



Historic towns and rugged scenery of Peneda Geres National Park, Northern Portugal



Grade:	Gentle / moderate		
Trip duration:	7 nights / 6 days	Average daily altitude gain:	1600 feet 500 m
Walking days:	5 days	Average daily walk:	11 miles 17 km
Minimum numbers:	Requires just 2 participants to guarantee this holiday		
Prices:	1 March to 31 October. See our website for prices		

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TRIP OVERVIEW:

- Walk across a 2,000 year-old Roman bridge in Ponte de Lima.
- Explore Lindoso Castle
- Follow in the footsteps of pilgrims to the spectacular Sanctuary of our Lady of Peneda
- See the communal grain stores on stilts in Lindoso
- Enjoy the cuisine of Viana do Castelo and Porto

Savour this 7-night / 5 walking days self-guided hike in the Peneda-Geres National Park in the North East of Portugal.

The trip starts in the beautiful riverside town of Ponte de Lima, named after its 2000 year-old Roman bridge spanning the River Lima. The next day a private transfer will take you into the hills to Castro from where you will be walking across rugged terrain, through lovely rural villages, across rivers and through forests. Special places to see during the walk are Lindoso Castle and its extraordinary collection of ancient communal stone granaries and threshing area, and the inspiring Peneda Sanctuary, a church built above a monumental flight of steps and overhung by a towering 300 metre rock.

This trip is offered from spring to autumn, from 1st March to 31st October, when the weather is at its best for walking, and the country flora are at their finest.



You will be staying in carefully-selected hotels and rural village houses, and dining on the delicious local cuisine of Northern Portugal. This is an important wine-producing area, and the nearby Douro Valley is famous for its port wine.

All accommodation is booked for you, with comprehensive walk notes, luggage transfers and with help available 24/7 should you need it. Your trip can be tailored to your individual requirements and timing, for example, spending an extra day in the UNESCO heritage city of Porto exploring both the old quarter and the lively café culture, as well as taking time for a tour of the port wine houses which dominate the riverside.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

The following itinerary is to be taken as a guide only. Whilst we expect that the walk will run as in the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions, and particularly with respect to the arrival time of your flight into Porto.

Day 1 Arrival at Porto Airport, transfer by bus or taxi to Ponte de Lima

Your first night is in the historic town of Ponte de Lima, which you can reach from the airport by taxi (approx. 50 mins) or by bus (1:20hr). When you check into your hotel, you will receive your Welcome Kit, which contains all the information you need to fully enjoy this walking holiday in the Peneda-Gerês National Park..

This is a lovely town with its famous Roman bridge crossing the river. The riverside walk leading to the bridge is lined with trees. The town has a lively medieval centre with interesting squares, shops and cafés. There are many excellent restaurants for you to choose from, to enjoy the local food and wines.

Accommodation: 3-star hotel

Day 2 Transfer to Castro Laboreiro and local circular walk

12.5 km (8 miles) +440m ascent

After your hotel breakfast, your private driver will meet you in the hotel lobby and drive you for about 90 minutes to Castro Laboreiro in the hills close to the border with Spain. You can leave your luggage at your Castro hotel, then walk out of the village into the scenic countryside of this region.

There are pretty woodlands and rivers and rugged rock formations, and then you will climb to a plateau with extensive views of the surrounding valleys and hills. Your walk takes you back to Castro and your hotel.

Accommodation: 3-star hotel

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch



The Sanctuary of our Lady of Peneda

Day 3 Walk from Castro Laboreiro to Peneda

15 km (9 miles) +310m ascent

After breakfast, walk through the village and across wild rocky highlands with glorious views over the surrounding mountains on the way to Lamas do Mouro park gates.

Then you will be walking through forest and upland on ancient stone paths used for centuries by pilgrims making their way to the spectacular Sanctuary of our Lady of Peneda. This is an inspiring and dramatic place, built in the shadow of an immense rock buttress. It will be a meaningful walk up the long stone staircase leading up to the large church – as you walk up you will pass 20 small chapels each depicting episodes in the life of Christ. The magnificent church above the steps dates from the 19th century.

Accommodation: 3-star hotel

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch

Day 4 Walk from Peneda to Lindoso.

19 km (12 miles) +370m ascent

Leave the hotel and Peneda Sanctuary and walk south down the valley along the centuries-old route used by pilgrims to Peneda.

There are sheer rock faces and dramatic mountain scenery along the route of the Peneda river down to the small village of Tibo, and then further down to the confluence of two rivers. At this point, the river Lima forms the frontier with Spain which no doubt saw all manner of contraband crossing this remote border.

Then you will walk across the spectacular dam across the River Lima to nearby Lindoso with its ruined castle occupying the high ground.

Your overnight stay is in a restored traditional country cottage.

Accommodation: Country cottage

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch



Day 5 Explore Lindoso and a circular walk around Serra Amarela

21.5 km (13 miles) +745m ascent

Shorter option: Linear walk

15.5 km (9.5 miles) +470m ascent

Walk through the delightful Lindoso village and see the communal grain stores on stilts (to keep out rats!) and the communal village threshing floor. Then walk through a forest leading gently uphill, offering spectacular views of the Soajo Mountains opposite. This is a peaceful area leading down to the village of Cidadelhe. At this point, you have walked 15.5 km. If this is enough for the day, you can take a taxi back to your cottage in Lindoso.

If you have time, you can complete the circuit a further 6 km and walk all the way back to Lindoso.

Accommodation: Country cottage

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch



Communal Granaries on stilts at Lindoso

Day 6 Transfer to Avelar, then walk to Soajo

19 km (12 miles) +580m ascent

A 1 hour private transfer takes you on a scenic drive to the village of Avelar which is deep in the Soajo mountains.

There is an energizing steep start to the walk today, gaining height to see the striking landscapes of the Peneda and Soajo mountains and the deep valleys between them. There are also examples in the hills of local heritage in the form of wolf traps and shepherds shelters.

Descending to the Mezio Park Gate, the walking gets easier along a quiet river with lovely pools of water.

The route heads to Soajo through mixed woodlands and meadows. The finest views on this section extend across the Lima Valley to the Amarela Mountains opposite.

The walk ends in the village of Soajo, a private transfer will be waiting for you to drive you an hour to the delightful coastal town of Viana do Castelo, where you will spend the night. Viana has a medieval town centre with a selection of great restaurants.

Accommodation: 4-star hotel

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch

Day 7 Free day in Viana do Castelo and Porto for wine tasting.

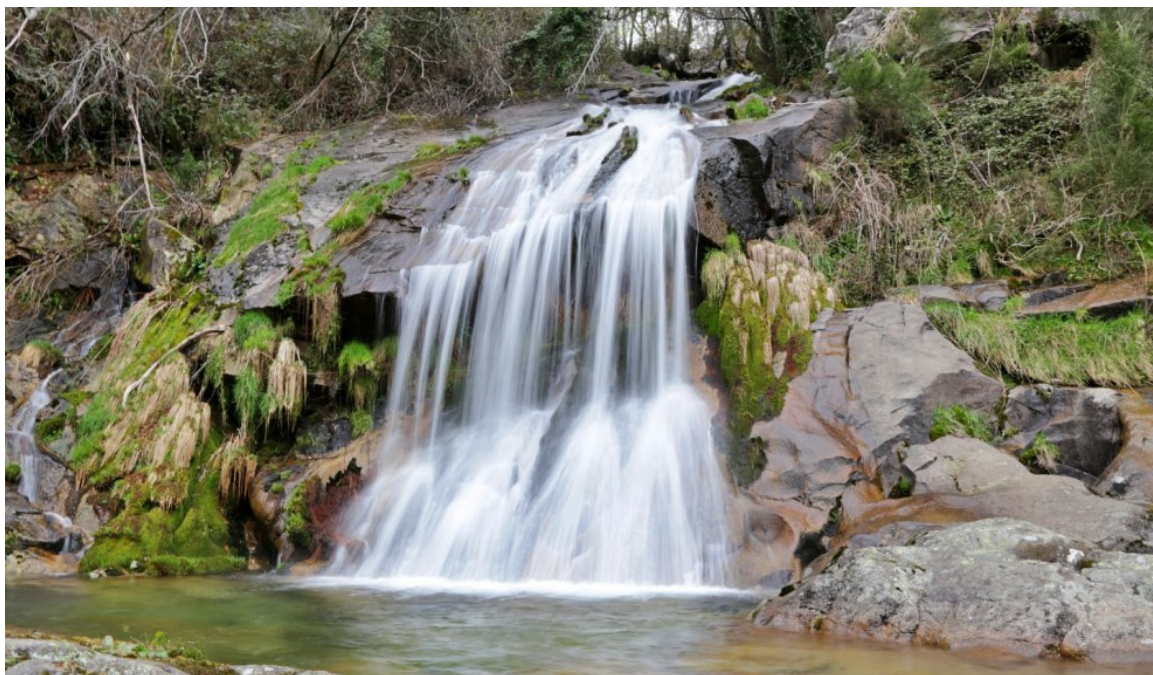
You will enjoy spending the morning discovering the lovely Viana do Castelo, which has several interesting sights including the Santa Luzia Basilica, the Costume Museum and the Gil Eanes Hospital Ship.

When you are ready to leave Viana do Castelo, take the train or bus to Porto (around 90 mins journey) for the final section of your Northern Portugal holiday.

The rest of the day is yours to explore Porto at leisure. Roam the historical streets to choose a restaurant for dinner, go souvenir shopping, admire the views or go on a port wine tour and tasting in the cellars of Vila Nova da Gaia on the waterfront.

Accommodation: 3-star hotel in Porto

Meals: Breakfast

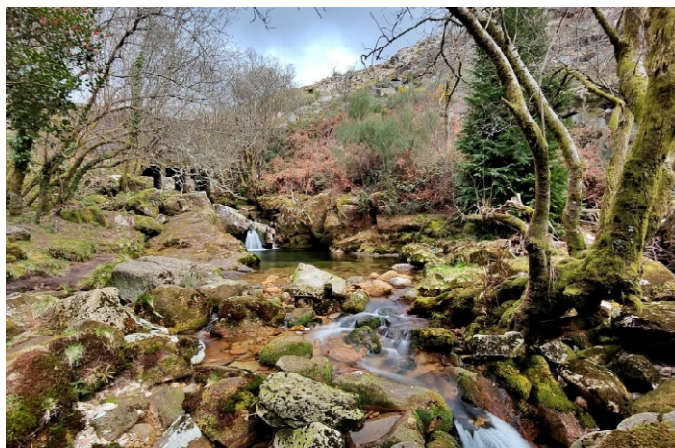


Day 8 Departure day

After breakfast and checking out from your hotel, begin your return journey. The airport is reached by bus or tram.

Meals: Breakfast

There is always the option of extending your holiday, perhaps with an extra day to explore Porto – just get in touch and let us know your wishes, and we will be happy to arrange it for you.



Pre-tour briefing: Most people choose to meet with a member of the Portugal team online before departure. However, if you prefer to have a personal Welcome Briefing on arrival this can be arranged for you for an additional charge. During the briefing, the member of our staff will be delighted to answer any questions that you have before starting your holiday. Whichever briefing method you choose, you will receive your Welcome Pack both by email prior to your departure and physically on arrival at your first hotel. Your Welcome Pack contains all the materials you'll need as a walker: a roadbook with maps and route descriptions, a tracking App for your smartphone, plus a few other goodies for the trail!

Accommodation: A combination of restored manor houses, village cottages, farmhouses and charming hotels. All rooms have their own bathrooms. We've chosen these accommodations for their hospitality, comfort, and location.

Meals: All breakfasts are included with your accommodation. We also include packed lunches for walking days where buying lunch on the trail is not an option. Let us know if you have any dietary restrictions and we can ask our hotels to accommodate these.

Luggage transfers: We will arrange for the transfer of 1 suitcase/piece of luggage per person between your hotels on your walk.

Travel: The best airport to fly into is Porto, which many European airlines use.

No flights or fixed travel arrangements should be booked until you have received written confirmation from the trekMountains office that your holiday is guaranteed to run.

The Price Includes:

- 7 Nights of accommodation with breakfast included
- 5 Packed lunches during the walks (day 2 to day 6)
- Welcome Pack
- Detailed route notes
- App with trail information for use on a smartphone
- Private transfer from Ponte de Lima to Castro Laboreiro (day 2)
- Private transfer from Lindoso to Avelar (day 6)
- Private transfer from Soajo to Viana do Castelo (day 6)
- Luggage transfers
- 24-hour emergency contact number (English-speaking)

Not Included:

- Flights (Porto is the closest airport to fly into)
- Transfer from Porto airport to Ponte de Lima
- Transfer from Viana do Castelo to Porto at the end of your walk, easy bus or train.
- Transfer from and to Porto airport
- Any meals not mentioned above
- Single room supplement if required
- Any costs incurred due to you needing to change your itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Tourism taxes; gratuities; personal expenses and anything not mentioned in the "included" section above