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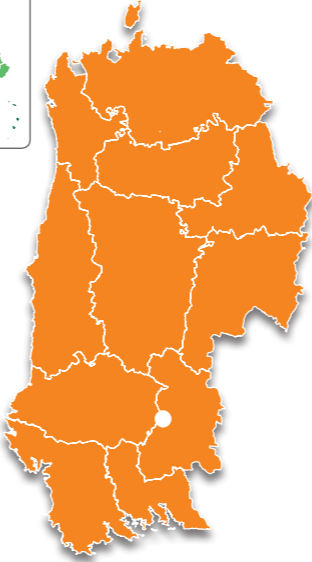
NATURE TRAIL LA RIBEIRA SACRA



Guide to the
Nature Trails
of Spain



SECTOR
NORTHWESTERN PENINSULAR



Since 1993 the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment's Nature Trails Program aims to restore former transport infrastructures such as railway tracks, cattle trails and traditional routes, for public use and enjoyment.

These routes take us to the countryside to discover the biodiversity and beauty of our precious natural heritage, and discover the villages, sights, traditions and people that are part of the unique cultural landscape of our country.

We invite you to visit them and offer you the keys to enjoy the trip. In this brochure you will find a brief description of the La Ribeira Sacra Nature Trail and the map for the journey, along with recommendations to make the most of this experience. We only ask one thing of you: do not forget to leave everything as you found it. The conservation of these pathways is also your responsibility.

THROGUH LANDS OF WINE AND PRAYER

The area is probably known as "Ribeira Sacra", owing to the large number of religious buildings found here. There are 18 monasteries open to visitors, including Monforte de Lemos, and San Estevo de Ribas de Sil, now converted into a Parador.

This county is located between the rivers Sil and Miño, the natural boundary between the provinces of Ourense and Lugo. With its capital in Monforte de Lemos (Lugo), is very famous for its cultural treasures, high biodiversity and spectacular landscapes and unique ecosystems; also, for its wines with denomination of origin.



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The Ribeira Sacra Nature Trail consists of several routes:

MAIN ROUTE

1a. The route begins at a small road from Alto de Couso, and heads to the town of Meiroás. At the first crossroads, the route turns left to a second intersection, where it continues to the right towards a third crossing where it proceeds straight ahead (to the right starts the third branch of this Nature Trail). The route passes an intersection and continues along a narrow path through meadows, and traverses through Melón Baixo. The route heads to Melón Alto, traverses through this small town and leaves taking a path that leads the starting point of Os Arcos Route.

1b. After reaching a stretch that runs over a paved road, the route turns onto a parallel gravel path that heads up a steep slope to the meadow where the shrine of Virxen do Monte can be found. This place has a resting area. The route skirts around the shrine, and heads down to the road along which it continues in parallel until it reaches an intersection.

1d. Following the gravel track to Nogueira de Ramuín, the route arrives at the town of Casares. Past the town, the route continues along the road until the first offshoot road to Pombar. It traverses through the streets to reach OU-508 and continues to climb down, heading on to the next crossroads, where you may access the ancient fortress of Penedos do Castro, with magnificent views of the Sil Valley and the Monastery of Santo Estevo. The trail

continues to descend and reaches Santo Estevo de Ribas do Sil, a town where the Monastery located. After reaching the road, it continues parallel to the River Sil up to the bridge of Santo Estevo station, where the route ends.

MEIROÁS - MELÓN DE ABAIXO BRANCH

2. This branch begins at a crossing situated 3 km from the Main Route. It follows the road leading to the town of Meiroás, winds through the town houses, and continues along a dirt road onto the road leading to Xunquera de Espadanedo. The itinerary carries on through the town until it reaches a wide track, along which it runs for a few metres, then turns onto a downhill path. After crossing a small bridge, it reaches another intersection and turns to reach the road to Melón Baixo. The branch reaches the town square where it ends.

OS ARCOS ROUTE

3. This short alternative begins at the intersection mentioned in Route 2. The route runs along a stone path, and the ruts tell of the passage of hundreds of wagons, and continues through an oak forest to reach the road leading to Arcos. After crossing the town, it continues along a narrow stone path, through meadows and oaks, which leads to the road where this short route ends.

SAN XOÁN DE CACHÓN ROUTE

4. This route included starts to the West of the Monastery of Santo Estevo de Ribas do Sil. After crossing two

wooden bridges over streams, the path winds down a flight of steep stairs towards the road along the River Sil, where this short yet pleasant route ends.

MONASTERY OF SANTA CRISTINA ROUTE

5a. This route starts at the entrance of the village of Parada do Sil, next to the "O Barquilleiro" memorial monument. The trail crosses the town to reach the intersection with OU-605 and takes the road leading to Fondodevila until it meets the road to Os Torgas and Balcones de Madrid. The route descends towards an intersection located next to a resting area.

5b. At this point, it is worth the trouble to make a detour to visit Balcones de Madrid, a spectacular natural viewpoint overlooking the canyons of the River Sil. Continuing the route you will descend along a very steep track. After a section of up and down hills and crossing several roads and the PRG-98 route three times, it reaches the town of Portela. The route traverses through this town and climbs to the shrine of San Antonio.

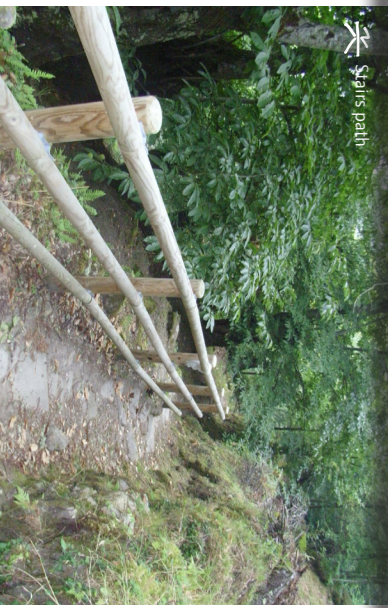
5c. Here it joins the road that heads to the nearby town of Castro and once you leave the town behind, the route continues downhill from where there are breathtaking views of the River Sil canyons, to the Monastery of Santa Cristina, (that may be accessed by climbing down a few steps), where the route ends.



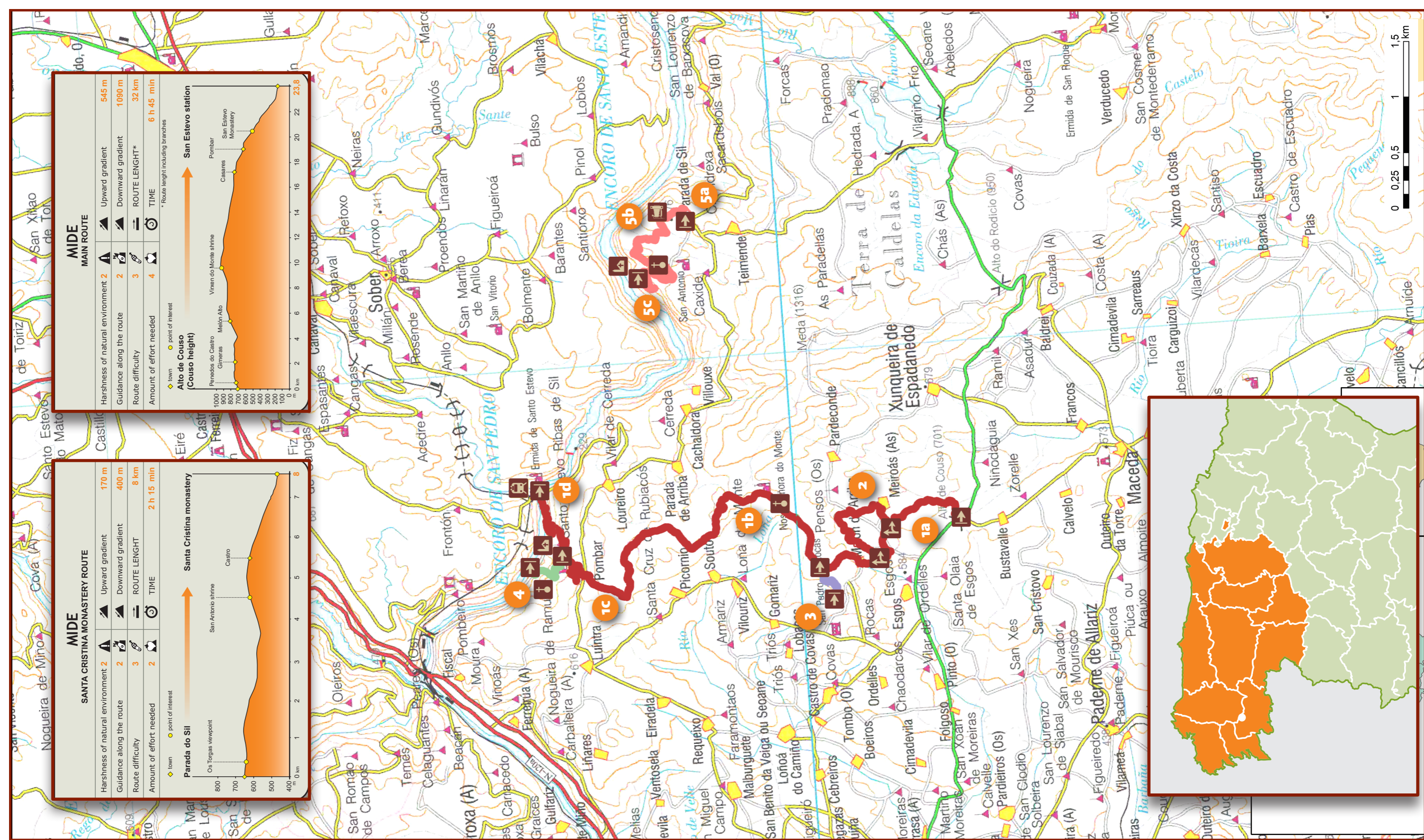
Santo Estevo Monastery



Inside Santa Cristina Monastery



Stairs path



MIDE SANTA CRISTINA MONASTERY ROUTE

Harshness of natural environment	2	▲	Upward gradient	170 m
Guidance along the route	2	▲	Downward gradient	400 m
Route difficulty	3	▲	ROUTE LENGTH	8 km
Amount of effort needed	2	▲	TIME	2 h 15 min

◆ town ● point of interest

Parada do Sil

Os Torgas viewpoint

San Antonio shrine

Castro

MIDE MAIN ROUTE

Harshness of natural environment	2	▲	Upward gradient	545 m
Guidance along the route	2	▲	Downward gradient	1090 m
Route difficulty	3	▲	ROUTE LENGTH*	32 km
Amount of effort needed	4	▲	TIME	6 h 45 min

◆ town ● point of interest

Alto de Couso (Couso height)

Vixen do Monte shrine

Pombar

San Estevo Monastery

San Estevo

Melón Alto

Casares

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NATURE TRAIL
LA RIBEIRA SACRA

- Starting point
- End of route
- Detour
- Religious building
- Hermitage
- Viewpoint
- Train station

