to understand human history and interaction with the environment in the Geopark.

This space is designed for the whole family to enjoy and has a wooded area equipped with tables and benches, a playground, a sports court and swimming pools. It also houses the O Castro Social and Cultural Centre (a former school dating from 1933, with a café and library). From here, you can also stroll along the banks of the river Pontellas and discover river mills and a wooden walkway designed to respect the surrounding wildlife.



360°
Panoramic
view



Moeche Castle (Moeche)

Symbol of the Irmandiña Revolt

41

Moeche castle, declared a Heritage of Cultural Interest (BIC in Spanish), is one of the most emblematic and best-preserved medieval fortresses in Galicia. Unlike other constructions that stand up high, this castle is characterised by its unique location in a valley.

Its origins date back to the 14th century, but it was in the 15th century when it gained significant importance as the setting for the **Irmandiña Revolt** (1467-1469), one of the greatest social uprisings in medieval Europe. After being destroyed during this conflict, the castle was rebuilt, making it a living symbol of the struggle between the people and the nobility.

The castle's Keep, the moat carved into the rock and the parade ground are all in excellent condition. Inside, the Interpretation Centre for the **Irmandiña Revolt** offers an in-depth look at this fascinating period in history. The castle contributes to the dissemination of information and education about the area, raises awareness and respect for the natural and cultural environment and promotes values such as sustainability and conservation of the Geopark.

In addition to its architectural and historical value, Moeche castle is the epicentre of the **Irmandiño** Festival. Every August, this event recreates the assault on the fortress with light and sound shows, folk music and a vibrant medieval atmosphere that attracts visitors from all over. From its battlements, the panoramic views of Moeche valley complete an unforgettable experience.



360°
Panoramic
view



Naraío Castle and the river Castro (San Sadurniño)

Impregnable rock castle among waterfalls



Naraío Castle, declared a Heritage of Cultural Interest (BIC in Spanish), is an imposing medieval fortress that stands on a prominent rocky elevation. Known as the “rock castle” or “eagles nest” due to its impregnable defensive position, this castle offers spectacular views of the valley and the banks of the river Castro.

Its origins seem to date back to the 12th century, and a century later it witnessed the **Irmandiña Revolt**, a social conflict that saw it destroyed and subsequently rebuilt. Although today it is presented as a “romantic ruin”, it still preserves its Keep, remains of walls and a water cistern, allowing visitors to explore its parade ground and climb the tower to enjoy unforgettable views.

Along with the view of the castle, the banks of the river Castro offer a really beautiful natural setting. The river flows between pools and small waterfalls, among which the **Fervenza** (waterfall) do rio Castro should be highlighted. The path that runs along the river Castro invites you to explore this natural space, which is ideal for hiking and getting in touch with the nature surrounding this historic fortress.



360°
Panoramic
view



Rosario convent and Santa María church (San Sadurniño)

Monastic splendour and community devotion



The Rosario convent and Santa María church form a harmonious architectural ensemble.

The Rosario convent, founded by the Dominicans in the 18th century, stands out due to its imposing Baroque architecture. Its cloisters and original features are still visible, allowing visitors to take a visual journey back to its monastic splendour.

Adjacent to the convent stands Santa María church, the main parish church. An active place of worship, it is not only a landmark for the local community, but also amazes with its Baroque façade and an interior that houses valuable altarpieces and artistic details.

Pazo da Marquesa, Finca da Cortiña, Arboreto Galego, Fraga Máxica and the river Xubia (San Sadurniño)

An oasis of tranquillity where history, botany and art come together

44

History and nature intertwine in this complex in San Sadurniño, a place that invites you to connect with the environment, learn about the native flora and enjoy a moment of peace and quiet by the river.

The Pazo da Marquesa stately home, the former stately residence of the Marquis of San Sadurniño, dating back to the 19th century, is now an example of heritage restoration. After extensive renovation, this building now houses the San Sadurniño Town Hall, whose staircase is made of **toelo (serpentinites)**. Its historic gardens, now open to the public, have become a place for people to meet and enjoy themselves.

Adjacent to the Pazo is the Finca da Cortiña, where the Native Fruit Tree Conservation Orchard is located. This area connects with the start of the river Xubia walk. This pleasant riverside walk runs alongside the calm waters of the river Xubia, a watercourse of great ecological value included in the Natura 2000 network (Xubia-Castro SAC).

The trail, ideal for the whole family, passes through a lush riverside woodland and leads you to discover the Arboreto Galego, home to the Fraga Máxica. This unique botanical garden showcases the main tree formations of Galicia and is home to artistic surprises, such as wooden sculptures that add a touch of magic to the route. It is the perfect place to immerse yourself in nature and relax to the murmur of the river.

The Arboreto Galego hosts two major fairs, the Planting Fair and the Rural Fair.



360°
Panoramic
view





Waterfall O Casón.Ortiguera

04

Explore the Geopark at your own pace

Cabo Ortegal Geopark invites you to discover its secrets at your own pace. Here you will find a variety of carefully designed routes to suit all your interests and offer you an unforgettable experience, with all the information you need to make the most of your visit.

Our routes will allow you to immerse yourself in the geological and natural wealth of this land, by hiking, practising water sports such as surfing, bird watching and boat trips. You will also feel a connection with the vibrant local community, exploring its ethnographic, archaeological and architectural heritage, traditional crafts, fairs, parties and festivals.

Cariño:

cliffs,
geology and
seafaring
tradition



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

23

Seafaring district of Cariño

25

La Pureza canning factory

24

A Concha and A Basteira beaches

5

Cala do Peiral

26

San Xiao do Trebo hermitage

6

Cabo Ortegal lighthouse

7

Punta do Limo (difficult access)

27

A Miranda viewpoint

8

Vixía Herbeira viewpoint

Discover the geological force of Cabo Ortegal and the charm of life at sea at the exact point where the Atlantic and Cantabrian seas meet.


Start in the historic centre of Cariño, strolling through its seafaring district, discovering history at the La Pureza canning factory. Feel the life of the port of Cariño and relax on the nearby beaches of A Concha and A Basteira. Continue your journey to Cala do Peiral, with its impressive **gneisses**, and climb up to San Xiao do Trebo hermitage to enjoy the panoramic views. Finally, head towards the majestic Cabo Ortegal lighthouse, where two seas meet. Marvel at the views from Punta do Limo and end the day at the A Miranda or Vixía Herbeira viewpoints, where you will be amazed by the height of the cliffs.





Fact sheet


 **Location:** Municipality of Cariño.


 **Duration:** 1 full day.

 **Distance:** Vehicle trip covering approximately 35 km between all points. Short walks to explore the surroundings of each point.

 **Difficulty:** Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.

 **Type of route:** Combination of vehicle route with short walks at points of interest.

 **Starting point:** Historic centre of Cariño

 **End point:** Vixía Herbeira viewpoint.



Seafaring district of Cariño



San Xiao do Trebo Hermitage (Cariño)

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Special precautions: Always keep a safe distance from the cliffs. If you go **birdwatching** in this area, please remain quiet and keep your distance so as not to disturb the birds.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Access to the lighthouses and viewpoints is generally by car, but some trails may have uneven sections.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Don't leave without trying the fresh fish and seafood of the day. The cockles cooked in the Cariño style are a must, as are La Pureza canned foods, which are ideal to take home as souvenirs.

Festivals: If your visit coincides with them, immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere of the Festas do Carne (seafaring festival), the Festa da Caldeirada e da Sardiña Lañada or the Festa do Pulpo e o Churrasco, where local cuisine takes centre stage.

Bird watching: The cliffs of Cabo Ortegual and Herbeira, as well as the port and beaches, are key spots to observe sea birds such as northern gannets, cormorants and various species of sea gulls.

Boat trips: The port of Cariño is the starting point for boat trips to see the cliffs from the sea.

Hiking: The area offers a variety of hiking trails to explore its coastal and inland landscapes.

Cedeira:

mystical coastline and seafaring roots

ROUTE



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

17

Historic centre
of Cedeira

12

Monument to the
A Muller do Pescador
(Fisherman's Wife)

18

Cedeira Sea
Museum

19

A Concepción
castle

20

Sarridal Castro

13

Punta Sarridal
viewpoint

10

Punta Candeeira
lighthouse

9

Teixidelo
viewpoint

21

Santo André de
Teixido sanctuary



Immerse yourself in the seafaring and mystical tradition of Santo André de Teixido, where geology is legend.


Discover the seafaring essence of Cedeira by strolling through its historic centre and the port, where *the A Muller do Pescador* monument pays tribute to tradition. Explore the maritime wealth at the Cedeira Sea Museum and climb up to A Concepción castle, where you can look out over the estuary with spectacular views. Nearby, discover the archaeological site of Sarridal castro and the panoramic views from Punta Sarridal viewpoint.


Afterwards, head towards the Punta Candeeira lighthouse, a solitary guardian in a stunning coastal setting. Continue your route to the Teixidelo viewpoint, with spectacular views, before ending your trip at the legendary Santo André de Teixido sanctuary, a place of deep tradition on imposing cliffs.


Fact sheet

 **Location:** Municipality of Cedeira.

 **Duration:** 1 full day.

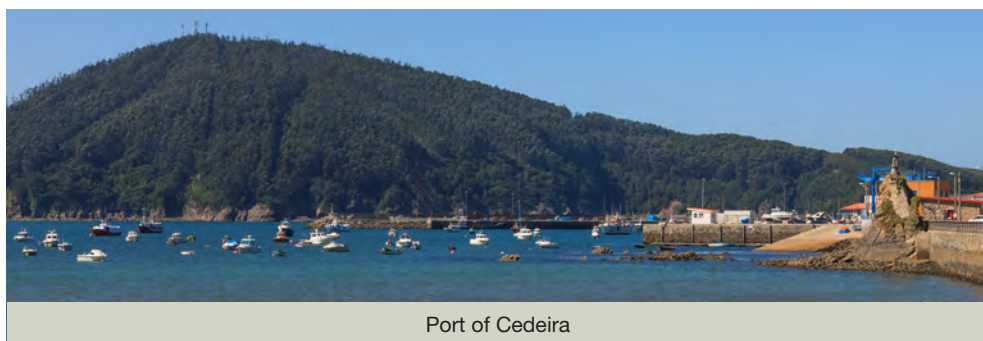
 **Distance:** Vehicle trip covering approximately 45 km between all points. Short walks to explore the surroundings of each point.

 **Difficulty:** Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.

 **Type of route:** Combination of vehicle route with short walks at points of interest.

 **Starting point:** We recommend starting in the historic centre of Cedeira.

 **End point:** Santo André de Teixido sanctuary.



Port of Cedeira

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Special precautions: Always keep a safe distance from the cliffs.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Access to the lighthouses and viewpoints is generally by car, but some trails may have uneven sections.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy the daily catch of fresh fish and seafood. Be sure to try monkfish cooked in the Cedeira style and the coveted goose barnacles, harvested at the foot of the cliffs.

Festivals: If your visit coincides with them, immerse yourself in the Festas do Carne (seafaring festival), the Festa do Percebe de Cedeira or the traditional Santo André de Teixido pilgrimage, which combine devotion with local folklore.

Hiking: The area offers a variety of hiking trails that allow you to explore the coastal and inland landscapes, many of which are connected to the Camiño de Santo André.

Water sports: The beaches in the area offer opportunities for water sports, especially surfing at nearby beaches such as Pantín (Valdoviño).

Valdoviño:

waves, sand dunes and coastal landscapes



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

14

O Baleo beach

36

Punta Frouxeira lighthouse and coastal battery

34

Océano Surf Museum

37

A Frouxeira lagoon and sand dunes

38

A Virxe do Porto hermitage

35

Pantín beach

Experience the adrenaline rush of surfing on wild beaches and the peace and quiet of a lagoon with geological history.

Feel the power of the Atlantic in Valdoviño. Start at O Baleo beach, a sandy stretch whose amphibolites reveal the history of the ancient Palaeozoic Rheic Ocean. Continue towards the Punta Frouxeira lighthouse and coastal battery, a historical and military landmark with panoramic views of the coast. Delve into the world of surfing by visiting the Océano Surf Museum, where you will learn about the deep connection between this sport and the sea.

Find peace and quiet at the A Virxe do Porto hermitage and let yourself be enveloped by the tranquillity of the A Frouxeira lagoon and sand dunes, a protected wetland that is crucial for migratory birds. End the day feeling energised at Pantín beach, world-renowned for its perfect waves.

Fact sheet



Location: Municipality of Valdoviño.



Duration: 1 full day.



Distance: Vehicle trip covering approximately 25 km between all points. Short walks to explore the surroundings of each point.



Difficulty: Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.



Type of route: Combination of vehicle route with short walks at points of interest.



Starting point: We recommend starting at O Baleo beach.

End point: Pantín beach.



Océano Surf Museum



Punta Frouxeira lighthouse

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Special precautions: If you surf, familiarise yourself with the currents and sea conditions.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: The sandy areas and trails in wetlands may have limited accessibility. On beaches, check local conditions for swimming and regulations regarding pets during high season.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy the fresh fish and seafood from the coast, reflecting the richness of the local sea.

Festivals and events: If your visit coincides with it, don't miss the Pantín Classic Galicia Pro, a world-class surfing event that attracts athletes and fans at the end of summer.

Water sports: Valdoviño is a paradise for surfing and windsurfing, with schools and services that make it easy for all levels to enjoy these sports.

Bird watching: The A Frouxeira lagoon is a key spot for bird watching, with a trail set up to enjoy its rich ornithological biodiversity.

Ortigueira:

estuaries,
geology and
tradition

ROUTE



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

29

Historic centre of Ortigueira and seafront promenade

31

Muíño de Mareas de Senra

3

Morouzos beach

2

San Antonio beach

30

Castro de Punta dos Prados

32

Garita da Vela

1

O Picón viewpoint



Explore estuaries with birds, vestiges of ancient oceans and vibrant traditional culture in a landscape with deep roots.

Discover Ortigueira, a land where geological history intertwines with life and traditions. Start at Morouzos beach and explore Santo Antonio beach. Feel the immensity of the landscape from O Picón viewpoint, where “The Best Bench in the World” offers panoramic views and distant memories of a glacial past.

Next, head into the historic centre of Ortigueira and stroll along its seafront promenade, ideal for bird watching in the estuary. Explore the remains of the Punta dos Prados **castro** and the historic Garita da Vela, guardians of the coast. End your tour at the Muíño de Mareas de Senra a unique structure that harnessed the power of the sea for grinding.

Fact sheet



Location: Municipality of Ortigueira.



Duration: 1 full day.



Distance: Vehicle trip covering approximately 35 km between all points. Short walks to explore the surroundings of each point.



Difficulty: Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.



Type of route: Combination of vehicle route with short walks at points of interest.



Starting point: We recommend starting in the historic centre of Ortigueira.

End point: O Picón viewpoint or return to the centre of Ortigueira.



San Antonio beach

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Special precautions: Always obey the signs, especially in high areas such as viewpoints.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Some points may have limited access.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy the daily catch of fresh fish and seafood, especially clams and cockles cooked in the Ortigueira style. Be sure to try the local produce from the local vegetable gardens and livestock farms, as well as the surprising seaweed in various dishes or the Ortigueira cake.

Bird watching: The seafront promenade, the Borde Litoral trail, the Morouzos observatory and the Senra observatory are ideal places to watch the diversity of birds.

Boat trips: The port of Ortigueira is the starting point for boat trips to see the cliffs from the sea.

Festivals and events: If your visit coincides with it, immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere of the Ortigueira International Celtic World Festival, one of the most important Celtic music events in the world.

Moeche, Cerdido and San Sadurniño:

rural heart and geological past

ROUTE



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

15/41

Moeche castle

39

Fraga dos Casás

42

Naraío castle and banks of the river Castro

43

Rosario convent and Santa María church

44

Pazo da Marquesa and Finca da Cortiña and Ramble along the river Xubia



A journey to the rural heart of Galicia, among medieval castles, historic lime kilns and rocks that were once part of the ocean.


Delve into the rural heart of the Geopark, where history and geology intertwine. Start at the imposing Moeche castle, witness to the **Irmandiña** Revolt.


Then immerse yourself in the lush nature of the *fraga* dos Casás, one of the last remaining Atlantic forests. Explore majestic Naraío castle on the banks of the river Castro, and stroll along the river Xubia trail, the Arboreto Galego and the Fraga Máxica, areas of great ecological value. Visit Rosario convent and Santa María church. End your tour with the elegance of the Pazo da Marquesa and the Finca da Cortiña, symbols of heritage restoration.


Fact sheet


 **Location:** Municipalities of Moeche, Cerdido and San Sadurniño.


 **Duration:** 1 full day.

 **Distance:** Vehicle trip covering approximately 35 km between all points. Short walks to explore the surroundings of each point.

 **Difficulty:** Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.

 **Type of route:** Combination of vehicle route with short walks at points of interest.

 **Starting point:** We recommend starting at Moeche castle.

 **End point:** San Sadurniño or return to Moeche castle.



River Xubia walk

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Special precautions: For hiking in forests, clothing suitable for wet areas is recommended.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Access to castles and fragas may be limited due to uneven terrain. Some protected areas or buildings may have restrictions on pets. The O Castro recreation area has facilities for families.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy local produce, Moeche cheeses, jams and hand-crafted vegetable preserves. Don't miss the meat (especially Galician beef) and hand-crafted sausages such as androlla, wood-fired bread and empanadas from Cerdido, as well as mushrooms in season.

Festivals and events: Immerse yourself in the historic atmosphere of the Irmandiño Festival (Moeche), Feira da Plantación (San Sadurniño), the Feria Rural (San Sadurniño), the Festa da Malla (Cerdido), the Feira do Queixo de Moeche and the Feira da Faba (Moeche). Discover the Muñecas de Cascarilla of San Sadurniño.

Valdoviño and Cedeira:

two days of coastline, lost oceans and seafaring tradition



ROUTE



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

VALDOVIÑO

- 14 O Baleo beach
- 36 Punta Frouxeira lighthouse and coastal battery
- 34 Océano Surf Museum
- 37 A Frouxeira lagoon and sand dunes
- 38 A Virxe do Porto hermitage
- 35 Pantín beach

CEDEIRA

- 12 Monument to the A Muller do Pescador (Fisherman's Wife)
- 17 Historic centre of Cedeira
- 18 Cedeira Sea Museum
- 19 A Concepción Castle
- 20 Sarridal Castro
- 13 Punta Sarridal viewpoint
- 10 Punta Candeeira lighthouse
- 9 Teixidelo viewpoint
- 21 Santo André de Teixido Sanctuary

Two days of coastal contrasts: from the powerful geology of lost oceans to the magic of a sanctuary, with waves and the flavours of the sea.

In Valdoviño, start your route at O Baleo beach, a stretch of sand whose amphibolites reveal the ancient Palaeozoic Rheic Ocean. Continue towards the Punta Frouxeira lighthouse and coastal battery, a historical and military landmark with panoramic views of the coast. Immerse yourself in the world of surfing by visiting the Océano Surf Museum. Explore the lagoon and sand dunes of A Frouxeira, and feel the energy of Pantín beach, world-renowned for its waves.

Your journey continues in Cedeira with a visit to its historic centre and port. Visit the Cedeira Sea Museum and A Concepción castle, overlooking the estuary. Nearby, discover Sarridal castro and the panoramic views from Punta Sarridal viewpoint. Then, set off for the Punta Candeeira lighthouse, a solitary guardian, and the Teixidelo viewpoint before ending your trip at the legendary Santo André de Teixido sanctuary, a place of deep tradition on imposing cliffs.

Fact sheet



Location: Municipalities of Valdoviño and Cedeira.



Duration: 2 full days.



Distance: Approximately 80 kilometres by car in total (both days combined, including travel between towns and points of interest). Includes short walks to explore the surroundings of each location.



Difficulty: Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.



Type of route: Combination of car travel with short walks at points of interest, structured to be enjoyed over two days.



Starting and ending point:

Day 1 (Valdoviño): We recommend starting at O Baleo beach. Ends at Pantín beach.

Day 2 (Cedeira): We recommend starting in the centre of Cedeira. Ends at Santo André de Teixido sanctuary or returning to the centre of Cedeira.



Recommendations

Check the **general recommendations section** for your visit.

Accommodation: We recommend looking for accommodation in Valdoviño or Cedeira.

Special precautions: Always maintain a safe distance from the cliffs and respect the signs, especially in wetlands or protected areas.

Accessibility

Check the **general accessibility section** in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Some trails or access to beaches/wetlands may have restrictions. Check the regulations for each beach regarding pets during high season and restrictions in protected areas such as wetlands.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy the daily catch of fresh fish and seafood (shortfin mako shark, goose barnacles, monkfish in the Cedeira style). Enjoy the local cuisine, which combines products from the sea and the land.

Festivals and events: If your visit coincides, don't miss the Pantín Classic Galicia Pro (Valdoviño, end of summer), the Festas do Carne (seafaring festival in Cedeira), the Festa do Percebe de Cedeira or the traditional Santo André de Teixido pilgrimage (Cedeira).

Water sports: Valdoviño and Cedeira are surfing and windsurfing havens, with schools and services that make it easy for everyone to enjoy these sports.

Bird watching: The lagoon and sand dunes of A Frouxeira, together with the cliffs and estuaries, are key spots for observing sea birds and migratory birds.

Cariño and Ortigueira:

Two days of cliffs, estuaries and traditions

RUTA



Delve into the majesty of the cliffs and estuaries that tell the story of how a continent was formed.

Start your trip in Cariño, stroll through the seafaring district and visit the La Pureza canning factory. Discover the port of Cariño and relax on the beaches of A Concha and A Basteira. Continue south to visit Puntal de Feás and the beaches of Fornos and Cala do Peiral, where the rocks tell the story of the formation of a continent. Explore A Miranda viewpoint. Finally, head north to enjoy the imposing Cabo Ortegaleira lighthouse and gaze at the cliffs from the Vixía Herbeira viewpoint.

Your adventure continues in Ortigueira. Discover a land where geological history is intertwined with life and traditions. Start at the beaches of Morouzos and San Antonio, where the rocks reveal the secrets of a vanished ocean. Feel the immensity of the landscape from O Picón viewpoint, where “The Best Bench in the World” offers panoramic views and distant memories of a glacial past. Explore the historic centre of Ortigueira, the Muíño de Mareas de Senra (tidal mill) and the remains of the Punta dos Prados *castro* next to the historic Garita da Vela, guardians of the coast.



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Start

CARIÑO

- 23 Seafaring district of Cariño
- 25 La Pureza canning factory
- 28 Puntal de Feás
- 27 A Miranda viewpoint
- 4 Fornos beach
- 5 Cala do Peiral
- 6 Cabo Ortegaleira lighthouse
- 8 Vixía Herbeira viewpoint


ORTIGUEIRA


- 29 Historic centre of Ortigueira
- 31 Muíño de Mareas de Senra
- 3 Morouzos beach
- 2 San Antonio beach
- 30 Castro de Punta dos Prados
- 32 Garita da Vela
- 1 O Picón viewpoint


Fact sheet

 **Location:** Municipalities of Cariño and Ortigueira.


 **Duration:** 2 full days.

 **Distance:** Approximately 90 kilometres by car in total (both days combined, including travel between towns and points of interest). Includes short walks to explore the surroundings of each location.

 **Difficulty:** Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.

 **Type of route:** Combination of car travel with short walks at points of interest, structured to be enjoyed over two days.

 **Starting and ending point**

 **Day 1 (Cariño):** We suggest starting in the centre of Cariño. End at Vixía Herbeira viewpoint or return to the centre of Cariño.

Day 2 (Ortigueira): We suggest starting in the centre of Ortigueira. End at O Picón viewpoint or return to the centre of Ortigueira.



O Picón beach (Ortigueira)



Cabo Ortegal lighthouse

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Accommodation: We recommend looking for accommodation in Cariño or Ortigueira.

Special precautions: Always maintain a safe distance from the cliffs and respect the signs, especially in wetlands or protected areas.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Some trails or access to beaches may have restrictions. Check the regulations for each beach regarding pets during high season.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Indulge in fresh fish and seafood, especially cockles prepared in the Cariño or Ortegueira style and La Pureza canned foods. Also, try local produce from kitchen gardens and local farmers, as well as the surprising seaweed and Ortigueira cake.

Festivals and events: If your visit coincides, immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere of the Festas do Carme (Cariño), the Festa da Caldeirada e da Sardiña Lañada (Cariño) or the Festival Internacional do Mundo Celta de Ortigueira (Ortigueira).

Sports and nature: Enjoy bird watching at Puntal de Feás and Ortigueira estuary. Consider a view of the cliffs from the sea on a boat trip from the port.

Ortigueira, Moeche, Cerdido and San Sadurniño:

geological roots and valleys with history



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.

Inicio

3

ORTIGUEIRA

Playa de Morouzos

MOECHE

15/41

Castillo de Moeche

CERDIDO

39

Fraga de Os Casás

SAN SADURNIÑO

42

Naraío castle and banks of the river Castro

43

Rosario convent and Santa María church

44

Arboreto Galego and Fraga Máxica
Pazo da Marquesa and Finca da Cortiña
Walk along the river Xubia

A cultural and geological immersion from the coast to the inland valleys, which reveals the deep origins of the land and its traditions.

Start your journey on Morouzos beach in Ortigueira, with rocks from a vanished ocean. Continue to Moeche, explore its castle and delve into the *fraga* dos Casás de Cerdido, a remnant of Atlantic woodland. In San Sadurniño, discover the majestic Naraío castle next to the river Castro, and stroll along the banks of the river Xubia, the Arboreto Galego and the Fraga Máxica. Visit Rosario convent and Santa María church, and finish with the elegance of the Pazo da Marquesa and the Finca da Cortiña.



Fact sheet



Location: Municipalities of Ortigueira, Moeche, Cerdido and San Sadurniño.



Duration: 2 full days.



Distance: Approximately 100 kilometres by car in total (both days combined, including travel between towns and points of interest). Includes short walks to explore the surroundings of each location.



Difficulty: Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.



Type of route: Combination of car travel with short walks at points of interest, structured to be enjoyed over two days.



Starting and ending point:



Day 1: We recommend starting in Ortigueira (Morouzos beach). The route ends at Moeche castle.

Day 2: We recommend starting in Cerdido (fraga dos Casás). The route ends in San Sadurniño (Pazo da Marquesa).



Hórreo San Sadurniño (galician granary)



Galician stew

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit

Accommodation: We recommend looking for accommodation in Ortigueira, Moeche, Cerdido or San Sadurniño.

Special precautions: Always respect private property and follow signs on rural roads and around castles.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Access to castles, *fragas* and trails may be limited due to uneven terrain or slopes.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy local produce, Moeche cheeses, jams and hand-crafted vegetable preserves. Try the meat (Galician beef) and hand-crafted sausages such as *androlla*, wood-fired bread and empanadas from Cerdido, as well as mushrooms in season. In Ortigueira, don't miss out on trying the berberechos a la ortegana (cockles cooked in the Ortigueira style) or the Ortigueira cake.

Festivals and events: Immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere of the Festival Internacional do Mundo Celta de Ortigueira, the Festival **Irmandiño** (Moeche), the Feira da Plantación (San Sadurniño), the Feria Rural (San Sadurniño), the Feira do Queixo de Moeche or the Feira da Faba (Moeche). Discover the Muñecas de Cascarilla of San Sadurniño.

Traditions: If your visit coincides, you can experience the Festa da Malla (Cerdido), a re-enactment of traditional threshing.

Cedeira, Moeche, Cerdido and Valdoviño:

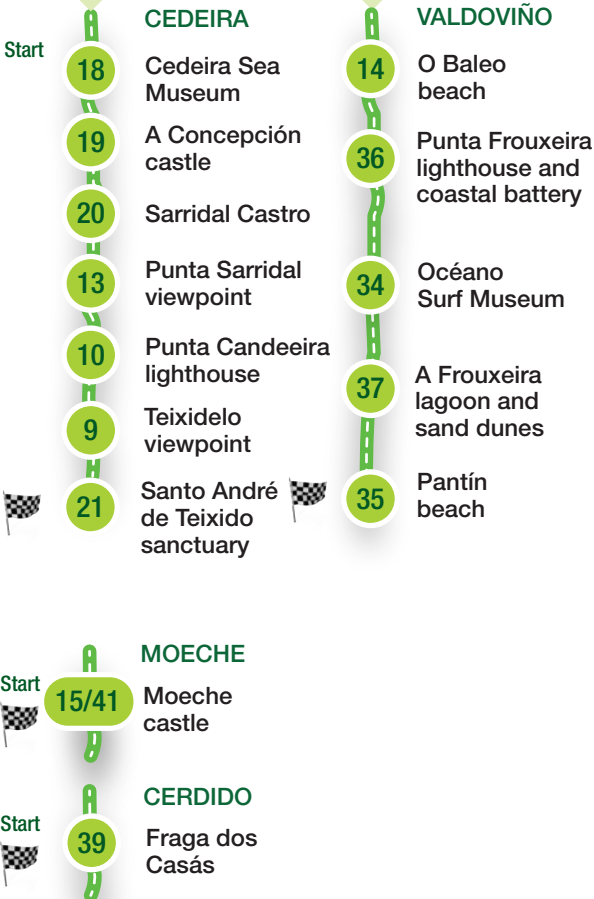
three days of wild coastline and inland essence



ROUTE



Consult this guide for detailed information on each point along the route using its reference number.



Experience a complete adventure combining coastal mystique, geological heritage and the authentic rural essence of the interior.

Start your adventure in Cedeira, visiting the Cedeira Sea Museum and exploring A Concepción castle, with panoramic views. Discover Sarridal **castro** and Punta Sarridal viewpoint. Then head towards Punta Candeeira lighthouse and continue on to the Teixidelo viewpoint and Santo André de Teixido sanctuary.

Continue on to Moeche and Cerdido. Discover Moeche castle and then enter the *fraga* dos Casás, an authentic Atlantic woodland.

Finally, the route takes you to Valdoviño. Explore O Baleo beach and enjoy the views from the lighthouse and coastal battery at Punta Frouxeira. Visit the Océano Surf Museum, the lagoon and sand dunes de A Frouxeira, and find peace and quiet at the Virxe do Porto hermitage. End your day feeling the energy of Pantín beach, world-renowned for its perfect waves.

Fact sheet



Location: Municipalities of Cedeira, Moeche, Cerdido and Valdoviño.



Duration: 3 full days.



Distance: Approximately 150 kilometres by car in total.



Difficulty: Easy-moderate. Most points are accessible by car, with short walks to explore the surroundings.



Type of route: Combination of car travel with short walks at points of interest, structured to be enjoyed over three days.



Starting and ending point:

Day 1: We suggest starting at the Cedeira Sea Museum. The route ends at the Santo André de Teixido sanctuary (Cedeira).

Day 2: We recommend starting at Moeche castle. It ends at Fraga dos Casás (Cerdido).

Day 3: We suggest starting at O Baleo beach (Valdoviño). Ends at Pantín beach (Valdoviño).



Coastal Battery of Punta Frouxeira



Santo André de Teixido sanctuary

Recommendations

Check the general recommendations section for your visit.

Accommodation: We recommend looking for accommodation in Cedeira or Valdoviño, and/or spending a night in rural accommodation in Moeche or Cerdido.

Special precautions: Always maintain a safe distance from the cliffs and obey the signs on rural roads and around castles.

Accessibility

Check the general accessibility section in the Geopark.

To be taken into account: Access to viewpoints, castles and nature trails may be limited due to uneven terrain or slopes.

Complementary activities

Gastronomic heritage: Enjoy some goose barnacles in Cedeira, shortfin mako shark and monkfish in the Cedeira style. Try the cheeses and vegetable preserves from Moeche, the bread from the bakeries in Cerdido, and hand-crafted sausages such as *androlla*.

Festivals and events: If your visit coincides, don't miss the Santo André de Teixido pilgrimage, the Irmandiño de Moeche festival, the Festa da Malla (Cerdido), the Feria do Queixo de Moeche or the Feria da Faba (Moeche) or the Pantín Classic Galicia Pro (Valdoviño).

Sports and nature: Take advantage of opportunities to take surfing lessons in Valdoviño, go bird watching in A Frouxeira, and go hiking in the *fragas*.

General recommendations for your visit

To ensure that your experience at the Cabo Ortegal Geopark is unforgettable and safe, we offer the following recommendations applicable to all our routes or independent visits:



Equipment required:

- ✓ Comfortable footwear suitable for walking, preferably sturdy for varied terrain.
- ✓ Warm clothing and a windbreaker, especially in coastal or high areas, where the weather can change quickly.
- ✓ Sunscreen and a hat to protect you from the sun.
- ✓ Binoculars (highly recommended for bird watching in coastal areas and estuaries).
- ✓ A camera to capture the stunning landscapes.
- ✓ Enough water to stay hydrated.
- ✓ If you are a surfer, don't forget your board and wetsuit if you plan to practise this sport. For hiking in forests, clothing suitable for wet areas is recommended.



Best time of year:

- ✓ Spring and in autumn: Ideal for enjoying nature, bird watching and the rural landscape, with milder temperatures and fewer visitors. Autumn and winter are particularly good for watching migratory birds in the wetlands.
- ✓ Summer: Perfect for combining exploration with enjoying the beaches and water sports.



Important precautions:

- ✓ Always keep a safe distance from cliffs and high areas.
- ✓ Respect all signs, especially in wetlands, protected areas and on rural roads.
- ✓ If you surf, familiarise yourself with the currents and sea conditions before entering the water.
- ✓ Check the opening hours of museums, castles and other places of interest.



Respect for the environment:

- ✓ Do not leave rubbish behind. Take everything you bring with you when you leave.
- ✓ Be respectful of the area's natural and cultural heritage.
- ✓ Always follow the marked paths and trails.
- ✓ If you want to go bird watching, keep quiet and maintain a safe distance so as not to disturb them.
- ✓ Respect private property.



Accommodation

(for multi-day routes):

- ✓ We recommend looking for accommodation in the towns near the routes, such as Cariño, Ortigueira, Cedeira, Valdoviño, Moeche, Cerdido or San Sadurniño. If the route combines coast and inland areas, consider staying overnight in both areas to optimise your journey.

General accessibility in the Cabo Ortegal Geopark

The Cabo Ortegal Geopark aims to offer an unforgettable experience for all who visit it. Below are some general accessibility considerations:



Reduced mobility:

- ✓ Access to lighthouses, viewpoints and many urban points of interest is usually by car or with good accessibility. However, it is important to bear in mind that some trails, sections of beaches, wetland areas or access to castles, viewpoints and forests may have limitations due to uneven terrain, slopes or steps.
- ✓ We recommend checking in advance the specific accessibility of each point of interest you plan to visit to ensure that it suits your needs.



Pets:

- ✓ Dogs are allowed in most open spaces and on rural paths.
- ✓ They must be kept on a leash and under the control of their owners at all times.
- ✓ Please note that restrictions may apply in protected areas (such as wetlands) or inside certain buildings or on beaches (it is advisable to check the specific regulations for each beach).



Families:

- ✓ The Geopark routes are generally suitable for families.
- ✓ They offer a wealth of outdoor spaces, beaches and natural areas that are ideal for play, exploration and learning.
- ✓ Many points of interest offer breathtaking views and open surroundings.
- ✓ Museums and castles stimulate the imagination, and some recreational areas have facilities suitable for families.
- ✓ On beaches, check local conditions for swimming.



Transport:

- ✓ Access to the municipalities and points of interest within the Geopark is mainly by road.
- ✓ Parking is generally available at most points of interest, beaches and urban centres.

Recommended experiences

The Cabo Ortegal Geopark is a place where the Earth tells you its story and experiences come to life. Here, the Earth invites you to enjoy a life-changing experience that connects geology, nature and culture.

The Cabo Ortegal Geopark is much more than a collection of landscapes; it is a living stage where every visit becomes a unique experience. Beyond exploring its routes, we invite you to feel and experience the territory through activities designed for every interest.

The Cabo Ortegal Geopark is a tourist destination with its own identity, sustainable and internationally recognised, with a range of tourist

activities designed to ensure that every visitor, especially families, enjoys unique experiences of nature and culture. To help you choose and guide you through the many possibilities offered by our region, check out the Experience Catalogue, available in several languages and the result of collaboration with local tourism companies.

As every year, don't miss the summer **Georoutes**. These itineraries, led by experts in geology, will allow you to discover the geological secrets of the seven municipalities that make up the Geopark, offering a unique opportunity for scientific and tourist discovery. You will find all the information on the website: xeoparquecabortegal.gal.

Cabo Ortegal is not just a destination, it is an experience waiting for you.



Cabo Ortegal lighthouse

Cabo Ortegal

is not just a destination,
it is an **experience**
waiting for you

I want to know
more



Did you know that?

- ✓ The Geopark has 108 sites of geological interest (**SGI**) and 6 **Geosites** of international interest.
- ✓ Most of the Serra da Capelada was an ancient volcanic island, similar to the current archipelago of Japan. The cliffs of Vixia Herbeira, on the coast of Serra da Capelada, at a height of 613 metres, are the highest in continental Europe.
- ✓ Cabo Ortegal is considered the meeting point and geographical separation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cantabrian Sea.
- ✓ Teixidelo beach, in Cedeira, is famous for its non-volcanic black sand.
- ✓ It is not unusual to see cetaceans off the coasts of Cedeira and Valdoviño. Dolphins even tend to venture into the estuaries.
- ✓ In Cariño, the oldest canning industry in Cabo Ortegal survives, still in the hands of the founding family. It is La Pureza, founded in 1924.
- ✓ Moeche stone, a **serpentinite** called **toelo** in Galician, is a type of rock that is normally found more than 70 kilometres below the surface. It is found on the surface of the Geopark and is highly prized as an ornamental material.
- ✓ The Rapa das Bestas is one of the most unique festivals in the region. Usually held on the last Sunday in June, wild horses gather at Pena Toxosa (Serra da Capelada, Cedeira), where their manes are cut and races and dressage displays are held.
- ✓ Emigration, especially to America, has left a deep mark on Galicia. In 1955, emigrants and descendants of Galicians in Havana donated an image of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, patron saint of Cuba, to the municipality of Ortigueira. Every 8 September, this image is carried in procession.
- ✓ Legends of found virgins are common in Galicia. The legend of the Virxe do Porto hermitage, in the parish of Meirás (Valdoviño), tells that some fishermen found the image of the Virgin in the sea and took it ashore, but the next day the image reappeared in the sea, so the fishermen decided to build a chapel on a rock that becomes an island at high tide.
- ✓ For more than thirty years, the second weekend in July has been the date for the Ortigueira International Celtic World Festival, which brings together the best international Celtic music artists.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why has Cabo Ortegal been declared a Geopark?

The area has a unique geology, the result of the **Variscan orogeny**, some 400-320 million years ago, which brought rocks from the Earth's mantle and other heavily **subducted** formations (buried at great depths in subduction zones, such as the current circum-Pacific zones) to the surface. This exceptional circumstance makes the Cabo Ortegal area one of the few destinations in the world where rocks that are usually found 70 km deep can be seen on the surface.

How big is the Cabo Ortegal Geopark and which municipalities does it cover?

In total, it covers an area of 799 km², 632 of which is land and 167 is coastline, encompassing seven municipalities: Cariño, Cedeira, Cerdido, Moeche, Ortigueira, San Sadurniño and Valdoviño. The current resident population is around 28,000, spread across 57 parishes.

What is the climate like and when is the best time to visit?

Cabo Ortegal has a humid oceanic climate, with mild winters and temperate summers. Most of the rain falls in autumn and winter. The best time for outdoor activities is spring and summer, but the choice will also depend on the visitor's specific interests. In autumn and winter, it is essential to wear good footwear and avoid risky areas in bad weather, especially if you are going to visit the cliffs and mountain and forest trails.

What local food should you try?

Being close to the coast, but still maintaining agricultural and livestock activity inland, Cabo Ortegal offers a rich and varied cuisine, with plenty of fresh fish and seafood, local meat and hand-crafted products. From the sea, the highlights are goose barnacles, monkfish, marrajo (a type of shark) and cockles. From the land, the traditional stews of the area, pork with turnip greens, hand-crafted cheeses and heather or chestnut honey. For dessert, we recommend cheese with quince, Ortigueira's tart or Cedeira "eses" (cookies).



Cockles

Can I do the Georoutes on my own?

There are routes marked by trails and rural tracks that are open to the public free of charge throughout the area, in addition to the roads. However, the **Georoutes** are guided itineraries led by geology experts organised by the Geopark during Easter and summer. There are coastal and inland **Georoutes**, walking and bus itineraries for all types of visitors. To find out more about what's on offer, availability and prices, please visit the Geopark's official website.

Practical information

Official website of the Cabo Ortegal Geopark

Whether you intend to visit a specific site — a geological outcrop, a viewpoint, a *fraga* or a beach — or you want to explore the Geopark at your own pace to discover its geodiversity, history and ways of life, the official website of the Cabo Ortegal Geopark is the place to go for the most useful and up-to-date information: xeoparquecaboortegal.gal.

The websites of the Provincial Council of A Coruña and the municipalities, as well as the tourist offices, are also a good resource to organise and plan your activities.

Good practices for the conservation of the Geopark

The natural and cultural heritage of the Cabo Ortegal Geopark is a legacy for all humanity that we must preserve for future generations in the best possible condition.

For this reason, the destruction of any element of the geological heritage is not permitted. We must never collect rocks, no matter how small, to take home as a souvenir of our visit. The collection of samples is only authorised for properly accredited scientific purposes.

If during your visit you detect evidence of looting or the perpetrators of such an act, the best thing you can do is collect any relevant information and report it to the authorities. Similarly, if you notice significant alterations, such as landslides, rubbish, graffiti or other situations that could compromise the preservation and enjoyment of the Geopark, please do not hesitate to contact the authorities.

Finally, when moving around in the natural environment, always try to stay on the paths and trails, avoiding walking across fields, trespassing on farmland or entering private

property without permission. Conservation and respect are everyone's responsibility, and good practices are the best guarantee of an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

How to get to and move around the Geopark

Ferrol can be reached by train, bus or motorway from A Coruña or Santiago. From Ferrol there are regular bus services to Cedeira, Cariño and Ortigueira. Although there are no trains that go directly to the natural areas of the Cabo Ortegal Geopark, the territory is crossed by the historic C 1 commuter line (formerly FEVE), which connects Ferrol and passes through several of the municipalities that form part of the Geopark: Moeche, Cerdido and Ortigueira, as well as San Sadurniño and Narón.

You can also explore the area by car, motorbike or bicycle. There are companies in the area that offer rental and organisation of routes on mechanical or electric bicycles. The Geopark, the *concellos* (town councils) and the Provincial Council of A Coruña provide visitors with guides and maps, both printed and downloadable, with all the itineraries, many of which are also signposted *in situ*. The free Sendegal application contains the official trails of Galicia.

Where to eat and stay

The area has a wide variety of restaurants, bars and cafés, and all kinds of accommodation: rural hotels, hostels, guesthouses, campsites and rural tourism houses, often next to ideal trails for hiking. In summer, it is advisable to book in advance.

Check the websites of the *concellos* (town councils) and Tourism of Galicia for all the latest tourist information.

Glossary of terms

Androlla: Traditional Galician sausage made with pork intestines, bones, ribs and minced meat marinated with pepper, garlic and bay leaves.

Cambrian: The first system and period of the Palaeozoic era on the geological time scale, preceding the Ordovician. It spans between 539 and 487 million years ago.

Castro: A fortified settlement from the Iron Age, this is the most characteristic and abundant type of habitat in Galicia's prehistory.

Cetaria: A traditional facility used to keep shellfish and crustaceans alive, built of stone and wood.

Devonian: Fourth system and period of the Palaeozoic era on the geological time scale, between approximately 419 and 360 million years ago. The Variscan orogeny began in its middle stage (approximately 400 million years ago).

Eclogite: Metamorphic rock formed under high pressure and high temperature in conditions typical of the Earth's mantle, composed mainly of garnet and omphacite (a calcium pyroxene rich in aluminium and sodium), very dense and resistant.

Fervenza: A natural waterfall or drop, where a river or stream falls abruptly, forming a visual and auditory spectacle characteristic of the Galician landscape. Literally meaning "boiling," due to the turbulent, foamy and roaring appearance of the water as it falls, as if boiling when it hits the rocks.

Fraga: A virgin Atlantic woodland with unique characteristics in Galicia, enclosed by mountains in isolated and difficult-to-reach locations.

Georoute: A guided itinerary designed by geologists to discover the geology, landscapes and nature of Cabo Ortegal.

Geosite: A place of international geological interest that represents the geological heritage of the Earth. Geosites are selected by the *Global Geosites* project, coordinated by the International Union of Geological Sciences and UNESCO.

Geopark: A clearly defined territory with a geological heritage of international importance, recognised as a UNESCO Global Geopark and

implementing a sustainable socio-economic development project. In order to be declared as such, it must have been the subject of advanced geological research published in a relevant international context. Geoparks have a Scientific Committee made up of specialists in all aspects of the Geopark, whose main role is to ensure the quality and correct practice of the scientific and educational activities for which it is responsible.

Glaciomarine deposit: A sedimentary sequence on the continental shelf containing stones of different types that were detached from large icebergs (*drop stones*) during their melting. The drop stones come from the neighbouring continent and were carried by the flow of the ice cap.

Gneiss: Metamorphic rock with alternating bands of light and dark minerals, formed by regional metamorphism at high pressure and temperature.

Granulite: Metamorphic rock that has undergone high temperatures during its metamorphism, giving it a granoblastic texture with crystallised minerals of appreciable size.

Greywacke: Type of sandstone with more than 15% fine matrix, composed of poorly sorted minerals and rock particles bound together by a clay matrix.

Greywacke flysch: Sedimentary formation composed of a stratified succession of deep marine sediments, with alternating layers of greywackes, clays and silts, originating from turbulent currents in active geological contexts such as the collision margins of tectonic plates or accretion prisms associated with subduction zones.

Irmadiña Revolt/ Irmandiños: Popular troops formed by farm workers and the sons of knights who rebelled against the lords of Galicia in the 15th century.

Lithosphere: The solid outer layer of the Earth, comprising the Earth's crust (both continental and oceanic) and the solid part of the upper mantle, varying in thickness between 50 and 100 km, fragmented into different tectonic plates.

Mélange: From the French *mélange* (mixture), this term refers to a highly deformed and heterogeneous rock unit formed by a chaotic

mixture of fragments of different origins, sizes and compositions. It usually appears in subduction contexts, where its matrix is typically serpentinite, and is known as 'serpentinite mélange.' They are traces of ancient subduction channels that separated two lithospheric plates.

Metamorphic: Rock formed by the modification of other pre-existing rocks inside the Earth through a process of heat and/or pressure called metamorphism.

Ophiolite: Association of lithologies representing a section of the lithosphere of an ocean: oceanic crust plus upper mantle. From bottom to top, typically: sedimentary rocks, volcanic rocks, diabase dikes, gabbros and peridotites. They are placed on the continents (obducted) during orogenies. They therefore indicate the existence of an ancient oceanic domain, which was closed during the approach and collision of the continental masses on its two sides.

Ordovician: Second period of the Palaeozoic era in the geological time scale, preceding the Silurian period. It spans between 485 and 443 million years ago.

Palaeocontinents: Areas of the continental crust that existed at some point in the Earth's geological past. The geology of Cabo de Ortegal has its origin in the collision of the paleocontinents of Laurasia and Gondwana, which preceded the Pangea supercontinent.

Peridotite: Ultramafic igneous rock formed in the Earth's mantle, composed of varying amounts of olivine, clinopyroxene and orthopyroxene. When found on the surface, as at Cabo Ortegal, it takes on reddish colours due to its high iron content. The planet's initial mantle settled about 4 billion years ago and has since been slowly flowing in large convective cells that move the lithospheric plates and create mid-ocean ridges.

Protolith: Original rock from which a metamorphic rock was formed through processes of pressure and temperature.

Pyroxenite: Plutonic igneous rock (formed by slow cooling at great depth), dark in colour, composed mainly of pyroxene.

Ramsar site: A wetland of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems, especially as a habitat for aquatic birds.

Recumbent fold: Also known as a lying fold, this is a fold whose axial plane dips less than

10°. If it originates from a syncline, the most recent strata will be at its core (recumbent syncline).

Raxo: A traditional dish from Galicia, made with finely chopped pork loin marinated in garlic, ground black pepper and olive oil.

SAC: Acronym for Special Area of Conservation; a protected area designated by the European Union within the Natura 2000 network, which seeks to conserve habitats and species of Community interest.

Serpentinite: Metamorphic rock formed by the hydrothermal alteration of peridotites with a greenish or bluish appearance and a smooth, silky surface. Its name refers to its texture, which resembles snakeskin. It contains around 10-12% water.

SGI: Acronym for Site of Geological Interest. SGIs are areas of scientific, educational or tourist interest which, due to their unique or representative nature, are necessary for the study and interpretation of the origin and evolution of planet Earth, including the processes that have shaped it, past climates and its paleobiological evolution.

SPA: Acronym for Special Protection Area for Birds, declared under a Council of Europe directive for the protection of habitats of special importance for the conservation of wild birds.

Subduction: A geological process associated with the convergence of tectonic plates, in which one plate sinks beneath the edge of another plate to great depths. This process is associated with the formation of Andes-type volcanic arcs in the overlying plate.

Toelo: Galician name for Moeche stone, a serpentinite traditionally used as a building and ornamental material.

Ultramafic: Igneous rock with very low silica and potassium content and high magnesium and iron content. Ultramafic rocks are the main component of the Earth's mantle. The term 'mafic' refers to the appearance of dark minerals. These rocks contain more than 90% dark minerals.

Variscan orogeny: A geological process that occurred approximately 350 million years ago, which led to the formation of the great Variscan mountain range in Europe.

Zorza: A traditional dish from Galicia, made with chopped pork marinated in garlic, paprika and salt. It was originally prepared on the day of the pig slaughter with chopped chorizo sausage.

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