



Great Trail Atlantic Path

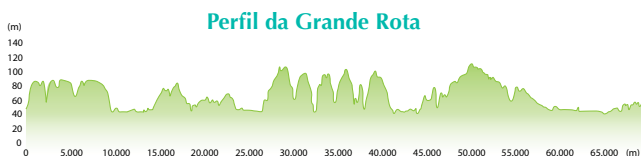


GR

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Ficha Técnica

Nome do Percurso: Grande Rota
Caminho do Atlântico - Rede Natura do Oeste
Localização do Percurso: Torres Vedras, Lourinhã e Peniche
Tipo de Percurso: Grande Rota
Âmbito do Percurso: Ecológico-Paisagístico
Ponto de Partida: Assenta Sul - Torres Vedras
Ponto de Chegada: Cabo Carvoeiro - Peniche
Distância do Percurso: 69,5 km
Duração do Percurso: 3 dias
Grau de dificuldade: Fácil
Cota Máxima Atingida: 95 metros (Monteito)
Cota Mínima Atingida: 5 metros (Peralta)



Sinalética

PEQUENA ROTA (PR)
decorrendo
temporariamente
pelo traçado de uma
GRANDE ROTA (GR)



CAMINHO
CERTO



CAMINHO
ERRADO



Mudança de direcção

PARA
A ESQUERDA



PARA
A DIREITA





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Torres Vedras

Three municipalities, a sole environmental conscience

It is my pleasure to write a foreword to this book, since it meets the concern for tourist offers, and it is openly in accordance with the environmental concerns of the Municipality of Torres Vedras. Therefore, we have been enthusiastic about implementing this project from the beginning.

We are pleased to realise that nowadays, more and more people are aware of such concerns, and have been responding to the hiking trails, knowing that they are enjoying Nature as a whole, while simultaneously doing an activity which is immensely important for their well being, both physical and mental.

The great trail Caminho do Atlântico - Rede Natura do Oeste (Atlantic Path – Western Natura Network) is an important instrument for such assumptions, offering trails which cross 3 municipalities, from Praia da Assenta, in the municipality of Torres Vedras, to Cape Carvoeiro, in Peniche, and offering a dazzling landscape variety, and the possibility to observe well defined ecosystems along the 66 km trail.

It also provides the opportunity to combine in just one project the assets of three neighbouring municipalities, each having its own peculiarities, which become uniquely captivating when joined together.

We are bound to meet, somewhere along the Great Trail.

The Mayor

Mr. Carlos Manuel Soares Miguel



Lourinhã

The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is much more than a healthy trail, surrounded by astonishing landscapes.

Sustainable Development is one of the greatest challenges of mankind. Defined as the development model which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1991), the concept of sustainable development possesses several aspects – economical, social, cultural, and environmental – which together should shape urban politics. Therefore, sustainability includes a holistic version of urban development and although it does not limit itself to an environmental perspective, the latter is one of its main components.

The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network should therefore represent not only those four dimensions of sustainability, but also be able to integrate and embody them, so that it becomes a true example of regional development. Its role should not limit itself to geomorphologic, biological, leisure, and educational aspects; it also has the very important job of providing the three involved Municipalities with an economic appeal, not only as regards promoting the region, but also on a micro economic level.

Indeed, it is a very interesting project, since it focuses on a regional level, it involves extremely low costs, and mainly because it made us realise that Nature does not need any changes to bring us benefits. It is in itself the greatest benefit of all! I believe that it is this change in mentality that which provides the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network with its pioneer spirit.

The success of preserving and rehabilitating the Environmental Structure, seen as a main sustainability vector, is not exclusively dependent on the scope of legal instruments and computer tools. An adequate regional planning increasingly demands the involvement of multiple sectors, and shall only succeed when all its agents show a greater respect for their fellow men, for the public cause, and ultimately for themselves.

I wish to thank the Municipality of Torres Vedras in the first place, for inviting us to participate in this enticing project, the Municipality of Peniche, for its excellent cooperation, and also all of those who provided us with essential information, reasoning, hints and considerations, which made such an implementation possible.

Thank you all.
Best wishes.

The Mayor
José Manuel Dias Custódio



Peniche

I have the deepest pride and satisfaction in introducing you to the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network. It is a unique trail, with great touristic, environmental, and cultural importance, which provides leisure and Nature lovers with the possibility to unveil the deepest traits of the identity of the West coastal region.

The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is a simple but authentic project, which was brought about by an institutional cooperation process among Municipalities. It promotes a healthy and Environment friendly activity, and is rooted in this region's endogenous resources in order to increase its appeal, and promote its development.

This trail offers extremely rich landscapes, framed by windmills, churches and historic fortresses, fields and intensely green orchards, dunes, seashore cliffs and beaches, with well acknowledged surfing waves, calm bays, and impressive promontories, bathed by deep blue seas, of which the majestic Berlenga island emerges.

Come! It is my pleasure to invite you to discover the natural, historic, and geologic patrimony of this small part of the West. You will find it impossible to resist visiting the rest of this region.

The Mayor of Peniche
Mr. António José Correia





Introduction

This book aims to be the calling card for the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network. The municipalities of Torres Vedras, Lourinhã, and Peniche present this new infrastructure which shall assist and enrich the whole of the region's touristic services. This is a tool which includes all relevant information allowing visitors to be duly informed, and easily accomplish this great adventure, which will surprise them over its 69,5 km of dazzling landscapes, unique species, and unforgettable historic and cultural curiosities.

This hike invites you to share with Nature. Dare to walk these magical paths, and allow yourself to be dazzled by what the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network has to offer you.



Goivinhos



Lage dos Pargos



Camarão



Natura Network 2000

According to Decree-Law 140/99, of April 24, and the corresponding amendments in Decree-Law 49/2005, of February 24, the Natura Network 2000 belongs to an environmental network for the EC territory, which is the basis for the whole of the UE's nature conservation politics. It is the result of applying Directives 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive), and its *"aim is to contribute to ensure biodiversity by preserving natural habitats, as well as wild fauna and flora, in the European territory of Member States where the Treaty is applicable"*.

In order to ensure that such an aim is achieved, this comprehensive conservation network is made up by areas with a Community relevance for the conservation of certain *habitats* and species, in which human activity should be compatible with the preservation of such values, aiming to a sustainable management from an environmental, economic, and social point of view. Therefore, it should be constituted by Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and by Special Protection Areas (SPA), the latter enjoying direct classification when compared to SAC's. In fact, the 39 SPA already

defined for mainland Portugal were directly classified, thanks to the presence on national territory of bird species mentioned in Annex I of the Birds Directive, whereas the classification of SAC's entails an intermediate stage, the so-called Sites of Community Importance (SCI).

Our country's mainland territory already has 60 delimited SCI, the reasons for which classification being as diverse as the *habitats* we aim to preserve. Together with the SPA, this covers a high percentage of domestic territory, under the protection of this effective means of conservation. Together with the National Network of Protected Areas, it corresponds to a 1/5 of our small but proficuous country. If we add the archipelagos of Madeira and Azores to the mainland, we must also mention the 15 SPA and 23 SCI in Azores, in addition to three ZPE and 11 SCI in Madeira.

Since such areas are meant for the conservation of species and their *habitats*, there could be a tendency to interdict access and fruition. However, the principle of this environmental network is to allow activities which are compatible with conservation, provided the principles of environmen-



Introduction

tal sustainability and good environmental practice are complied with. This is where the increasingly representative concept of hiking applies. Together with environmental interpretation, it turns the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network into an example of Excellency. It runs through two of the 60 SICs of the mainland Portugal Natura Network 2000, and was thus created with an absolute respect for the natural and cultural spaces, and under the principle of causing no impact on the coastal region, further to what it already is. This fact led to the protection of sensitive areas when setting the route, and the enabling of conditions for hikers to get fully acquainted with some of the most beautiful landscapes in Portugal.

Duna





Marca



Caminho



Placa

Hiking

The Portuguese Camping and Mountaineering Federation (FCMP) defines Hiking as the sports activity of covering long distances on foot, on traditional and mountain trails in rural environments, the countryside and coastlines, as well as in city parks in some cases. Its aim is to be a sports activity accessible to all. Hiking routes are currently considered to be one of the most sought recreational activities in Nature. The routes can also be instruments of land-use planning if correctly defined and managed, since they avoid reckless territory use, by reducing entries in areas with greater environmental sensitiveness.

However, hiking routes should always be valued both through information and through environmental interpretation.

By definition, environmental information is all information which aims at providing visitors with useful guidance, such as: where to go, how to get there, which are the codes of conduct, among others. Environmental interpretation concerns the activity allowing the visitor to receive global knowledge on the natural and cultural patrimony of the visited location, namely as regards the flora, fauna (and respective

habitats), geological structures, built patrimony, as well as the customs and traditions of the local populations.

In Portugal, there is already a great number of hiking routes which have been approved by the FCMP, and include small and larger routes, either inside or outside classified areas. The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is the 11th great mainland route. It crosses the whole of the municipalities of Torres Vedras and Lourinhã, as well as part of the municipality of Peniche, and always follows the coastline.







Mexilhoeira



Moinho



Mar



Os Municípios

The three municipalities who joined their will to be able to offer this Great Trail to their citizens and to all who wish to get acquainted with the charms of these lands surrounded by the deep blue sea, seek to be on the forefront of sustainable and quality tourism services.

This route, which crosses all three municipalities, intends to act as a “bridge” between the assets of each municipality, and to embed new vitality into the notion of sharing and good neighbouring, which will in fact benefit visitors, as well as those who cherish sharing with Nature, and those who seek to learn more about the past and present real life of local communities.

Although the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network acts as bonding and integrating element, it is important to be aware that each Municipality has its own separate entity, and its own differentiating factors. Although the latter are valuable on their own, their value is nevertheless increased when joined together to form the grounds for something greater. It benefits the West region, and those who dedicate themselves to improve the living conditions for the local people, as well as any visitors... We

all benefit from it.

For the purpose of providing a background, we shall make a brief introduction to each of the Municipalities who dared join their endeavours for the common good – Torres Vedras, Lourinhã, and Peniche.



Santa Cruz



Maceira



Foz



Torres Vedras

Of the three municipalities, Torres Vedras is geographically located more to the South.

It is the capital of its municipality. It includes 20 parishes, and has a total area of 410 km². It was granted the status of city in 1979, and currently holds a population of 80 000 people.

Torres Vedras a dynamic and pro-active municipality. It is committed to show its visitors its natural patrimony, endowed with exciting natural beauty, and emphasized by historic and cultural elements, which enrich the magnificent landscapes characterising it, making them even more interesting. It provides us with memories of its high quality and emblematic beaches, endless vines invoking reminiscences of Ancient Roman settlements, and of the tasty typical bean pastries, which were created in the 19th Century, by Joaquina Rodrigues, and carried on to our days to become the typical Torres Vedras sweet food.

This municipality contributes to the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network with a small percentage (2%) of the Natura Network 2000's Sintra/ Cascais SCI, and with 9% of the Peniche/ Santa Cruz SCI,

which southerner limits are in Santa Cruz. Over more than 20 km, its coastline offers us beaches, both nestled between cliffs, and with long strands of sand, volcanic chimneys bursting from Jurassic strata, and isolated high groups of rocks springing from the water, which are emblematic, and represent the whole of the region. Geology is united to Ecology by the sea and limicolous avifauna, by the avifauna characterising typically mixed farming areas, and also by sandstone preceded cliffs, where the botanical interest is noteworthy due to the endemisms they hold.

This natural canvas is further coloured by countless patrimonial and cultural elements which, whether they are included in the Great Trail or not, are undoubtedly worth a visit. The latter include the Ermida de Santa Helena (Saint Helen's Chapel), in Santa Cruz, the Convent of Penafirme, near the beach of Santa Rita, the Medieval Castle, and the Mineral Spa of Vimeiro.



Lourinhã

The municipality of Lourinhã is perfectly set among its two Great Trail partners, leaning against Torres Vedras on the South, and to Peniche on the North, and hosting 8% of the SCI area of Peniche/ Santa Cruz.

The municipality holds a 146 km² area, divided among 11 parishes and has 23 000 inhabitants. It is proud of its brave roots: in the times of the “Reconquista” (Iberian Reconquest from the Muslims) its lands were awarded by D. Afonso Henriques to D. Jordan, for services rendered in conquering Lisbon from the moors.

Nowadays, it is a modern municipality, focused in increasing the knowledge of its citizens and visitors. There is an acknowledged effort from its part in developing infrastructures which facilitate the access to such knowledge, mainly as regards two *ex-libris* themes of Lourinhã: dinosaurs and the Battle of Vimeiro.

It was not nicknamed the “Dinosaur Capital” by accident. Years of field work have been disclosing unique paleontological patrimony, bringing to scientific light specimens which are unique worldwide. They have been taken from their stone bed in the seashore cliffs to the Museum of Lourinhã. This museological unit holds the largest Iberian collection of fossils from the Late Jurassic epoch, which is also one of the most important worldwide. This collection, along with the contributions of the population, is organised into four sections:

Archaeology, Sacred Art, Ethnography (the largest ethnographic collection of the West Region), and Palaeontology.

In Lourinhã, the coastline spreads across 12 km, alongside which many specimens of dinosaurs have been found. Its steep and characteristic cliffs show strata from the mythical Late Jurassic epoch, and no-one can even try to guess what is still lying inside it. We already know that Porto Dinheiro, Peralta, and Paimogo have offered us some of the most fantastic fossils in the country, and that there is still much to unveil among the characteristic layers of this seashore area.

We gain a more precise and interesting perspective of the Battle of Vimeiro, since it was on that occasion that the previously invincible Napoleonic troops were utterly defeated. It took place in the distant year of 1808, in August, under the command of Arthur Wellesley, who defeated General Junot.

Furthermore, and considering that the whole of the seashore area of Lourinhã is comprised by the SCI Peniche/ Santa Cruz, it has numerous contributions for the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network. With delightful and crystal clear water beaches, well defined dune extensions, and cliffs from where one glimpses the endless sea, not many people can claim that this landscape is not a very enjoyable place to visit.

Escavações



Vista da Costa





Peniche

Peniche lives for its inhabitants. All the activities it organises for them radiate with a vibrant and contagious energy, which sinks in and promotes the well-being of those who live there, as well as those just passing through. In fact, the appeal of these lands is well and widely known, as they attract all those who seek beautiful beaches, the scent of the ocean, a cure for their rheumatism, or simply the taste of good fresh fish.

The municipality of Peniche comprises an area of 77,7 km² spread across six parishes. It holds a population of about 28 000 inhabitants, and it is widely known for its arts, namely for its exquisite bobbin lace, which is acknowledged both internationally and domestically.

It possesses a characteristic round Geomorphology, with a coast jagged by small and mysterious coves, and it brings to memory the ancestral customs that this peninsula embraced from Roman times, when it was a centre for inter-regional commercial exchanges, which favoured, for example, the trade of Lusitanian preserved goods and Andalusia wine.

Its emerald coloured waters spread from Cape Carvoeiro to the Berlengas archipelago, along 11 miles; this sea witnessed shipwrecks, and fathered some sad stories, such as the one of the *Amigos de Peniche* (Peniche Friends), who never

returned, as well as some epic feats, performed by all who dared (and still dare) to cross it in stormy days.

From History to Nature's best, it is in Peniche that the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network holds one of its largest dune extensions, near Consolação. When you go through this route, in a municipality which comprises 13% of the whole area of the Peniche/ Santa Cruz SCI, you may also observe the largest national extensions of limestone pavements, located in the area of Carvoeiro and in Consolação, which holds one of the most studied Late Jurassic areas, filled with easily seen fossils.

Regarding its built heritage, Peniche possesses a rich collection, namely of monuments classified as National Monuments, and among which we have the unique Fortress of Peniche (16th century), with its characteristic and starred shape, the Military Fortress of Consolação, Saint Leonard's Church, in Atouguia da Baleia, and Saint John the Baptist's Fort, in Berlenga, which possesses arches connecting it to the island.







Paisagem Início Lourinhã



Flor das Dunas



Ovo de Terápode



The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network

The Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is a linear route, and may thus be followed from the South towards the North, beginning at the Assenta Beach, in Torres Vedras, or from North to South, beginning at Cape Carvoeiro, in Peniche. It follows the whole of the coastline of the municipality of Torres Vedras, reaching the municipality of Lourinhã, and crossing it as far as Peniche, where it ends, near the Lighthouse of Cape Carvoeiro, facing the Berlengas archipelago.

The name of Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network was assigned to it because it is an adventure trail along 69,5 km of coastline, crossing the Natura Network 2000's Peniche/ Santa Cruz SCI (by land, since 66% lies on sea waters), and also a small part of the Sintra/ Cascais SCI, which ends in the South area of the municipality of Torres Vedras.

Along the route, which is located in two of the 60 SCI classified in mainland Portugal, the hiker may learn about dune extensions' systems of an impressive dimen-

sion, unique geological and paleontological structures, more than 150 million of years old, and countless life forms, from the avifauna to the species which inhabit the area between tides. You may also learn more about the customs and traditions of the populations, and go through sites which witnessed historic events of great importance to Portugal. All of this in the proximity of magnificent windmills, the sea, which is almost always in site, and in the company of the sunset, in the late afternoon.



The Atlantic Path Western Natura Network

Assenta



Foz Sizandro



Paisagem Agrícola



Trail Description

As mentioned above, the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is a linear route, and can be followed from either way. However, in order to describe it, we chose to follow it from the South to the North, without prejudice of the opposite direction.

Therefore, the Great Trail begins at the Assenta Sul Beach, which is a privileged spot for observing the richness of the Intertidal zone, on low tide, before continuing towards the town of Assenta. When we arrive to the entrance of the town, and descending the Rua do Facho, there is a detour leading to the Lighthouse of Assenta. We then return through the same street, and continue our descent towards the fishing harbour. After visiting these locations, the trail returns to the same crossing, in Assenta. The trail then follows through farming paths, until Cambelas, where we rejoin the sea, and may enjoy the fabulous view over its small beach. From Cambelas, the sea shall accompany you throughout the whole of the way, until the Foz Beach, where River Sizandro joins the sea, and where early in the morning, or late in the day, you may watch several species of sea and limicolous avifauna.

We say “see you later” to the mouth of the Sizandro, and follow some farming paths until we find and cross the River Sizandro, and before taking the path that lead us to the Azul Beach, where we may observe the mouth of the river from another angle. From to Santa Cruz is just a heartbeat, always near the sea (mind the road; although it is not paved, it is often used by cars). At this spot, the Great Trail meets the Trail of the Atlantic (PR2), a small trail of the Municipality of Torres Vedras.

When you arrive to Santa Cruz, take your time to enjoy all that this town has to offer: several beaches which invite you to take a dip, the recovered Watermill of Santa Cruz, Saint Helena’s Chapel, the small verandas, the Amarela Cliff, the Guincho Cliff, and near the latter, on high tide, the Pedra que Bole (Dangling Rock), which “swings” with the undulation.

Leaving Santa Cruz behind, continue towards the Mexilhoeira Beach, again following paths near the sea, and passing by sandstone cliffs, where you may enjoy a variety of flora specimens characteristic of coastal areas. Following the path, and passing by the Seixo Beach, we then follow a



The Atlantic Path Western Natura Network

road to Santa Rita, which is a beach with a long strand of sand area, where you may watch a section of a secondary dune on your left side, and the only section of a tertiary dune visible along this trail, on your right side. The latter holds the ruins of the Penafirme Convent, which deserves to be visited, even if it entails a small detour from the trail, starting from the main road (crossing to the right).

After getting back on track, you shall arrive to Porto Novo, and thus cross the small bridge over the Alcabrichel River, at its meeting point with the ocean. Stop for a while to enjoy the beauty of the beach nestled between the cliffs, and the natural beauty of the Maceira scarps and the little valley surrounding the river, to the East.

Follow the road, leave the sea behind, and begin climbing, with the scarps on your right side, until you find a crossing with a dirt road on the left. Take the latter, and rejoin the paths with farming landscapes.

This landscape shall accompany you until you find national road 247, near Ribamar, which is at the beginning of the municipality of Lourinhã, and at the end of the nearly 27 km of the municipality of Torres Vedras.

After a few meters, the trail continues to the West, thus getting closer to the sea, once more, and going towards the Valmitão Beach. After taking a moment to enjoy the beach and thus gaining a new breath for the ascent, leave towards Porto Dinheiro. Once again following rural paths, you shall arrive to the beach, on whose cliffs several traces of dinosaurs were found, among which a new species which was named *Dinheirosaurus lourinhannensis*.

From there on, the trail follows through crops and greenhouses, passing by Porto de Barcas, and going towards the town of Atalaia de Cima, from which we again approach the sea, towards Peralta Beach. The latter is strongly associated to the shipwreck of Galleon S. Nicolau (17th century), as well as to the discovery of the fossils of yet another dinosaur, *Lourinhanosaurus antunesi*. From Peralta, get ready for yet another ascent, this time through a valley

with high vegetation, which will lead you to the small village of Montoito, afterward passing near the town of Areia Branca, towards Seixal. In this area, briefly take the road EN 247, until the crossing leading to the Areia Branca Beach, which you should take and follow, until you arrive at the Areal Beach, where the Grande River drains into the sea.

This beach holds a relevant dune system, where we may observe mostly primary dune vegetation. It is also here that you may find the panel describing the "Dinosaur Trail" (PR1 of Lourinhã), with which this Great Trail coincides in some places.

From the Areal Beach, continue near the sea, this time along the Areia Branca Beach, leaving it behind and entering a small path that will lead you to the Fort of Nossa Senhora dos Anjos, in Paimogo. This represents the last major historical focal point in the municipality of Lourinhã, from where the trail turns East towards the 247 national road.

Arriba Porto Dinheiro



Along this portion of the trail, concurrent with the busy national road, you should take precautions for your safety. The road will lead you to S. Bernardino, in the municipality of Peniche, where you will be able to visit another beautiful beach. Returning to the centre of the village you must turn to the left taking the road to the Consolação Beach, which runs alongside the sea.



The Atlantic Path Western Natura Network

Arriving to Consolação, stop for a while to observe everything the area has to offer: unique geological structures, with countless fossils, a beach with a long strand of sand, on the opposite side, the Church of Nossa Senhora da Consolação, and also the Fort of Nossa Senhora da Consolação, which is a main part of the defensive line of Peniche.

Leaving Consolação, the trail follows alongside a dune with impressive dimensions, where one may observe several species of the secondary dune. This is the path with we shall follow until the Supertubos Beach, at the entrance of Peniche, then following to the Molho Leste Beach, where it crosses the S. Domingos River.

After crossing the river, the trail enters into the city of Peniche, passing by its urban park and respective maintenance circuit, and following through the urban area, where it passes by the Peniche Fort, which was an old prison establishment of the Es-

tado Novo (New State period), then leaving the urban area again, towards the Carvoeiro Cape.

On the way to the cape, we begin to have a glimpse of the limestone pavements which characterise this location, as well as of small hiding places in the cliffs, where one may watch the crystal clear sea. Cape Carvoeiro, with its lighthouse and the famous Nau dos Corvos (Crow Carrack), is at the end of this 69,5 km adventure.

Forte de Peniche





Intertidal



Environmental Framing

Although the Great Trail's southern boundary is integrated in the Sintra/ Cascais SCI, most of its route is integrated in the Peniche/ Santa Cruz SCI, which comprises a wide coastline, characterized by the changes between dune systems and cliffs. The communities of plants in both systems are in a good conservation status, and their majority hold relevant flowers, including numerous Lusitanian endemisms, such as *Limonium dodartii* spp. *lusitanicum* and *Limonium multiflorum*, in addition to some gorse and briar, which are dominated by *Ulex jussiaei* spp. *congestus*. The dune system is essentially formed by white and grey dunes, dominated by the Lusitanian endemism *Armeria welwitschii*, gorses over sands, with ericaceae or cistaceae, sands with bushes of juniper, and scrubs dominated by thorny shrubs.

The priority *habitats* for the area integrating the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network are the following: fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes), Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulice-tea*), coastal dunes with *Juniperus* spp.,

wet Atlantic heathlands tempered with *Erica ciliaris* and *Erica tetralix*, *limy* or basophile rupicolous grasslands of *Alyso-Sedion albi*, and pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the *Thero-Brachypodietea*.

This is also a wonderful opportunity to watch not only the sea avifauna, as is the case of the great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) or the black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), but also the limicolous avifauna (the turnstone - *Arenaria interpres* - or the kentish plover - *Charadrius alexandrinus*), as well as the land avifauna (kestrel - *Falco tinnunculus* - or the partridge - *Alectoris rufa*).

Intertidal

The Peniche/ Santa Cruz SCI goes into the sea, where it holds half of its total area. It is therefore only fair that we also approach the sea environment which may more easily be observed when walking the Great Trail - the intertidal area. This area has special characteristics, and some of the species it holds are only found in this environment, and are especially adapted to living in it.

The considerable biodiversity of the area between tides is affected by the periodic immersing and emerging systems, which condition the presence and organisation of these communities, stressing the organisms due to long exposures to the air during the emerging periods. When they are immersed, their problems do not get any simpler. In these conditions, they must take the impact from the waves which break on the rocks, provoking currents which put the sands and other sediments in motion, with highly abrasive effects.

From the fauna and the flora composing this ecosystem, we may point out the anemone (*Anemonia sulcata*), the sea urchin (*Paracentrotus lividus*), the red algae (*Asparagopsis armata*, *Corallina elongata*), the green algae (*Codium tomentosum*), and the starfishes (*Asterias rubens*), as well as the limpets (*Patella* sp.), the mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*), and the crabs (*Carcinus*



maenas). All of these may be easily observed in the Assenta Sul Beach, in the Areia Branca Beach, or in the rocky area of the Consolação Beach.

Dune Systems

Most dune systems, which in this Great Trail are found in the Azul, Santa Rita, Areia Branca and Consolação Beaches, are constituted by different areas: the foredune, the primary dune, the inter-dune space, the secondary dune, and should the system be well preserved, the tertiary dune. These areas are distinguished, among other things, by the different species of flora which inhabit them, as well as by the amount of organic matter in the soil.

The foredune is the area closest to the beach and possesses almost no vegetation. However, it can serve as a habitat to such species like the beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*) or the cottonweed (*Otanthus maritimus*).

On the primary dune (white dune) and in addition to the species mentioned in the foredune, we can find the eryngo (*Eryngium maritimum*), the beach morning glory (*Calystegia soldanella*), the sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), and in some cases, some species of the inter-dune space, such as the sea daffodil (*Pancratium Maritimum*).

The secondary dune (grey dune) is richer in organic matter, which allows for the presence of some species of bushes, which need more nutrients. Some of the species which are characteristic in this dune are the curry-plant (*Helichrysum italicum*), the sand stock (*Malcolmia littorea*), the sea medick (*Medicago marina*), the coastal crucianella (*Crucianella maritima*), and the Portuguese crowberry (*Corema album*).

In the places where the dune system is more complex, there may also be a tertiary dune (brown dune), where some arboreal can be found, alongside with the bush species. Some of the examples of species which may be found in this dune are the juniper (*Juniperus turbinata*), the stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), and the cluster pine (*Pinus pinaster*).

The conservation of the dune systems has been the object of concern of the three municipalities, since we all know the importance they bear, not only due to their considerable landscape and environmental value, but also because they make coastal erosion difficult in stormy weather, as well as the invasion of sand brought upon by the wind. However, these advantages are only real if the dynamic balance of the dunes is indeed maintained, which is essentially obtained by the stabilisation of its vegetation. Most dune systems of the Great Trail are well preserved and one can observe a large part of the flower species described in the various "levels" of the dune.

Arméria



Juniperus





Fauna

The majority of fauna species which inhabit the *habitats* characteristic of the Great Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network, apart from those already mentioned for the intertidal area, are relatively easy to observe in specific areas. For example, the Sizandro River, is an interesting area to observe avifauna, as well as species such as the elusive water pipits (*Anthus spinoletta*), in the Fall and the Winter, and other more common, such as the common black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), the great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), with its open wings, drying in the wind, the limicolous species kentish plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), the Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), and the Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*). Some of these species can also be observed in the mouth of the Grande River.

For the Sizandro River, there are also other species: the otter (*Lutra lutra*), and the cyprinid fish *Rutilus macrolepidotus*. In order to ensure the preservation of the river, some specific measures for its management were issued, such as: ensuring the maintenance of the environmental flow, the conditioning of weir construction in sensi-

ve areas, as well as of the interventions on the banks and waterbed, and in the specific case of the *Rutilus macrolepidotus*, the conditioning of fishing through methods which interfere with the bottom of the river.

The strongly farming landscapes which will accompany you throughout the way, will offer you a bucolic walk where it shan't be difficult to observe some species of the fauna typical in these environments, such as the wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), which we can easily spot due to its capacity to glide in search of food, the hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), the southern grey shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*), which is used to stick its prey in the thorns and barbed wire as a way to store food, and the carrion crow (*Corvus corone*), easily identifiable by its screams

At Cape Carvoeiro, in Peniche, we may also observe the uncommon European shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), which regarding its congenerous species, the *Phalacrocorax carbo*, does not have white cheeks, but a crest immediately over its beak. Slightly more to the South, near Molho Leste, we can also spot sanderlings (*Calidris alba*), and occasionally Purple Sandpipers (*Calidris maritima*), which are rare in Portugal.

Borrelho - de - coleira - interrompida



Peneireiro



Poupa







Esqueleto Dinheirossaurus



Paleogeographic and Geological Framing

Regarding Geology, the Great Trail completely lies on the Lusitanian Mesozoic-Cenozoic Sedimentary Basin, which alongside with the basins of Oporto and Algarve, are a part of the group of the national territory Interior Basins. These, as the Exterior Basins (located in deep waters to the West, and to the South of the first ones), came about due to the tectonic processes which led to the opening of the North Atlantic Ocean, more than 250 Ma, the Lusitanian being one of the largest Portuguese interior basins, spreading over an area of about 22 000 km².

From its creation, the Lusitanian Basin began being filled by sedimentary materials, mostly carbonated rocks (limestone and marlstone), and detritic rocks (such as sands, stoneware, clays, and conglomerates) which favoured the process of fossilization of countless organisms, from lamellibranchia to the famous dinosaurs.

Geology and Palaeontology

Along the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network, from the Assenta Sul Beach to the limestone pavements of Cape Carvoeiro, we may observe different geo-structural phenomena, such as abrasion platforms, lodes, volcanic chimneys, and also compacted platforms of fossils, particularly the *lamellibranchia Isognomon lusitanicum*.

The sedimentary materials which began depositing themselves over more ancient layers of the so-called Lusitanina Basin, where as aforementioned, the Great Trail is inserted, were essentially either carbonated or detritic rocks, as is the case in the Guincho Cliff, or in the Amarela Cliff, which are formed by sands, stoneware, clays, and conglomerates.

The collection of fossils already found in the area surrounding the Great Trail includes invertebrates, plants, fishes, crocodiles, shark teeth, cetaceans' skulls and vertebrae, as well as the emblematic dinosaurs, which takes us through a fantastic journey of 450 million years, from the Palaeozoic to the Cainozoic Eras.



The Atlantic Path Western Natura Network

In fact, the area between Consolação and S. Bernardino is one of the main areas for studying the Late Jurassic geological period in Portugal, and we find traces of biostromes (reef-type constructions of the accumulation of coral skeletons and other organisms horizontally laid) of corals, bivalves, gastropods, and other invertebrates.

In Lourinhã, the dinosaur capital by its own right, several specimens of these magnificent animals were found, in the cliffs between the area of Porto Dinheiro and Paimogo. Two of the most important identified specimens were the *sauropos Dinheirosaurus lourinhannensis*, found in Porto Dinheiro, and the *Lourinhanosaurus antunesi*, considered to be the most emblematic dinosaur of Lourinhã, and which was discovered in Peralta.

The Great Trail shall guide you through the places where such unique discoveries were made, as well as others, namely that of *Lusotitan atalaiensis*, the skeleton of which was found in Atalaia, and that of the nes-

ting area of a theropod from the Jurassic, found in Paimogo, and whose eggs are still associated to some embryo bones. However, and so that you may see the fossilized bones of these and other dinosaurs, you must go to the Museum of Lourinhã, where you may receive all the information on the different specimens of dinosaur.

On the extreme North of the Great Trail, at Cape Carvoeiro, one must give considerable relevance to geological elements.

The characteristics of these area are the carbonated and eroded cliffs and the limestone pavements, which are typical formations of Carsic geologies, and which in Cape Carvoeiro, have dimensions which are practically unique in Portugal. Its more representative element is probably the Nau dos Corvos.

Also at this site, and if the sea is not too agitated, you may descend through the small steps that led to the Lage dos Pargos, and observe a series of Jurassic strata (205-135 million years).

Biostromas



Nau dos Corvos





Convento de Penafirme



Praia da Peralta



Paimogo



Built and Cultural Patrimony

However, the Atlantic Path - Western Natura Network is not only rich in natural assets. In fact, the latter is frequently side by side with by a vast number of built and cultural assets, which contribute on their own to enrich this Great Trail.

In fact, from the Mineral Spa of the Cucos, on the right bank of the Sizandro River, which was once acknowledged Europe-wide as having some of the best waters and mud for treating rheumatism, gout, arthritis, and skin problems, to the fortification integrating the Linhas de Torres, located near the Azul Beach, and to the Lighthouse of Cape Carvoeiro, there are countless relevant elements on which it is important to provide some information.

Regarding the Linhas de Torres (1810-1812), an important set of fortified lines, which at the time of the Peninsular War, aimed to defend Lisbon and its harbour from the invading Napoleonic troops, it should be said that they correspond to a fortified and complex system, composed by 152 forts and 628 cannons, which were centred at Saint Vincent's Fort, in Torres

Vedras, and were born from the will of the English General Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, and the first Marquis of Torres Vedras.

Santa Cruz is widely known for the Guincho Cliff, but in addition to the natural appeal, there are also other patrimonial elements which should not be overlooked, such as the small verandas, the Watermill of Santa Cruz (classified by the IGESPAR), and Saint Helena's Chapel.

Further to the North, Porto Novo was the place where the British troops landed. Those troops would fight alongside the Portuguese in the famous Battle of Vimeiro, in 1808, against the Napoleonic troops, when the first French invasion took place. In fact, two British brigades landed on this beach (brigades Anstruther and Anckland), on the eve and dawn of the battle day (20th and 21st of August).

Brigade Anckland, together with other forces commanded by Wellesley, took their position at the plateau of Portelas, southeast from Vimeiro, located within the boundaries of the parish of A-dos-Cunhados, in Louri-



nhã, thus paving the way for French defeat.

This undoubtedly a historically relevant location, but its importance grows even bigger. This is an area which is rich in classified cultural patrimony, as is the case of the ruins of the Penafirme Convent, whose first documental references to the presence of hermits data from 1226. However, it was only in 1638 that the construction of the temple was considered to be finished and dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Assunção (Our Lady of Assumption). The structure which still remains is what resisted the floods of the time of the 1755 earthquake.

Also, the pre-historic caves of Maceira revealed important fauna findings from the Pleistocene, as well as evidence of antropoc use. Some of them also revealed important findings from the Bronze Age.

In Lourinhã, more exactly in Porto Dinheiro, and if you follow this Great Trail in August, be sure to go to the Festa do Mar (Sea Celebration), which is an ethnografic manifestation of which the highest point is the traditional “vacada” on the beach.

In addition to the finding of the *Lourinhanosaurus antunesi* dinosaur, the Peralta Beach is also associated to another important historic fact. It was here that the Carrack São Nicolau was shipwrecked. It was the leading ship of a thirteen ship fleet, commanded by General Tristão de Mendonça, in 1642. This event was so relevant that it is represented in the coat of arms of the parish of Atalaia, specifically representing “a black carrack highlighted in gold, with black masts, wrecked, and dressed in red, with torn sails”.

Continuing to the North, on your way to the municipality of Peniche, you will arrive to Paimogo, easily identifiable due to the presence of the Fort of Nossa Senhora dos Anjos (Our Lady of the Angels) of Paimogo, over the sea. This fort was classified as a Public Interest Building, and built from 1674, aiming at becoming part of a second line of defence of the bank of the Tagus River, from the main square of Peniche to Cascais.

When you arrive to the Consolação Beach, you can observe the rocky area

which attracts many visitors, thanks to the fame of its medical powers, which are due to the accumulation of iodine, favouring the cure of rheumatism.

On the small square of the peninsula of Consolação you can visit the Church of Nossa Senhora da Consolação, built in the late 18th century, in the place of an old chapel and which nave is lined with tiles with themes of the life of Our Lady, and also the Fort of Our Lady of Consolação (National Monument). It was built in 1641 by King João IV, who also built a series of similar fortifying structures on the coastline of the Peniche region, strongly implemented after the Reinstatement of Portuguese Independence.

It was also in this place that in 1589, the English troops commanded by D. António,

Forte da Consolação



Prior do Crato, landed, on the first attempt to reinstate Portuguese independence, and to which is associated the story of the “Amigos de Peniche” (“Friends of Peniche”). Although this expression does not have a positive connotation, and refers to disloyal and dishonest friends, it does not relate to the locals of Peniche, which are a hospitable people. In fact, during the reign of the Spaniard D. Filipe II (king of Spain, Filipe I of Portugal), D. António, Prior do



Crato, a candidate to the Portuguese Crown, after forming an alliance with Elizabeth Tudor, Queen of England, landed on the 26th of May, 1589 on Consolação Beach, with an armada of about 20 000 Englishmen, commanded by General John Norris, so that he could claim his rights. The people whispered, hopefully: "Our friends are coming... Our friends, who landed in Peniche, are coming!..."

But the invader army, and without the Prior do Crato has the strength to avoid it, marched without discipline, devastating, and looting all the lands in their way, until that, when they arrived at the gates of Lisbon, they were bombarded by the cannons of the Castle of Saint George, which led the English "rescuers" to flee and abandon the Portuguese who sided with the Prior do Crato wondering what had happened to those «Friends from Peniche».

Nevertheless, and as an illustrious doctor from Peniche pointed out to a colleague who asked him who were the "Friends from Peniche": they are everyone but the "band of rascals who I find everywhere but there!...". *Nothing could be truer!*

Still in Peniche, and regarding the built patrimony, we should mention the Fort or Fortress of Peniche, which began its constructions by order of D. João III, in 1557, and was finished in 1645, by D. João IV. In addition to its characteristic starred shape, this Fort has a very distinct Round Bastion - the first fortification built in the peninsula of Peniche - a Tower of Guard, and the chapel of Santa Bárbara.

This building had its space used in several ways, according to the needs and historical circumstances of each epoch. Therefore, in addition to being used as a military square until 1897, it was also a shelter for the Boer refugees from South Africa in the early twentieth century, a residence for German and Austrian prisoners during the First World War, a political prison for the Estado Novo, between 1934 and 1974, a provisional lodging for Portuguese families arriving from the old overseas colonies in 1974, and from 1984, the shelter for the Municipal Museum.

Lastly, Cape Carvoeiro, on the end of this Great Trail, is one of the most emblematic sites of the municipality of Peniche, and one of the most recognisable landscapes nationwide.

On this site, which witnessed numerous shipwrecks throughout History, we can observe unique geological structures, watch the fishermen which usually occupy the cliffs, and contemplate the sea from there to the Berlengas archipelago.

This cape's lighthouse is one of the six lighthouses built by order of a License issued by the Marquis of Pombal, on February the 1st, 1758, which established the lighthouses service in Portugal. Therefore, it is one of the oldest lighthouses still working.

It is constituted by a quadrangular tower in masonry, and it is located at 57 meters above sea level, having 27 meters in height. The light from this lighthouse reaches 15 nautical miles (approximately 28 km).

Farol







Beyond the Great Trail

Torres Vedras

Although the Medieval castle was primarily built by the Alans or the Goths, it was rebuilt by the Muslims and later taken in 1148 by D. Afonso Henriques. In 1810, it became part of the Linhas de Torres, together with the Saint Vincent's Fort. The latter was one of the most fortified points of this defensive line, containing 39 cannons, and a capacity for 2000 men. There are also several religious monuments worthy of mentioning, such as the Church of St^a Maria do Castelo, Saint Peter's Church, and also the Varatojo Convent, all of which are National Monuments. There are also other relevant elements such as the Charfariz dos Canos (drinking fountain), which is considered to be the most characteristic construction of Torres Vedras.

Torres Vedras is also a town with miraculous waters. They were sought by queens and princesses, seeking for their ailments. Nowadays, one may still enjoy their therapeutic powers at the Vimeiro Mineral Spa. There is also the Cucos Mineral Spa. Although it is not currently open, it well deserves a visit, which takes through time, into the 19th century, to the years of charm and glamour, of the *Challets*, the *Buvette* and the Casino.

Castelo de Torres Vedras



Lourinhã

Although there are windmills all along the Great Trail, they are more present in Lourinhã. In fact, the miller is one of the most emblematic professions of this municipality, as well as of the whole of the West area. The municipality still holds several working windmills which one may visit, namely a recently restored set located at the village of Moita dos Ferreiros, called "Moinhos da Pinhoa".

Regarding religious architecture, there are two monuments classified as National

Monumento evocativo da batalha do Vimeiro



Monuments: the Castle Church, with a Gothic configuration allegedly dating from a reconstruction from the 14th century, and the Saint Anthony's Church and Convent, which belonged to the Order of the Franciscan, and which would have been founded in 1598.

In Lourinhã, and following the aforementioned on the Battle of Vimeiro, there is still a monument in the place where that important battle was fought, which was inaugurated on the day of the one hundred year anniversary of the event, in the presence of D. Manuel II. It has about 4,5m in height, and it symbolises the thankfulness for the brave services rendered by the British troops in said battle. Made by national artists, this monument honouring the Battle of Vimeiro is classified as a Public Interest Building.



Peniche

In Peniche, outside the route of the Great Trail, be sure to visit Papôa, North of Cape Carvoeiro. It is a small peninsula connected to land by a narrow isthmus, which represents a stratigraphic boundary between different rocky formations, and where in addition to dazzling landscapes, you may visit a volcanic breccia; also, the Berlengas, a Natural Reserve which is the habitat for plants and animal specimens which are unique in the world.

As regards the architectural patrimony, one should mention the Rosário Fountain (16th or 17th century), from which this area with serious water deficiencies drunk, as well as the churches of Saint Peter (16th century) and of Mercy (17th century), in Peniche, and the churches of Saint Leonard (12th century) and Nossa Sr^a da Conceição, in Atouguia da Baleia, the church of Saint Leonard being the most relevant of the municipality, since it is classified as a National Museum. It is also worth to mention the Sanctuary of Nossa Sr^a dos Remédios, perching over the sea, and Saint John the Baptist's Fort, in Berlenga (also a National Monument, together with the arches connecting it to the island).





Food and Lodging

Lodging

Hotel Santa Cruz

Rua José Pedro Lopes,
Praia de Santa Cruz – Silveira
2560-418 Torres Vedras
Phone: +351 261 930 330
Fax: +351 261 930 339
E-mail: reservas.hotelsantacruz@gmail.com
Web: <http://hotelsantacruz.org>

Hotel Apartamento Praia Azul

Rua da Varandinha, Praia Azul,
Santa Cruz
2560-411 Torres Vedras
Phone: +351 261 930 100
Fax: +351 261 930 139
E-mail: htl.praiaazul@mail.telepac.pt
Web: <http://www.praiaazul.com>

Hotel Golf Mar

Praia do Porto Novo – Maceira
2560-100 Torres Vedras
Phone: +351 261 980 800
Fax: +351 261 984 621
E-mail: hotelgolfmar@eav.pt
Web: <http://www.eav.pt>;
Web: <http://maisturismo.pt/hgolfmar>

Parque Campismo da Praia de Santa Cruz

Praia de Santa Cruz – Silveira
2560-495 Silveira
Phone: +351 261 930 150
Fax: +351 261 930 155

Restaurants

Restaurante Vela d'Ouro

Rua Jerónimo Vilarinho lote 30, Loja 6
Santa Cruz
2560-492 Silveira
Phone: +351 261 931 933

Restaurante Grão d'Areia

Avenida Dr. Jacinto Leandro (EN 247),
Santa Rita Norte – Maceira

Restaurante Praia do Navio

Praia Navio Santa Cruz Vale de Janelas
2560-051 A-dos-Cunhados
Phone: +351 261 937 241

Restaurante Hotel Golf Mar

Praia do Porto Novo – Maceira
2560-100 Torres Vedras
Phone: +351 261 980 800
Fax: +351 261 984 621
E-mail: hotelgolfmar@eav.pt
Web: <http://www.eav.pt>;
Web: <http://maisturismo.pt/hgolfmar>



Food and Lodging Lourinhã

Lodging

Noiva do Mar ****

Estrada Vale Bravo – Atalaia
2530 – 038 Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 430 090
Fax: +351 261 431 091
E-mail: reservas@noivadomar.pt
Web: <http://www.noivadomar.pt/>

Pensão (Residencial) Dom Lourenço

Avenida António José do Vale
Praia da Areia Branca
2530 - 213 Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 422 809
Fax: +351 261 471 182
Web: <http://www.domlourenco.com>

Pensão Figueiredo

Largo Anacleto Marques da Silva
2530 - 125 Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 422 537
Fax: +351 261 412 697
E-mail: info@residencialfigueiredo.com
Web: <http://www.residencialfigueiredo.com>

Pousada de Juventude da Praia da Areia Branca

Praia da Areia Branca
2530 - 217 Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 422 127
Fax: +351 261 471 054
E-mail: areiabranca@movijovem.pt
Web: <http://www.pousadasjuventude.pt>

Restaurants

Restaurante Manjar da Praia

Av. António José do Vale
Praia da Areia Branca
2530 - 213 Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 469 346
Cell Phone: +351 917 356 773
Fax: +351 261 469 348
<http://www.restaurantemanjardapraia.com>

Restaurante O Remo

Rua dos Mestres, nº 4
Praia de Porto Dinheiro
2530-626 Ribamar
Phone: +351 261 422 589
Fax: +351 261 422 589

Marisqueira Frutos do Mar

Sítio da Água Doce, 12
Praia de Porto das Barcas
2530-015 Atalaia - Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 416 588
Fax: +351 261 412 481
E-mail: frutosdomar@iol.pt

Marisqueira Alto d'Arriba

Estrada de Porto de Barcas
2530 - 015 Atalaia - Lourinhã
Phone: +351 261 469 008
Cell Phone: +351 917 745 088
or +351 918 787 811
E-mail: reis104@hotmail.com



Food and Lodging Peniche

Lodging

Atlântico Golfe Hotel****

Casal do Botado
Praia da Consolação
2525-150 Atouguia da Baleia
Phone: +351 262 757 700
Fax: +351 262 750 717
atlanticogolfhotel@atlanticogolfhotel.com
Web: www.atlanticogolfhotel.com

Aparthotel D. Rita Park***

Casal do Botado
Praia da Consolação
2525-150 Atouguia da Baleia
Phone: +351 262 757 800
Fax: +351 262 757 809
atlanticogolfhotel@atlanticogolfhotel.com
Web: www.atlanticogolfhotel.com

Hotel Praia Norte ***

Av. Monsenhor Manuel Bastos
2520 – 206 Peniche
Phone: +351 262 780 500
Fax: +351 262 780 509
hotelpraianorte@hotelpraianorte.com
Web: www.hotelpraianorte.com

Hotel Soleil Peniche***

Estrada do Baleal
2520-206 Peniche
Phone: +351 262 780 400
Fax: +351 262 783 815
E-mail: peniche@soleilhotels.com

Restaurants

Restaurante Faz as Pazes

Rua N^o Sr^a da Esperança, n^o 69
Lugar da Estrada
Cell Phone: 962 329 762

Restaurante Mira Mar

Av. do Mar, 42
2520 – 205 Peniche
Phone: +351 262 781 666

Restaurante Portinho d'Areia

Sítio do Porto de Areia Sul
2520-999 Peniche
Phone: +351 262 789 062
Fax: +351 262 787 547
Cell Phone: +351 931 697 893
E-mail: lborinholopes@iol.pt

Restaurante Nau dos Corvos

Cabo Carvoeiro
2520-605 Peniche
Phone and Fax: +351 262 783 168
Cell Phone: +351 918 816 515
E-mail: dneto@naudoscorvos.com



Useful Contacts

Torres Vedras

City Hall of Torres Vedras

+351 261 310 400

In case of emergency or fire (SOS) - 112

Lourinhã

City Hall of Lourinhã

+351 261 410 100

Fax: +351 261 410 108

Junta Freguesia de Atalaia

+351 261 411 294

Fax: +351 261 411 294

Junta de Freguesia da Lourinhã

+351 261 422 159 / +351 261 422 261

+351 261 423 350

Junta de Freguesia de Ribamar

+351 261 461 298

Taxis (Lourinhã)

+351 261 413 280 / +351 919 364 854

Taxis (Ribamar)

+351 261 422 980 / +351 966 772 909

+351 962 436 204 / +351 261 422 980

Lourinhã Health Centre

+351 261 417 950

Lourinhã Fire Fighters

(Urgências)

+351 261 411 047

Police (G.N.R.) Lourinhã

+351 261 422 021

Tourism Lourinhã

+351 261 410 127 / +351 261 410 108

Tourism Areia Branca Beach

+351 261 422 167

Fax: +351 261 410 108

Lourinhã Museum

+351 261 414 003 / +351 261 413 995;

Fax: +351 261 423 887

Batalha do Vimeiro

Interpretative Centre

+351 261 988 471; Fax: +351 261 984 211

Peniche

City Hall of Peniche

+351 262 780 100

Police (P.S.P.) Peniche

+351 262 790 310

Police (G.N.R.) Peniche

+351 262 782 152

Brigada Fiscal

+351 262 789 888

Capitania do Porto de Peniche

(Port Authority)

+351 262 784 109 / +351 918 498 039

Peniche Fire Fighters

+351 262 789 666

Hospital

+351 262 781 900

Serviço Municipal de Protecção Civil

(Civil Protection Cabinet)

+351 927 519 104

Instituto de Socorros a Náufragos

(life guards)

+351 262 789 629

Tourism

+351 262 789 571

Parque Municipal de Campismo (Camping)

+351 262 789 529

Arméria – Environmental Group of Peniche

associacaoarmeria@gmail.com







Código de conduta

Não saia do percurso marcado e sinalizado. Preste atenção às marcações.

Não deite lixo no chão. Transporte consigo um recipiente ou saco onde o possa guardar para posteriormente o deitar num contentor próprio.

É fundamental respeitar as plantas e os animais silvestres, já que todos cumprem um importante papel na Natureza.

As culturas e o gado devem ser respeitados. Procure não assustar os animais, passando tanto quanto possível, afastado deles.

Feche cancelas e portelos.

Evite o pisoteio fora dos caminhos, pois se o fizer estará a criar um impacte desnecessário.

Evitar os incêndios depende de todos – não faça lume.

O silêncio pode ser uma boa companhia... não faça ruído.

As recordações devem ser mantidas. Use e abuse da máquina fotográfica, mas não recolha plantas, pedras ou outros elementos naturais.

Para melhor usufruir deste percurso aconselha-se o uso de roupa e calçado adequados para caminhada, chapéu ou impermeável e ainda que se faça acompanhar de um recipiente com água.

Aproveite a oportunidade para gozar do contacto com a Natureza.

Esqueça as pressas, preste atenção às pequenas coisas e deixe-se levar pela atmosfera envolvente.

