



IMPORTANT NOTICE_

With the aim of promoting its tourism products, Turismo de Galicia carried out an open tender procedure (arm's length principle) aimed especially at travel agencies.

The itineraries included in this brochure are the outcome of the package holiday proposals created by the winning agency.

Mouthfuls of seaside experiences

In Galicia the sea outlines a unique landscape along its 1,200 kilometres of coastline. The beauty of its rias, or estuaries, together with its unique cultural heritage is linked to the fascinating world of the sea and fishing, and a rich gastronomy based on the delicacies that the ocean provides.

Seaside tourism provides visitors with once-in-a-lifetime experiences and a collection of intense sensations. We will be accompanying professional seamen on a fishing day and then cook our own catches; we will go up to one of the thousands of shellfish beds where the best mussels in the world are produced. We will discover how cockles, clams or razor clams are gathered on the beach, following the expert advice of women shellfish gatherers. We will witness the boldness of the barnacle gatherers as they risk their life defying the ferocity of the waves as they break on the rocks. We will participate in the bustle of an auction and get to know the special and animated auction system for the various products. We will stroll along beaches that are practically untouched. And we will taste fresh fish and seafood right by the port, while we feel and smell the sea breeze.

We offer you an exciting tourism experience: discover Galicia through its sea, enjoying the narrations of its protagonists.

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1 Preparing octopus in A Costa da Morte

In Carnota we will visit the largest raised stone granaries in Galicia and we will walk along one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. We will go on board a fishing boat to experience a day of sustainable sport fishing and we will learn how to prepare octopus.

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2 Days by the sea in A Toxa

We will decide whether to sign up for a trip on a traditional fishing vessel or to learn the art of shellfish gathering on the beach. We will taste the essence of seafood in O Grove and witness the bustle of its fish market.

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3 Seaside towns: Muros, Fisterra and Muxía

In Muros we will visit one of Spain's largest tidal windmills. In Fisterra we will visit Galicia's first fish auction prepared for tourists, and in Muxía we will see some of the last of the traditional conger-eel dryers that are still left in Europe.

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4 Barnacle gatherers for a day

In the heart of the Costa da Morte, in Muxía, we will take in scenes as fascinating as the audacity of the barnacle gatherers as they defy the fierceness of the sea. We will visit the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca and its famed rocks, known as the Abalar and Cadris rocks.

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5 Discovering the Rías Baixas - seaside towns

We will visit the towns of Pontevedra, Combarro, O Grove and Cambados to delve into their busy marine activity. We will even sail out to one of the largest shellfish banks in the world, among shellfish beds, where mussels, oysters and scallops are bred.

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Marine tourism

experiences



1
EXPERIENCE **Preparing octopus in A Costa da Morte**

days 1-2-3 | Carnota

2
EXPERIENCE **Days by the sea in A Toxa**

day 1 | Island of A Toxa
day 2 | Island of A Toxa – O Grove
day 3 | Island of A Toxa – O Grove

3
EXPERIENCE **Seaside towns: Muros, Fisterra and Muxía**

day 1 | Muros – Dumbria – Fisterra – Muxía

4
EXPERIENCE **Barnacle gatherers for day**

day 1 | Muxía
day 2 | Muxía
day 3 | Fisterra

5
EXPERIENCE **Discovering the Rías Baixas – Seaside towns**

day 1 | Pontevedra – Combarro – O Grove – Cambados

Preparing octopus in A Costa da Morte

The sea of Lira in the bay of Corcubión could be considered to be the boundary between the Rías Baixas and the Costa da Morte. The coastline known as the Costa da Morte represents the beginning of the Rías Altas from the south. Its spectacular beauty consists of vertiginous cliffs, wild beaches with fine white sand, dunes and marshes. Long ago, the polar and subtropical sea currents created a special habitat here that today is a Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest. It is a sanctuary for octopus husbandry and breeding. Therefore, our proposal consists of a getaway to enjoy this delicacy in all its splendour, fishing it, cooking it, tasting it while experiencing the sea just like a local.



> Beach of Carnota



START_ Carnota
END_ Carnota
DAYS_ 3

FURTHER INFORMATION_

- Pepe do Cuco's cabin_ **981 761 252**
- Open all year, from 10:00-14:00 and from 17:00-19:00 h
- Sea of Lira_ www.mardelira.net



1 EXPERIENCE

- day 1 | Carnota
- 1_ Parish of Lira
 - 2_ Raised stone granary of Carnota
 - 3_ Carnota town centre
 - 4_ Raised stone granary of Lira
- day 2 | Carnota
- 5_ Port of Lira (Portocubelo)
 - 6_ Sea of Lira (Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest Os Miñarzos)
 - 7_ Beach of Carnota
 - 8_ Marshes of Boca do Río
 - 1_ Lira (culinary workshop)
- day 3 | Lira (Carnota)
- 9_ Portocubelo
 - 10_ Pepe do Cuco's cabin
 - 11_ Fish market
 - 12_ Ancient sardine salt-curing factory

| day 1 |

Lira and Carnota compete for boasting Galicia's largest stone granary

We arrive in Lira, in the municipality of Carnota, in the afternoon. We recommend choosing a country guesthouse with a home-cooked meals service, where all the products that arrive at the port are exquisitely prepared.

The raised stone granary of Carnota is 34,76 metres long and it stands on 22 pairs of pillars



> Stone granary of Carnota

Before dinner we suggest a walk through this quiet village. One of its most characteristic features is its “Fisterra-style” granary, with a rectangular granite body and narrow slits chiselled all along its structure. Two granaries compete for size and monumentality: the stone granary of Carnota and the stone granary of Lira. The **stone granary of Carnota** is a National Monument and, officially, is Galicia’s largest. It is 34.76 meters long and stands on 22 pairs of feet. In addition it constitutes a unique architectural ensemble, together with the **church of Santa Comba**, the rectory and dovecote.

In less than five minutes by car we reach the town centre of Carnota, following the AC-550, until we arrive at its main square, where we can park. From here it is easy to reach the **stone granary of Lira**, whose neighbours claim is longer by some centimetres than the granary of Carnota. From Minortos street, along the urban stretch of the AC-550, with the sea to our left, a turn-off to the right signals the way toward the **church of Lira**, an impressive rural building.

Back at our lodgings, we recommend not choosing octopus for dinner. Leave it for the following day, for it will be one of the stars of our voyage in the sea of Lira.



> Lira stone granary and pigeon coop



> Port of Lira

| day 2 |

A fishing day in the sea of Lira

We will have to get up quite early to take good advantage of this day of sport and sustainable fishing that we propose at the **Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest Os Minarzos**. After a hearty breakfast with natural and home-made products that are served here, we head to the port of Lira, **Portocubelo**, just a short walk down from the town.

You will be surprised to see the port so quiet, dotted with small fishing boats nodding lightly on the crystal clear waters by the beach. In fact, the port was always “bare” until the heroic intervention of its inhabitants, who in 1966 rescued 166 shipwreck victims from the Frigate Ariete. They saved them from the water and lodged them in their homes. This earned Carnota’s town hall the nickname of “very humanitarian”. In appreciation, the first breakwater was built at this port.

In 1966 the people of Carnota rescued 166 shipwreck victims from the Frigate Ariete and lodged them in their homes

The village’s fishermen introduce us to sustainable sport fishing

At around 9:30 am we go on board the fishing boat belonging to one of the town’s fishermen. It is usually the fisherman known as *Pepe da Cacha* who guides visitors on a day of sustainable sport fishing. This sea-hardened sailor will initiate novices in the art of fishing, from how to assemble the cane or pull the thread through, to placing the bait. Enthusiasts will acquire new skills typically used by these sailors.

Bream, varieties of wrasse and flatfish are some of the species that we can fish, always strictly respecting sizes, closed seasons and catch limits, because this is also a special protection area. We will also have the opportunity to practice catch and release fishing. The day provides all the ingredients so that, while we enjoy sport fishing, we also take care of the marine environment, contributing to the preservation of its fishery resources. Taking warm clothing along is always a good idea on this coast.



> Portocubelo

We eat what we have caught

At lunchtime we will provide the means for you to eat what you have caught. You can arrange with the skipper to cook on board, or else at a seaside tavern or eatery in the area. They will cook your catch in the traditional way, in a delicious stew (*caldeirada*), grilled, or accompanied by delicious sauces. You can even enter the kitchen and participate so that you can acquire the different culinary skills that these fresh sea products deserve.

A walk along Carnota, one of the most beautiful beaches in the world

For dessert nothing beats walking barefoot on the fine white sand of the beach of Carnota, one of the most beautiful beaches in Galicia and even in the world, according to the prestigious German publication *Traumstrände*. This seven-kilometre long crescent constitutes a unique set of dunes and marshes with an interior lagoon that shelters a variety of interesting species of plants and animals.

We recommend starting off at the very heart of the beach, where the mouth of the **river Valdebois** offers a marvellous spectacle in the area known as **Boca do Río**. Birdwatchers must know that this is a shelter for many migratory species and one of the few places in Galicia where the Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) nests.



> Beach of Carnota

We learn to cook octopus by attending a culinary workshop

With this image still in our mind's eye we return to Lira to devote ourselves to the king of local products, the octopus, that in this sea finds an excellent habitat for breeding. We propose participating in a culinary workshop organized by a local restaurant and hostel. In addition to helping us achieve the exact cooking point, we will learn other ways of preparing this cephalopod. Grilled, with clams or in *pâté* are just some of the endless possibilities for preparing octopus. The workshop is rounded off with the preparation of homemade desserts.

When we are ready to eat, the ideal place is the restaurant's terrace. Open to the sea of Lira, it provides a breathtaking view of the beach of Portocubelos. In summer, looking closely, we can see the long sandy shape of the beach of Carnota.



> Lira fish market



| day 3 |

We visit a museum that used to be an old fisherman's house

On our last morning we return to Portocubelo to visit the characteristic cabin known as **Caseta de Pepe do Cuco**. This used to be an old fisherman's house that was restored and converted into a museum. It is a picturesque place that offers the best interpretation of the villa's marine life. We find typical wooden boats and gear, such as ancient gillnets for sardine fishing and traps to catch octopus that were traditionally used by fishermen.

Two women shellfish gatherers will be our guides

The museum houses Galicia's only *cascaeiro* that can be visited. It is a facility where formerly the gillnets were tanned by soaking them in a solution made from pine husks to prevent them from rotting at sea. Another major attraction is the company offered by two women shellfish gatherers from the village, from a family with a long tradition in the trade. They are the perfect hostesses, for in addition to their great knowledge of their craft, their special way of narrating makes the visit even more attractive.

The tour includes a visit to the **fish market** (*lonja*) and to an old sardine salt-curing factory, today abandoned. We conclude the visit at the port's tavern, tasting a succulent *tapa* (appetizer) accompanied by tales told by the local fishermen.



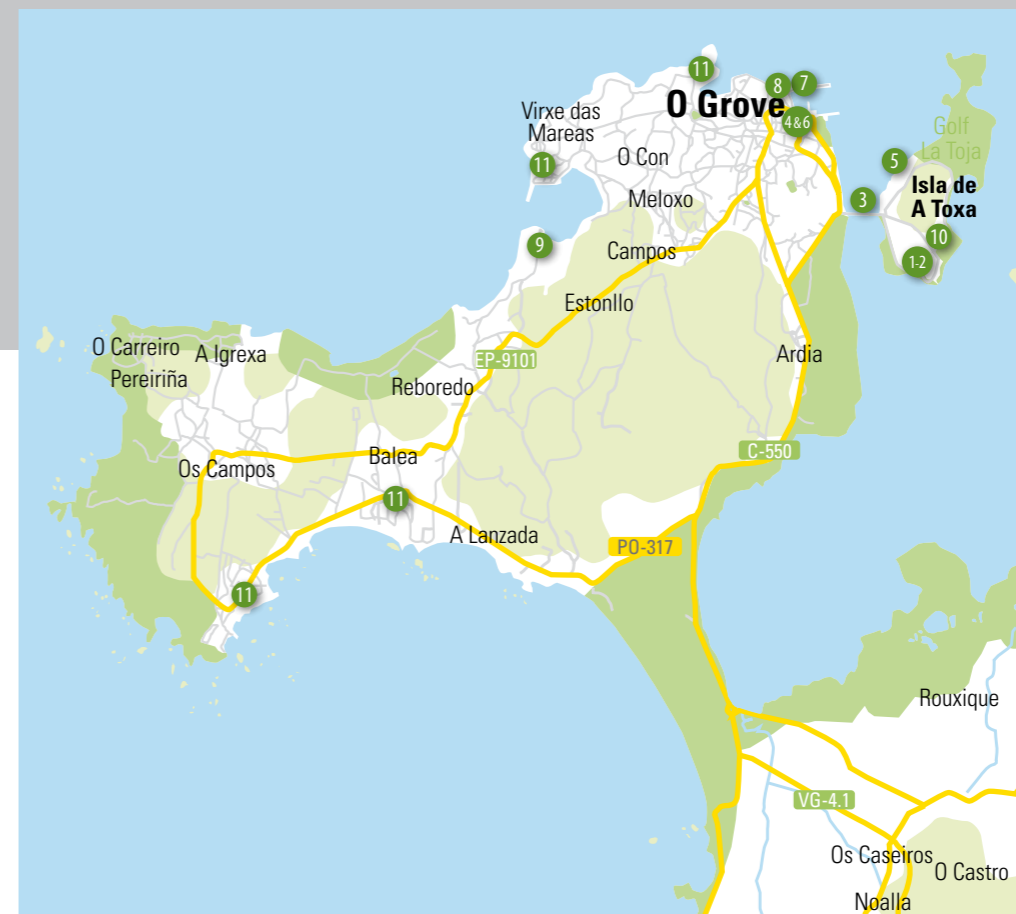
> Carnota

Seaside days in A Toxa

The island of A Toxa brings together luxury, the essence of the mineral-medicinal waters and the richness of the sea. It is located in the Ria of Arousa, a shellfish gathering power. Therefore, here is a plan to learn the keys that give the shellfish and seafood from this ria their fame. We will do so right by shellfish beds, spending a day fishing or shell-fishing, under the guidance of those with the best knowledge of these activities. And to wrap up the day, a relaxing marine and thermal session.



> A Toxa



EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Island of A Toxa
- 1_ Thermae, thalassotherapy and spas
 - 2_ Stroll along the island of A Toxa
- day 2 |
A Toxa
- 3_ Bridge of A Toxa
 - 0 Grove
 - 4_ Port
 - A Toxa
 - 5_ Beaches of A Toxa
 - 0 Grove
 - 4_ Port
 - 6_ Monument to the family of shellfish gatherers
 - 7_ Breakwater
 - 8_ Fish market
 - 9_ Punta Moreiras aquarium
- day 3 |
Island of A Toxa
- 10_ Chapel of As Conchas (The Shells)
 - 0 Grove
 - 11_ Shellfish farms

START_ Isla de A Toxa
END_ O Grove
DAYS_ 3

FURTHER INFORMATION_

- Hotel Balneario Hesperia Isla de La Toja. Tel_ **986 730 050**
- Gran Hotel La Toja_ www.granhotellatoja.com
- Talaso Hotel Louxo La Toja_ www.louxolatoja.com

- Aquarium of O Grove_ www.acuariodeogrove.wordpress.com



| day 1 |

Relaxing session at thermae, thalassotherapy centres or spas

We arrive at the hotel in the early afternoon. The quality of the island's hotel offer is extraordinary. It has thermae, thalassotherapy centres and spas. The Nobel Laureate Santiago Ramon y Cajal recommended these waters to fight rheumatic, respiratory, skin and nervous system disorders, among others.

It will be very relaxing to spend what is left of evening at the hotel, in its spa and thermal leisure areas, having bubble and jet baths, or signing up for a thalassotherapy treatment. There are treatments as suggestive as those that combine the properties of sea water with those of Albariño wine.



> Bridge of the island of A Toxa



The spectacle of watching a beautiful sunset in A Toxa

We recommend going for a short walk around the island before dinner. Its large **pine grove**, in the centre, the paths that run parallel to the urbanizations or even the seashore are enticing. And, if possible, don't miss the wonderful spectacle of watching the sunset in A Toxa. Back in the hotel for dinner we will find that the restaurant offers an essential cuisine, that handles the extraordinary products from these rias, the fish and seafood, with the maximum respect.

| day 2 |

We go out to sea on board a traditional fishing boat

We recommend rising early to go on board a traditional fishing boat. As sailors, under the orders of the skipper, we will spend a day of inshore fishing or shellfish gathering at sea. In both cases, the boats leave from the **port of O Grove**, a few minutes away from the island, crossing the **bridge of A Toxa**, from where we can see the pontoons after taking a right turn.

Sheathed in boots and wearing water-proof garments provided by the crew, the skipper gives us the relevant safety guidelines, explains the route that will be followed and reports on the state of the sea and the expected weather conditions before casting off. On board we become familiar with the rudder, the bridge, the engine and the main parts of the boat, while at the same time we are given indications regarding the sailing route.



> Shellfish gatherer

The sailors tell us a myriad of stories

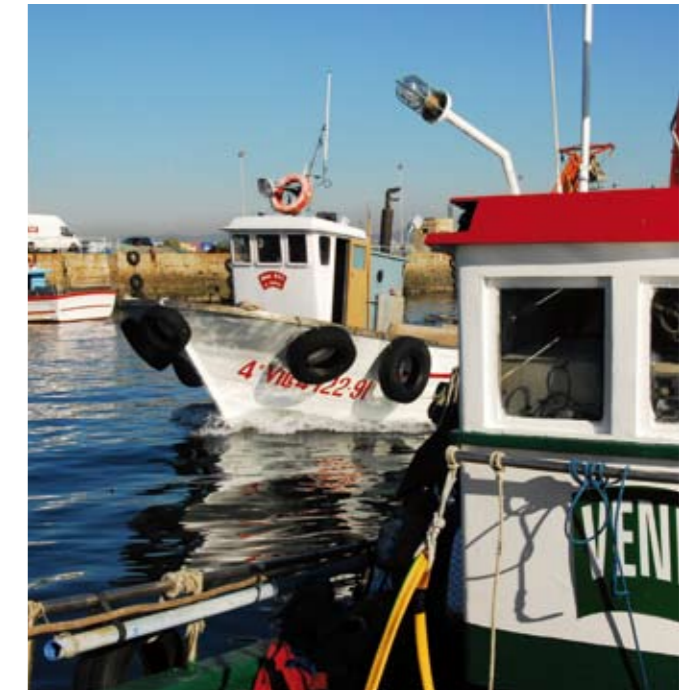
Shellfish gathering at sea is carried out in the authorised natural banks of the bay of O Grove. While you fish you will become aware of the depth, the type of sea bottom and the molluscs that you will be gathering using the gear that the fishermen will help you to distinguish. Tune your ear to listen to the thousand-and-one stories that every good sailor has to tell. This profession combines the harshness of the work with moments of leisure on board.

In the case of the **inshore fishing** we will experience first hand how the gear and tackle is prepared, as well as their draught and hoisting. And we will even learn which part of the day is the best to capture the different species.

O Grove has been hosting the "Festa do Marisco" (Seafood Festival) in October, since 1963

A shellfish gathering lesson in A Toxa and lunch at the port of O Grove

There are also other seaside alternatives to spend the morning without leaving the island of A Toxa. If the tide is low we can sign up for a short shellfish gathering workshop and spend a typical day like a shellfish gatherer. Under the guidance of women shellfish gatherers we will go on a three-hour route during which we will learn how to extract clams and cockles on the beach, the techniques to recognize which bivalves are buried in the sand and know how distinguish them. Other species will also turn up, such as algae, worms or snails.



> Shellfish beds

At lunchtime we will give in to the local product, accompanied by Albariño wine. Opposite the port of O Grove there are a good number of seafood restaurants. If our visit takes place in October we can attend the "Festa do Marisco" (Seafood Festival). Here the product is not only tasted "naturally" cooked, but also in *empanadas*, seafood cocktails, croquettes and prepared using innovative culinary processes. In the port area stands the **monument to the family of shellfish gatherers**, a beautiful representation in granite by the sculptor Alfonso Vilar.

After lunch, a stroll along the **Breakwater** provides lovely breaths of seaside air. While we stretch our legs we can marvel at the ria's outline.

The bustle of the Fish Market

The afternoon is the busiest time at O Grove's fish market. We can visit it accompanied by the shellfish gatherers or by the boat's skipper, if we have participated in these activities in the morning, or else by hiring specialized guides. It is always a lively experience, especially during the auction, which is rich in smells and sounds, because when the bids are not electronic they are spoken out loud. We will receive a real-time explanation of the processes of reception, weighing, labelling and selection of seafood and fish.



> Aquarium of O Grove



> Typical necklaces from A Toxa

A visit to the aquarium of Punta Moreiras

But if we prefer a quieter afternoon with the calm and global view of different Rías Baixas marine ecosystems, the aquarium of Punta Moreiras is the best showcase on dry land. We exit O Grove to take the PO-9101 and three kilometres later, a sign indicates the detour that we must take. It is only a fifteen-minute car ride.

The aquarium houses the molluscs, crustaceans and fish that live in this habitat. Trying to distinguish sea bass, gilt-head bream, bream, Atlantic redfish, flatfish or dogfish in movement can be harder than you think. The aquarium also welcomes guests from tropical ecosystems. Their water community is a live system, under continuous change. One day we are able spot the lionfish or the bamboo shark and another day we can see the windings of the Zebra moray. And we will be amazed watching the bull shark, the largest shark in the aquarium, as it feeds.

The illustrative exhibits make this aquarium a genuine interpretation centre of the water habitats of the Rías Baixas. Models of vessels or to-scale reproductions of seaside houses, highlight the peculiarities of the territory. To round off the visit we can have a drink on its terrace, overlooking the sea. We can then head back to the hotel or grab dinner in the area.



> A Toxa and O Grove

| day 3 |

At the shellfish farms they prepare take away seafood

After breakfast and before leaving the island you can visit the most characteristic marine site on the island of A Toxa, the Chapel of San Caralampio or **Chapel of the Shells**, known as such because its entire facade is covered with scallop shells.

On the way back, stopping again at O Grove is a must. The town is like Galicia's huge seafood warehouse. Do not miss going up to one of its many shellfish farms, where it is kept alive in water from the ria, so that these select crustaceans, such as spider crabs, velvet crabs or shrimp reach the table perfectly fresh. In some restaurants they prepare it for take away, in the desired amount, packed in boxes that make its transportation easy and hygienic and that maintains the product's ideal conditions to be enjoyed at its point of destination. We can purchase it for ourselves or to surprise someone with a gift, for we can also ask for it to be carefully gift-wrapped.

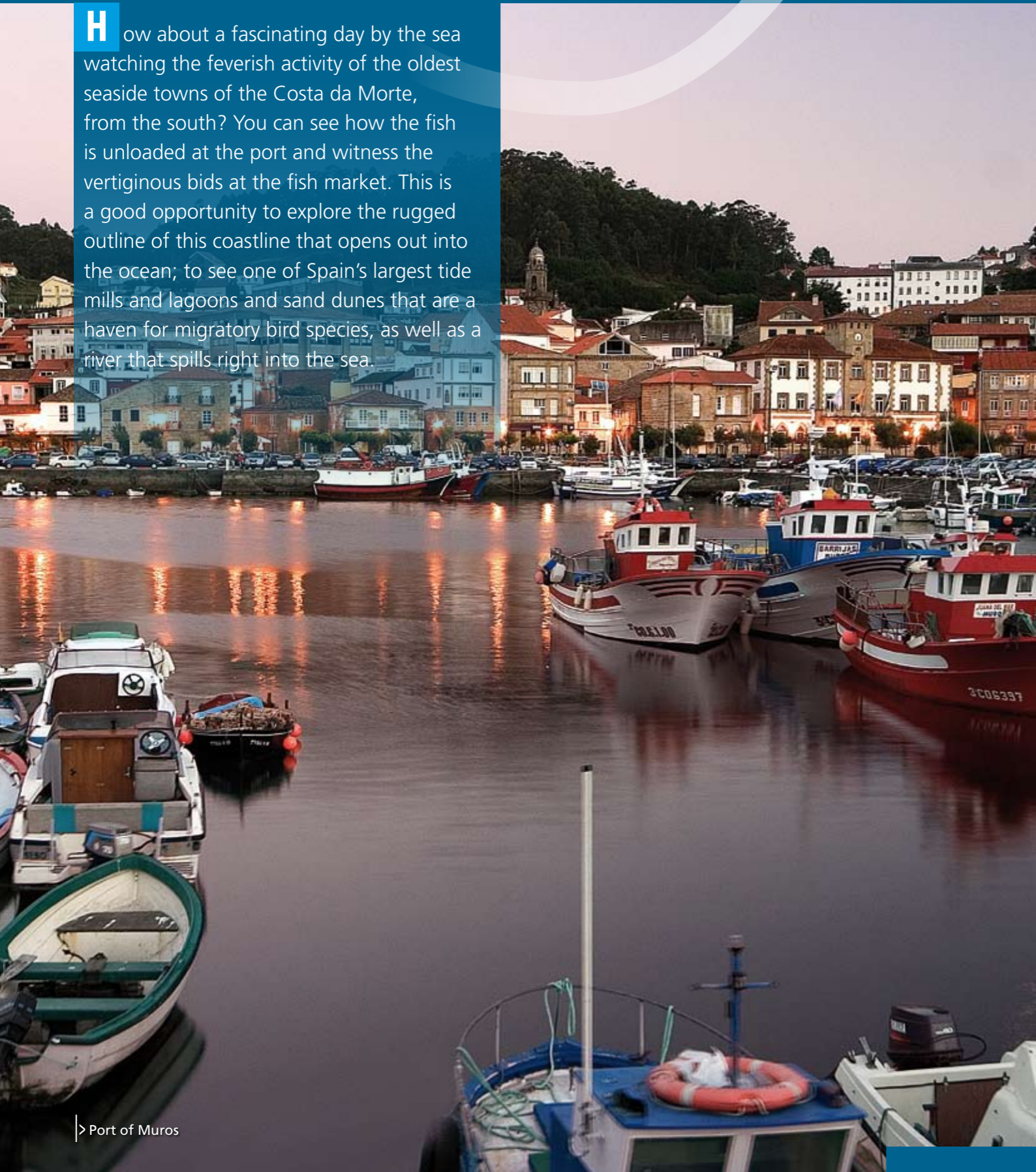


> Chapel of As Conchas

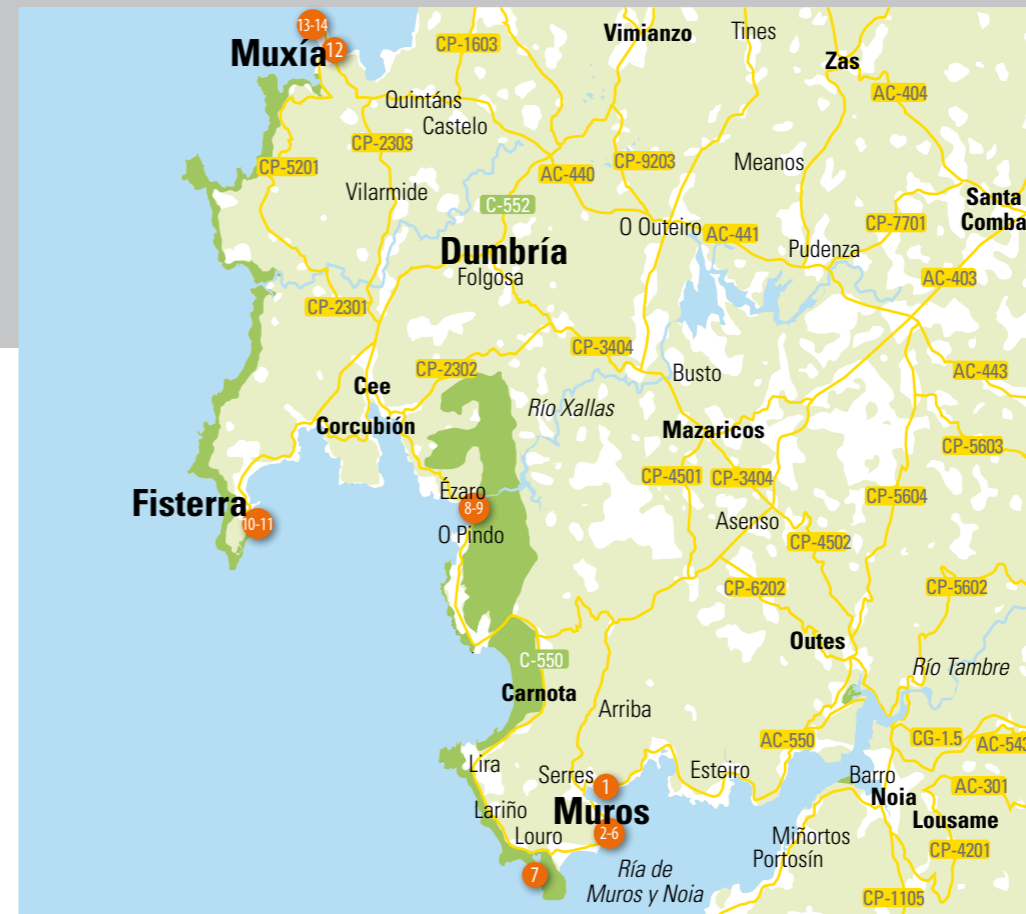


Seaside towns: Muros, Fisterra and Muxía

How about a fascinating day by the sea watching the feverish activity of the oldest seaside towns of the Costa da Morte, from the south? You can see how the fish is unloaded at the port and witness the vertiginous bids at the fish market. This is a good opportunity to explore the rugged outline of this coastline that opens out into the ocean; to see one of Spain's largest tide mills and lagoons and sand dunes that are a haven for migratory bird species, as well as a river that spills right into the sea.



> Port of Muros



EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Muros
- 1_ Tide mill of Pozo do Cachón
 - 2_ Seafront boulevard
 - 3_ Port
 - 4_ Fish market
 - 5_ Old quarter
 - 6_ Pescadería Vella - square
 - 7_ Beach of Area Maior
- Dumbría
- 8_ Parish of Ézaro
 - 9_ Waterfall of O Ézaro
- Fisterra
- 10_ Port
 - 11_ Fish market
- Muxía
- 12_ Traditional conger eel dryers
 - 13_ Sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca
 - 14_ Abalar and Cadrís rocks

START_ Muros
END_ Muxía
DAYS_ 1

FURTHER INFORMATION_
→ Tide mill of Pozo do Cachón (Muros). Tel_ 981 826 050



> Tide mill of Pozo do Cachón. Muros

| day 1 | MUROS

Muros, where the Rías Baixas end, is one of Galicia's most beautiful seaside towns. Its municipality can be accessed through the AC-550, which circles the coast, or through the AC-400, which comes from the interior.

We visit one of Spain's largest tide mills

At the entrance to the municipal capital, by AC-550, we stop at the parish of **Serres** to visit **Pozo do Cachón**. We are going to enter one of Spain's largest tide mills. Since the middle of the 19th century it was still active until just a few years ago. At the time it even hosted a sort of thalassotherapy centre, known as the Baths of Santa Rita, and specialized in curing rheumatic diseases using warm algae and sea water baths.



More than 150 boats make up the coastal fleet of the port of Muros

At the port we watch how octopus, blue whiting and crayfish are unloaded

The AC-550 will also lead us, following the coastline, to the centre of the town of Muros and its port, both must-sees. We suggest parking in advance and strolling to the docks from the gardens of the seafront promenade. In this way we can enjoy the view of the calm sea on our left, flanked by the mounts of Costina and Ribeiriño, which also shelter the port. And, to the right, the white glass galleries of buildings that house stores under their porches and terraces are a delight. These are the same porches that long ago used to shelter the seamen when they repaired their fishing gear and the *pescantinas* who used to wash and dry the fish.

We arrive at the area of greatest activity, especially if it is a fair or market day, because long rows of stalls selling all kinds of products are set up here. Soon we reach Muros' beautiful dock, where the smaller boats moor. They are part of a fleet of more than 150 vessels, mostly inshore fishing boats. The other boats share space in the two following docks.

There is movement in the whole area, and it gets busier when it is time to unload the fish, especially the species typical of dragnets fishing, such as octopus, blue whiting or crayfish. The fish market will also be busy, for here not only do they market the catches that arrive at the port of Muros, but also at the ports of Lira and O Pindo.



A tour of the old quarter

Part of another day's run would be to explore the beautiful old quarter of Muros, which was declared Historic-artistic Site back in 1970, and with good reason. The special marine features of all the streets that run perpendicular to the port, which harmoniously embraces the enormity of the gothic-style palaces and temples, earned it this recognition. We propose visiting **Praza da Pescadería Vella**, the square that is one of the town's most singular landmarks. Today it has been converted into a leisure area where one can go wine-drinking and tapas-dining at its many taverns and bars, located beneath its archways.

A unique phenomenon in Europe, a river that spills right into the sea

And we continue our journey, still on the AC-550, practically by the edge of the sea. We soon reach the **beach of San Francisco** and **mount Louro**, with its two granite peaks, which is the closure of the ria of Muros and Noia. Further on we find the **lagoon of As Xarfas**, trapped by a white tongue of sand, the **beach of Area Maior**. Keep your eyes open and your camera ready to capture the image of the herons that flock to this dune ecosystem, also attracted by the abundance of reptiles and amphibians.

As we pass, we notice the changing landscape. We will become aware that we are in the Costa da Morte because the rias become narrow and open out to the sea. Along the way we cross small fishing villages that dot the edges of the region of Barbanza, such as **Lira**, **Caldebarcos** and **O Pindo**, until we reach **Ézaro**.

We can stop at Ézaro to marvel at the spectacle of the **river Xallas spilling into the sea**. The turn-off to the lookout point is well indicated from the road. We drive to the power station building and park and from there take the wooden walkway that hangs above the rocks, right by the side of the mountain, and that leads directly to the view of a phenomenon like no other in Europe, that no doubt will astound you.

FISTERRA

Next we head to Fisterra, the *finis terrae*, for the ancient Romans, who wanted to peer at the end of the world, captivated by its geographical uniqueness, the western-most point known to them. We will be delighted by its genuinely marine attraction, that can be seen in the strength of its fish market and port, which is where we are heading. From here we can interpret that the ancient core of the village grew in the shape of an amphitheatre above it. This is why its buildings with white galleries overlooking the sea seem to rise, assisted by slopes and stairs.



The Fisterra fish market is Galicia's first to be fitted out to receive tourist visits while its bustling activity takes place

At lunchtime, sea bream, octopus or razor clams

Before going on a detailed exploration of the town, we suggest having lunch at any of the barbecue restaurants or taverns at the port. Here the full menus that include fresh and season seafood and fish are displayed. We can enjoy a grilled sea bass right by the beach, grilled Octopus or razor clams – that here are known as *longueirons* – prepared griddled. Whether it be in the traditional or signature style, the kitchens always prepare fresh local products.

After lunch we suggest taking a calm stroll along the **port**, that at this hour is a continuous arrival of long liners, creel or net fishing vessels that return with their catches. We can observe the agility of the seamen as they climb the stairs from the beach carrying boxes loaded with fish. And then we can accompany them to the fish market for the auction.

The Fisterra **fish market**, in addition to being a large, modern glass and aluminium building, is the first in Galicia equipped to receive tourist visits. This grants us a privileged and global view of its lively bids. We recommend that you tune your ears well to hear the prices, sung at blistering speed.

"Veño da Virxe da Barca,
da Virxe da Barca veño,
veño de abalar a pedra,
de abalar a pedra veño".

*I come from Our Lady of the Boat,
from our Lady of the Boat I come.
I come from balancing the rock,
from balancing the rock I come.*

Popular Galician song

MUXÍA

Europe's last traditional conger eel dryers

We now head towards Muxía, to discover a century-old tradition: the last of the traditional conger eel dryers left in Europe. To get there we need to stay as close as possible to the coast, taking the AC-445 and then the AC-2301. Since the 15th century this method was used to treat this delicacy that ended up being the standard of Calatayud's cuisine, where it continues to be exported. The reason was the special trading relationship between the two towns that date back to that period. The people of Calatayud provided fishermen with the hemp ropes they needed to moor their boats and that they paid for with dry conger eel.

The appearance of the conger eel dryers will impress us. They are structures made from criss-crossed logs, resembling cages, and known as *cabrias* (derricks). The fish, previously cleaned and pierced so that the sun and wind from the Atlantic can dry it, is hung or spread out on the structures.



The sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca (Our Lady of the Boat)

The conger eel dryers are in the same area as the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca, that stands on large rocks, making it easier for us to visit this magical place, that thousands of pilgrims flock to. Following the tradition we must go down to the Abalar rock, a megalith measuring 9 meters in length that rocked when people stood on it, and the Cadris rock (that gets its name because of its kidney shape). There is a famous legend that says this rock cures rheumatic ailments if you pass under it nine times.

After the visit, we recommend any of the seafood restaurants or eateries located in the port area or town centre. A corn meal pie (empanada) filled with conger eel or a dish of stewed conger eel are excellent options.

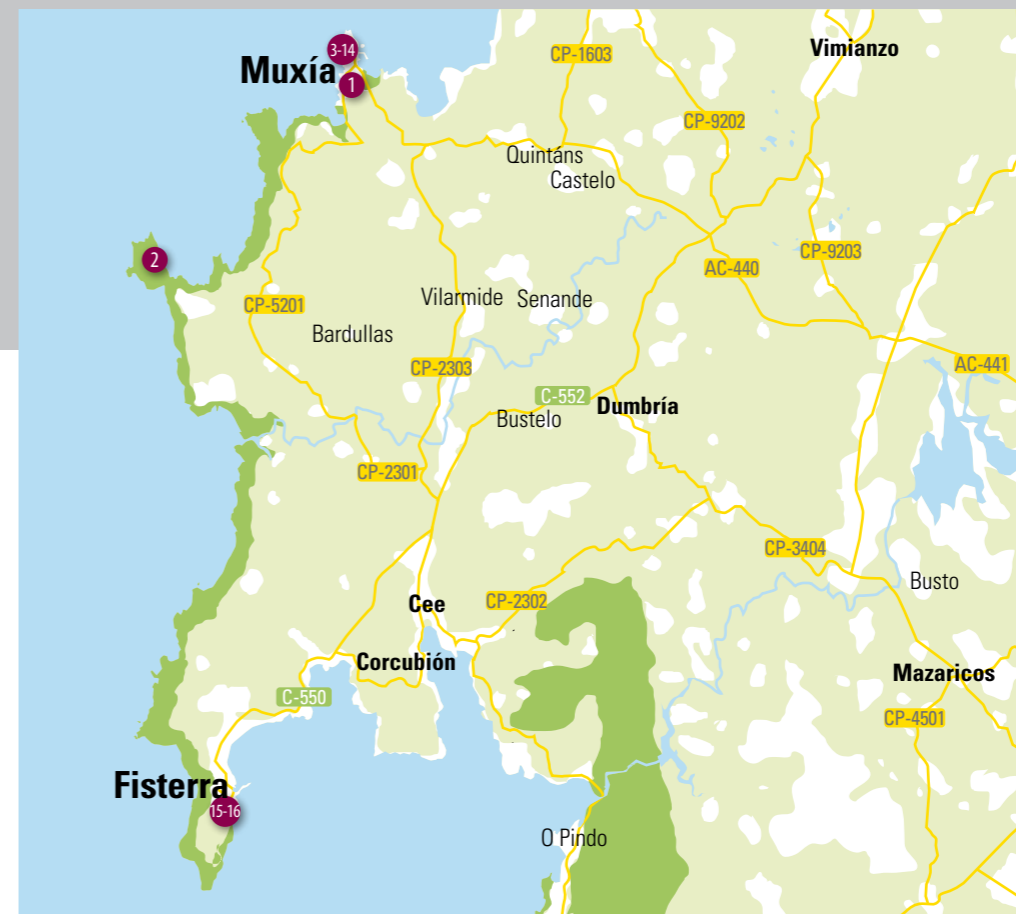


Barnacle gatherers for a day

This proposal is meant to take you right into the most marine character of Muxía, in the heart of the Costa da Morte. Here we can witness experiences to the limit, like the workday of a *percebeiro*, or barnacle gatherer, defying the sea between the rocks. We will also be amazed by the conger eel dryers, whose handcraft technique has survived virtually untouched. And we will arrive at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Boat, located on the rocks just a few meters from the ocean.



> Cape Touriñán



4 EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Muxía
- 1_ Town of Muxía
 - 2_ Cape Touriñán
- day 2 |
Muxía
- 3_ Punta da Barca
 - 4_ Fish market
 - 5_ Lookout point of A Cruz
 - 6_ Pier of don Manolo
 - 7_ Praza da Constitución - square
 - 8_ Church of Santa María
 - 9_ Sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca (Our Lady of the Boat)
 - 10_ Abalar and Cadrís rocks
 - 11_ Sculpture of A Ferida (the wound)
 - 12_ Lookout point of Monte Corpiño
 - 13_ Conger eel dryer of A Pedriña
 - 14_ Praza do Coído - square
- day 3 |
Fisterra
- 15_ Port
 - 16_ Fish market

START_ Muxía
END_ Fisterra
DAYS_ 3

FURTHER INFORMATION_
→ Muxía Fish Market. Tel_ **981 742 039**
→ Fisterra Fish Market. Tel_ **981 740 030**



| day 1 |

Sunset at Cape Touriñán

We suggest arriving in Muxía in the early afternoon. The area offers a wide range of charming accommodation. Some of the accommodation is in restored buildings with many years of history and bear an official badge of quality. Any choice is good if what we are looking for is friendly treatment in a rustic atmosphere and that offers a cuisine based on the fish and seafood that arrives at the port, prepared in the traditional style.

When you have settled in, we invite you to contemplate the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Touriñán. The plan is to watch the last ray of sunlight falling on continental Spain disappear at its western-most point. The car drive from Muxía takes less than a quarter of an hour, following the road signs along the coast.



> Barnacles



> Percebeiros (barnacle gatherers)

From the lighthouse we watch the Sun as it dies in the sea

Cape Touriñan juts into the sea for a distance of more than one kilometre, that we propose exploring on foot. You will enjoy an environment that has hardly been altered by man's intervention and where it is common to see wild horses grazing freely. At the end of the path we reach the lighthouse, where we can look over this untamed balcony facing the sea.

When the sky begins to change colour into different shades of red it is time to get your camera ready: be prepared to capture the moment and the place where the sun dives into the sea. And we will understand why many interpret that the place name "Costa da Morte" comes from the sunset, the death of the sun. Full of the feeling of enjoying nature at its purest, we return to our lodging to enjoy dinner.



> Fish market auction

| day 2 |

We accompany a barnacle gatherer on a day of work

Today we propose spending a day out at sea with a *percebeiro*, or barnacle gatherer, one of the sea trades that requires the most courage. We will enjoy the experience in a perfectly safe manner. Instead of going on board to reach cliffs that are inaccessible by land, we will watch the professionals carry out their work from strategic locations that they will find for us, without running any risks.

The best area for gathering barnacles on the peninsula of Muxía is at the point known as **Punta da Barca**, between the lighthouse and the sanctuary. The hour at which the gatherers begin their work varies from one day to another, because it depends on the tides, which they check on a daily basis on the time charts. Watching the sea before going out is vital for these bold professionals. We will accompany them to the

lookout point and will learn to interpret the sea and the wind, to know at what intensity it blows and how the waves break among the rocks so that they can tackle and dodge them.

We will become familiar with their gear, a mixture of scuba diver and mountaineer, and the tools they use. And we will also see how in addition to their wetsuit, their ropes, their harnesses and their scrapers, they rely primarily on their great skill and expertise to perform perfectly calculated jumps, quick climbs, descents and immersions. And we will be at their side when they clean the product by the rocks before they take it to the **fish market**. After the experience we will be able to understand why this delicacy, whose flavour is like a mouthful of sea, is one of the most expensive.



> Lighthouse at Cape Touriñan

The route of Europe's unique conger eel dryers

In Muxía there are countless eateries and seafood restaurants. We can find them in the port area, or in the centre of the town. Conger eel prepared in a stew, in a corn meal pie (*empanada*), in a fish stew (*caldeirada*) or griddled is always a good option, for we will spend part of the day on the "route of the conger eel dryers".

This is a traditional and century-old method of drying fish. Perhaps Muxía is the only European town that can still boast these structures, which consist of a series of interlocking logs, called *cabrias* (derricks) on which the open conger eel is hung or spread out after having been cleaned and pierced all over. It looks quite unusual and it can even evoke the tattered sails of a wrecked ship.

They can be seen on the way to up to the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca, but we suggest visiting them while stopping at Muxía's most outstanding places. The route is an easy one to walk. We begin at the **Mirador da Cruz** (lookout point) and arrive at the **pier of don Manolo**, a small dock where a canon is used as a *noray* (a type of boat mooring made from iron).

We pass by the town Council building, continue along Marina street and walk up a small hill to the square known as **Praza da Constitución**. We are in the old city centre, where we can see the traditional houses that have been restored. Further on is the library, the Pilgrim's Office and the Gonzalo Lopez Abente Foundation. On the way to the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca we can stop before the facade of the **church of Santa María**, of gothic-marine style.

The conger eel dryers can evoke the tattered sails of a wrecked ship



> Conger eel dryer

From the promenade that borders the sea and to the right we see the first conger eel dryers. We can also enjoy the excellent panoramic views of the ria of Camariñas and Cape Vilán. And the spectacular surroundings of the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca, that are visited every year in September by thousands of pilgrims. Across from it we must look for the mythical **Pedra de Abalar** (balancing) and **Pedra dos Cadris** (kidney) rocks, which, according to the Christian legend are identified with Christian parts of the ship that brought the Virgin Mary to this place to encourage the Apostle Saint James in his preaching through Galicia. Nearby we can see a huge rock with a slit across it. It is the sculpture **A Ferida** (the wound) in memory of the tragedy of the *Prestige*.

We walk up to the **lookout point of Monte Corpiño**. In addition to its beautiful views, the old stone fences that surround the vegetable gardens are impressive. From Matadero street we walk to the other conger eel dryer that is preserved in Muxía, the dryer of **A Pedriña**, the only one left in the western part of the town, and that still works using the whole artisanal process. It has a storehouse, a building where the fish is treated before it is hung on the structures and then, once it has dried, it is packed in sacks to be exported. We finish by **Praza do Coído**, the square that is considered the ground zero of the catastrophe of the *Prestige*, and where a **monument to the volunteers** stands.



> Sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca (Our Lady of the Boat)

| day 3 |

In Fisterra we witness its busy marine activity

After breakfast we encourage you to continue along the Costa da Morte towards the south, all the way to Fisterra, to compare its non-stop marine activity with Muxía's more relaxed activity. In three quarters of an hour we get to the town, taking roads AC-2301 and AC-445. At its port we run into sailors coming and going from fishing at sea, mending their nets or auctioning the fish in the **fish market**. The Fisterra fish market is Galicia's first to be equipped to receive tourists thanks to the installation of a platform from where the various activities can be observed without interfering with the auction activity.

Every year in September thousands of pilgrims visit the sanctuary of A Virxe da Barca



Discovering the Rias Baixas - seaside towns

Along the Galician coast the sea enters straight into the lives of its people, who meet at the beach, on the cliffs, in the port or at the fish market. They let it enter their houses, their churches, their streets and they even let it reach their tables. To become aware of this, how about spending a whole day following the salty trail of the Atlantic through the cities, towns and fishing villages of the Rías Baixas? We will travel along one of the most winding coastal outlines that you have ever seen. And we will stop to admire the powerful fishermen's guild of Pontevedra, the unique marine character of Combarro and the seafood strength of O Grove and Cambados.



> Pontevedra



START_ Pontevedra
END_ Cambados
DAYS_ 1

FURTHER INFORMATION_
→ Port of O Grove. Tel_ **986 730 300**
→ Casa del Pescador (Cambados). Tel_ **986 526 119**



5 EXPERIENCE

- day 1 |
Pontevedra
- 1_ Bridge of A Barca
 - 2_ Old quarter
 - 3_ Praza Alonso de Fonseca - square
 - 4_ Basilica of Santa María A Maior
 - 5_ Neighbourhood of A Moreira
 - 6_ Praza da Leña, A Verdura and A Ferrería - squares
- Combarro (Poio)**
- 7_ Praza de San Roque -square
 - 8_ A Rúa - street
 - 9_ Beach of Padrón
 - 10_ Rúa do Mar - street
- O Grove**
- 11_ Port
 - 12_ Seafront promenade
 - 13_ Island of A Toxa bridge
- Cambados**
- 14_ Neighbourhood of San Tomé
 - 15_ Casa do Pescador (Fishermen's House)
 - 16_ Port of Tragove
 - 17_ Fish market
 - 18_ Neighbourhood of Fefiñáns

| day 1 |

PONTEVEDRA

The call of the winding coastline of the Rías Baixas will wake us early. An early start is essential to take full advantage of our journey as sailors on dry land. We can set off on this adventure on our own or signing up for a professional guided tour. In addition to experiencing it, this option will enable us to interpret it.

We propose starting in Pontevedra. Observing its most marine side will be our first inspiring challenge. We begin by crossing the bridge **Ponte de A Barca**, heading for the old town, which the people of Pontevedra can rightly boast is one of Galicia's most well preserved.



> Praza da Ferrería - square. Pontevedra



> Basilica of Santa María A Maior. Pontevedra

The fishermen's guild sponsored the construction of the Basilica of Santa María a Maior in the 16th century

In the square known as **Praza Alonso de Fonseca** is where we find evidence that, in spite of its appearance, Pontevedra was born and was devoted to the sea. When looking at the Basilica of Santa María A Maior we become aware of the wealth and importance of its fishermen's guild, a group of professionals of the sea, which sponsored its construction in the 16th century. It was possible thanks to the extraordinary income from sardine fishing using enclosure gear in the Rías Baixas.

Its main facade represents one of the best examples of plateresque style of Galicia. On the iconography of its staircase look out for a quite unusual image: a Saint Jerome with glasses. We will then wander around the streets Tristán de Montenegro, Álvaro Páez, Formigueira or San Martiño, among other picturesque *rúas* (streets) in the neighbourhood of A Moreira, the city's most marine suburb.

If you fancy a coffee or even a hearty breakfast, try the bars located in many of the beautiful squares, such as the **Praza da Leña**, **A Verdura**, or **A Ferrería**. You will feel like a local, for if something distinguishes the people of Pontevedra it is the good use they make of these public meeting places.



> Praza da Leña - square. Pontevedra



> Raised stone granaries. Combarro

COMBARRO

We leave the vertex of the ria of Pontevedra and take road PO-308, towards O Grove, to reach the north side of the ria. After approximately a ten-minute drive we stop at the village of Combarro, which offers good examples of marine architecture. The itinerary that we propose aims at completing the perfect triangle that is created here out of stone, granary (*hórreo*) and stone cross (*cruceiro*).

The pathway of the cruceiros

We set off from the **Praza de San Roque** square, in the town's **old quarter**, where we find two of the many *cruceiros*, or stone crosses, that will accompany us throughout the journey. The main one in the centre of the square joins, on their respective sides, Christ on the Cross with Our Lady of Socorro, which carries a stick to scare away the devil. The most unusual feature of the stone crosses of Combarro is that if we look in the same direction that Christ is facing we look in-land, and if we do the same with Our Lady we look out at sea.

Sailors used the stone granaries to dry fish and to store corn and potatoes

In this square we get the feeling that we are in a town carved out of the rock that goes down towards the ria. We can even see how the houses of the fishermen take advantage of the granite massif for their foundations. From the square we go down to the street known as **A Rúa**, the old quarter's main street, where we can marvel at the seaside architecture, the houses standing so close to each other, with porches and balconies decorated with stone, iron or wooden balustrades. The downward slope to the sea forces us to take the stairs carved out of the rock.

The coast of Combarro is characterized by its rows of thirty stone granaries

We continue to the **beach of Padrón**, that offers us a breathtaking panoramic view of the coastline of Combarro, that is unique in the world because of its rows of thirty raised stone granaries, right by the sea. Dizzy by the smell of saltpetre, we can take in the architecture of these special stone structures, often combined with painted wood.

The granaries stand on stone pilasters to keep moisture out, for sailors used them to dry fish and store corn, potatoes and other products that they brought in boats from the other side of the ria, where they owned farmland, as this side of the shore is mountainous and less suitable for farming. We will be captivated by their appearance, especially when they are decorated with plants, with the painting peeling off due to the abrasiveness of the sea breeze, or with small tufts of grass growing on their rooftops.

Walking down the **Rúa do Mar** we will find that many of its houses accommodate taverns and restaurants. So after the walk it might be the ideal moment to taste the first *tapa* (appetizer) of the morning, before going back to our path.

And finally we say farewell to Combarro, after experiencing life in a typical fishing village, characterized by its bustling activity. It is common to see fishing boats coming and going, women gathering shellfish at low tide or mending nets.



> Combarro



> Shellfish beds



> Shellfish gatherers

The ria of Arousa brings together more than half of the 3,000 shellfish beds that exist in the Galician rias

O GROVE

We now head towards O Grove, along the same road, following the winding part of the Galician coastline. To get an idea of its extremely winding outline, if we could stretch it, its perimeter would measure over one thousand kilometres, reaching all the way down to Almería. Along the way we can observe its rounded interior geography and we will be surprised to see, among its towering granite houses, smaller or larger areas of *albariño* grape trellises and other varieties under the Rías Baixas Denomination of Origin, that produces the famous wines.

We will sail along one of the world's largest shellfish banks

Upon arriving in O Grove we head towards its **port** to live our first marine experience. Going on board catamaran with a glass floor or on a sailboat we can sail through one of the world's largest shellfish banks.

Here, in the heart of the ria of Arousa, more than half of the 3,000 shellfish beds that exist in the Galician rias are gathered. They are wooden platforms that float on the sea for the breeding of mussels, oysters and scallops. On a journey that lasts about an hour and a half we can experience on site the day-to-day work of seamen, right by shellfish beds. We will see them handling the thick ropes that the bivalves cling to, cleaning them of algae, parasites, and untangling them. When they draw them out, which is not an easy task, for they can weigh more than 300 kilograms, we will see how they are full of shellfish. The seamen themselves will explain to us the growth stage that the molluscs are currently at, as well as their breeding process.

With the saltpetre on our face we return to the port with bagfuls of knowledge about a trade that supports most of the families of the area. In the nearby restaurants they offer all that we just saw in the sea only a while ago, in addition to the clams harvested on the beaches and other crustaceans and fish from the ria. The menus and prices are usually displayed at the entrance, making it easier for us to choose. A walk along the **seafrom promenade**, with views of the ria, towards the **bridge over the island of A Toxa**, is an excellent dessert.



> Cambados

CAMBADOS

A quiet walk around the most marine neighbourhood

We head to Cambados along the PO-550, where we arrive in a little over half an hour. In addition to being the capital of the Albariño wine and a stately town, its marine character is likewise stamped in its genes. To verify this, wandering along the streets of the **neighbourhood of San Tomé** is a must. Some streets are so narrow that when you stretch out your arms you can touch the houses on both sides. It is also not unusual for us to smell the aromas from their kitchens. Sometimes we can also smell the paint that sailors use to paint their houses, which is the same one they use for their boats and that gives the neighbourhood its lively colours. Here we can visit the Casa do Pescador, a quaint museum with examples of sailor life.

The women shellfish gatherers will guide us through the fish market

If you prefer a more active option, we can delve into the fish market, located in the more industrial quarter of the town, in the **port of Tragove**. We can plan the visit so that the shellfish gatherers who go there to market their products can guide us. In this way we can participate in the whole process, from its selection, weighing labelling to the frantic bidding.

The perfect farewell will be enjoying a glass of Albariño wine in the high-class **neighbourhood of Fefiñáns**, accompanied by tapas or a dinner menu, with the same seafood that we saw being handled at the fish market.





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