



## A Family Trip to Gerês

**Prepare yourself for two days of fun and excitement for all the family.**

Make your way into the Peneda-Gerês National Park through its northernmost tip at Lamas de Mouro (Melgaço), where the visitor centre will provide you with a number of interesting suggestions for different places to see. While you enjoy your visit to the park, keep your eyes peeled for the “Garranos”, the wild horses of the Gerês mountains, which will certainly be the delight of the younger members of your family.

In Castro Laboreiro, show them the famous sheepdogs that are bred here. In this area, which was already inhabited long before the Roman occupation, take your children to see the remains of some dolmens. Make sure also to visit the Santuário da Senhora da Peneda, a shrine surrounded by majestic mountains, and the castle of Lindoso that once guarded the border with Spain.

Discover all about the region’s ancient villages, such as Soajo, with its granite houses and “espigueiros” (small granaries used for drying corn) and its longstanding rural traditions. In the reservoir formed by the dam of Vilarinho das Furnas, there is an old village – now submerged under the water – which reappears above the surface in years of drought, offering a curious spectacle. Take advantage of the fact that you are in a region of communal villages and fantastic natural surroundings to enjoy a different kind of sleep for the night. You can choose between the campsite, the park’s “Casas de Abrigo” (shelters that were previously used by shepherds) or a “Casa de Aldeia” (one of the guest houses in the villages).

On the second day, take advantage of your stay to enjoy a ride on the water-powered funicular taking you up to the Santuário do Bom Jesus de Braga, so that your children can enjoy a physics lesson without getting bored. Take some time to appreciate the view and then make your way down the enormous staircase, challenging your children once again by getting them to count the number of steps. While you’re in Braga, make sure to visit the country’s oldest cathedral and the truly original municipal sports stadium designed by Souto Moura. Thousands of years separate this remarkable work of architecture – built to host matches at the Euro 2004 football championships – from the Iron Age settlement of Citânia de Briteiros, which your children are also bound to love. When you arrive in Guimarães, the city that was the birthplace of the Portuguese nation and is now classified as world heritage, take some time to get to know the castle and the city’s historic centre. Finally, take the cable car up to the top of the Monte da Penha, from where you can enjoy a spectacular view over the city, the park and the shrine.



### Points of interest along the Itinerary

- Santuário da Senhora da Peneda
- Santuário do Bom Jesus do Monte
- Sé de Braga
- Museu da Imagem
- Castelo de Guimarões
- Museu do Paço dos Duques de Bragança



## Points of interest along the Itinerary

### Santuário da Senhora da Peneda

Gavireira  
4970-150 Arcos de Valdevez

### Santuário do Bom Jesus do Monte

Bom Jesus do Monte - Tenões  
4700 Braga  
Tel. : +351 253 676 636

### Sé de Braga

Rua Dom Paio Mendes - Rossio da Sé  
4700-424 Braga  
Tel. : +351 253 263 317  
Fax : +351 273 263 731

### Museu da Imagem

Campo das Hortas, 35-37 (Largo da Porta Nova)  
4700-210 Braga  
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### Castelo de Guimarães

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### Museu do Paço dos Duques de Bragança

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## Suggestions

### A tour in the Upper Minho

By driving from Viana do Castelo along the valley of the River Lima, you'll arrive at the Serra do Soajo. Alternatively, you can cross over the river at Ponte da Barca, heading towards Arcos de Valdevez and following the road further to the north. The two roads will lead you to the Serra de Soajo and the village of the same name, which is to be your starting point for discovering the culture, heritage and breathtaking natural scenery of this mountainous area.

This region has long been appreciated for its many virtues. In the 13th century, the king Dom Dinis granted special privileges to the local inhabitants, forbidding the nobility to remain here any longer than "the time needed to cool their bread on the tip of their lances," unless, of course, they were in his presence. We suggest you stay as long as you want and appreciate the region's landscape, culture and tasty cuisine, in which the locally-made vinho verde enjoys a prominent place.

To experience this special moment as intensely as possible, stay in one of the village houses, where you will find every kind of home comfort, coupled with a respect for tradition. Spend your time getting to know the Peneda-Gerês National Park and discovering its great wealth of fauna and flora. In spring or summer, make sure to take your swimsuit with you at all times. The region's countless watercourses form small natural pools where you can enjoy a most pleasant and refreshing dip.

### Peneda-Gerês park

Setting off by jeep from Campo do Gerês, between the Cávado and Homem rivers, the first point of interest is the Lindoso Dam. When the reservoir is at a low level, it reveals the abandoned village of Vilarinho das Furnas, covered by water for most of the year.

When you arrive at Mata da Albergaria, leave the car behind and take to the footpath. The walk through to Portela do Homem is more than worth the effort. Shepherds have marked out paths using "mariolas", small stone piles serving as route markers. These will lead you to the beautiful waterfalls, ideal for a brief stop.

As well as walking, you can climb, abseil and slide. Should you bring a bike along, follow the centuries-old marker posts on the former Roman road. Make it to the Junceda viewpoint, 950 metres up, and enjoy views over the hills and villages.

In the far north-west of Serra do Gerês, visit the village communities of Pitões das Júnias and Tourém, which have held onto their traditional customs. Pitões is the end of the road, but there is still plenty more to see. Waterfalls and a Benedictine monastery are just some of the surprises up in these hills.

Take up the challenge and discover the well-preserved world of Gerês.

### Visit Braga

It is here that the keys to the city are kept - keys to a thousand year-old city whose monuments serve as reminders of the awesome power once wielded by its bishops.

Back in Roman times, emperor Caracala raised Bracara Augusta to the status of capital of Galécia, now Galicia.

After the Romans came the Sueves, Visigoths and Moors before the Christians took possession in the 11th century. Braga's cathedral is the oldest in the country, a fact reflected in the popular saying "as old as the Braga Se" to refer to anything that has withstood the test of time. The city's ecclesiastical power, in medieval times commonly associated with the sword, extended out across the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. Around the Braga Cathedral Se, monuments were added with the passing of time. In the 16th century, archbishop Diogo de Sousa, impressed with the Rome of



Pope Julius II, set about creating the decorative grace of the Renaissance.

Later, the exuberance of the Baroque period would result in other equally splendid buildings. But city has reminders of all eras, such as a mid-street medieval tower, or window shutters designed to hide the female form or a Rocaille palace that looks like a Luis 15th commode.

In more recent times, the opening of the University and the quality of the contemporary architecture has generated a youthful influx as well as all the light, colour and unpredictability of the modern world.

## Religious Festivals

Visit Braga at Easter and witness the traditions of Holy Week. Throughout this festive season, the city is decorated in religious motifs and the "Passos" – street altars – are filled with flowers and lights.

Among the many celebrations, make sure you see the main procession, where the 'Farricocos' (lay brothers), go barefoot with their heads' covered. Wearing purple tunics, they hold torches in a re-enactment of the rites of public penitence and reconciliation common to the 16th century.

In the charming city of Viana do Castelo, between August 19th and 22nd; you can also join the Festival of Our Lady of Anguish. Since the 18th century, fishermen have been praying to the Virgin to grant them safe seas.

Various processions make up this three-day festival, accompanied by music and the wearing of colourful traditional costumes. Join the throng marching to the deafening sound of the "Zabumbas" bass drums and the "Gigantones" giant processions. The whole event is like a living museum, spectacularly rounded off with a firework display.

In Guimarães, where the Portuguese nation was first proclaimed, the first Sunday in July sees the Grand S. Torcato Pilgrimage, with a cortege processing along the city streets depicting allegorical scenes from the life of the saint. Later in summer, the Gualterianas Festivals are another highpoint with a procession in honour of Saint Gualter.

## Citânia de Briteiros

This embryo of a town, in the rough design of a Celtic castro, is more than two thousand years old. The settlement is protected by walls, inside the circular houses are laid out in small 'blocks', and there are also sheds for the cattle.

Citânia de Briteiros is one of the most interesting examples of the castro culture that developed in the Iberian Peninsula in the second century BC.

The castros, as these settlements are called, were situated at great heights so their inhabitants could keep watch for potential invaders. Many of Portugal's present cities have their origins in these castros.

To complete your visit, see the exhibition of objects gathered at Citânia by archaeologist Francisco Martins Sarmento. The French government presented Sarmento with the Legion of Honour for his work in studying these artefacts. The museum, named after the great man, is in Guimarães.

## Visit Guimarães, Capital of Culture 2012

It was in this medieval castle that Afonso Henriques was born. Within sight of its high walls, he would defeat the armies of his mother in 1128. Proclaimed heir to the Kingdom of Portugalense by the nobles of the Minho, the Prince, declared of striking beauty in chronicles of the time, would go onto become the first king of Portugal.

However, it is for its surviving built heritage that UNESCO declared the city of World Heritage status, a decision that soon becomes clear in its historic centre. There is a very authentic feel to the gracious iron verandas, the granite balconies and porchways, the outline of the turreted towers of noble residences, the archways that link narrow streets, the stone paving slabs worn by the passage of time and the cool freshness of the cloisters. For moments, one is plunged back into medieval times when the nobility was busy reflecting their own sense of importance in residences such as Mota



Prego, the Vila Flor Palace, Toural and so many others that endow Guimarães with its unique ambience.

We shall leave you in the very heart of the city, the Nossa Senhora da Oliveira square, just one possible departure point for your tour. Here stands the impressive Collegiate Church of Guimarães from where Pedro Hispano set off to Rome to become John 21st, the only Portuguese Pope thus far in the history of the Catholic Church.

For another perspective on the city, take the cable car to the top of Penha and enjoy one of the most beautiful views out over northern Portugal.

In 2012, Guimarães will be the European Capital of Culture. Throughout the year, the city will host a large gathering of creators and creations in various artistic fields such as music, film, visual arts, architecture, theater, dance or street arts.



## Useful contacts

### Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês

Website : <http://www.icnf.pt/cn/ICNPportal/vPT2007-AP-Geres/Visitar+Area+Protegida/Como+Chegar?res=1280x800>; [www.adere-pg.pt](http://www.adere-pg.pt)|[www.icnf.pt](http://www.icnf.pt);  
[www.adere-pg.pt](http://www.adere-pg.pt)

### Museu dos Biscaínhos

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### Museu de Cordofones Domingos Machado

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### Museu Arqueológico Martins Sarmiento

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