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# Parque Natural das Serras de Aire e Candeeiros

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## ABOUT



The greatest riches of the Serras de Aire e Candeeiros Natural Park are hidden within its interior. This chalk massif is a paradise for speleologists who will be able to discover grottoes and ravines in its depths, with surprising rock formations that have been sculpted by water over time. Several of these areas are prepared to receive visitors such as the grottoes of Santo António, Moeda, Mira d'Aire and Alvados, that have various support infrastructures.

At the surface, there are neither rivers or streams. The landscape is barren, dotted here and there by boulders, fissures and slopes. Notwithstanding this arid appearance, there is a rich and varied range of animal life, including 18 species of bats (the symbol of the Park) that find ideal shelter in the various grottoes.

Close to the River Maior, we find the rock salt mines, where it is possible to see salt-extraction activities, in accordance with management and utilisation principles that have been used for over eight centuries.

On the eastern flank of the Serra de Aire, around 10kms from Fátima, we find the world's largest and most important collection of sauropod dinosaur footprints from the mid Jurassic period (175 million years old). Several of the 20 or so tracks, discovered by chance in a former quarry - the "Pedreira do Galinha" - measure over 100 m in length. The site includes some of the largest and clearest footprints known to man, that attain up to 95 cm in length and 70 cm in width, which gives an idea of the dimension of the largest of beings that have ever inhabited the planet.

In order to get to know this protected area, visitors may choose between the 16 pedestrian walks proposed by the Park. If they prefer a more original and less tiring approach, they may go on a donkey ride, organised by the excursion companies in the zone.

## Contacts

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**Characteristics and Services**

Signposted routes

Park area: 39.900 ha.

Altitude: Máx: 678m

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