

AND CULTURE

FROM THE SERRA D'ARGA TO THE FOZ DO ÂNCORA

PRODUCED BY



TERRITÓRIO XXI

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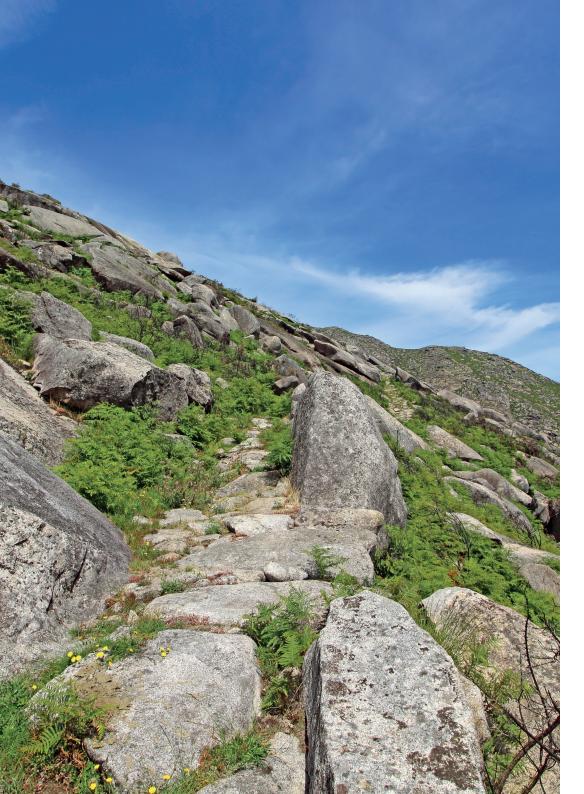
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Introduction

According to the European Landscape Convention (ELC)1, "Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors, performing an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields.

In Portugal, the adoption of the ELC led to the formulation of the National Policy on Architecture and Landscape (PNAP), determined by Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 45/2015, of 7 July, which identifies the four values associated with architecture and landscape:

- a) Social value spatial and biophysical support for life in society;
- b) **Cultural value** a living testimony of the collective past and a significant part of the heritage of peoples and nations;

- c) **Economic value** assets and resources creating wealth and benefits for society;
- d) **Environmental value** the result of human intervention in the natural and built environment.

Therefore, in order to educate the population to protect the Landscape and Culture of the Site of Community Importance 'Serra de Arga', this brochure has been published as part of a wide range of promotional materials aimed at raising awareness about the value of the area's landscape, fauna, flora, geology and culture.

A granite slab path winding through the blockfields on the Cerquido slope

¹The **European Landscape Convention** (ELC), adopted by the member States of the Council of Europe in October 2000 at the ministerial meeting held in Florence, came into effect in 2004 and was ratified by Portugal in 2005 by means of Decree No. 4/2005 of 14 February. The ELC is aimed at the protection, management and planning of the landscape, as well as at the fostering of European cooperation in this field.

Site of Natura 2000 network 'Serra de Arga'

The **Natura 2000** network consists of a wide range of sites of particular importance for nature conservation and biodiversity in European Union countries.

The network was created following the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC), which list the priority species and habitats requiring protection.

Site 'Serra de Arga'

The importance of the Serra d'Arga was initially recognised nationally, given the rare and diverse habitats present in the biogeographical region and the fact that it is home to a number of species that are endangered at the European level. In the year 2000, designated as Site of Community Importance 'Serra de Arga' (SCI PTCON0039), it was included in the

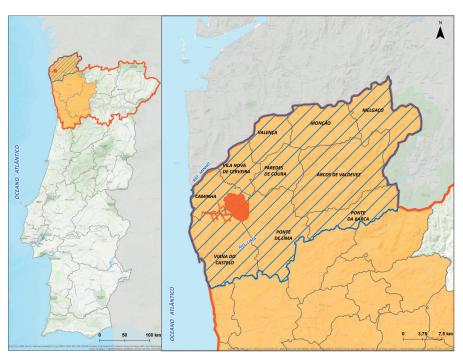
second phase of the national list of sites proposed for the Natura 2000 network (Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 76/00, of 5 July). Later, on 7 December 2004, the site was approved by the European Commission.

The Site 'Serra de Arga' has an area of 4,493 hectares covering the municipalities of Caminha, Ponte de Lima and Viana do Castelo.

The Site's territory is located in the Norte Region of Portugal (NUT II), the Alto Minho Subregion (NUT III) and the Entre Douro e Minho Agricultural Region. It is part of the Alto Minho Inter-municipal Community, together with the municipalities of Arcos de Valdevez, Melgaço, Monção, Paredes de Coura, Ponte da Barca, Valença and Vila Nova de Cerveira.

Municipality	Area (Hectares)	% of the Municipality classified	% of the Site in the Municipality
Caminha	1,891	14%	42%
Ponte de Lima	449	1%	10%
Viana do Castelo	2,154	7%	48%

Municipalities covered by the Site of Community Importance 'Serra de Arga' (Source: Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests, 2000)



Geographical context of the Site of Community Importance 'Serra de Arga'

Location of SIC PTCON0039 'Serra de Arga'

Alto Minho Subregion

Norte Region of mainland Portugal

Entre Douro e Minho Agricultural Region

Natural heritage

The Site 'Serra de Arga' has a valuable natural heritage, which includes natural and semi-natural habitats as well as species of fauna and flora whose conservation is considered a priority.

- Ten natural and semi-natural habitats (listed in annex I of the Habitats Directive) that serve as a refuge for some rare species;
- A species of flora listed in annex II of the Habitats Directive: *Centaurea micrantha* ssp. *berminii*;

• Twelve species of animals listed in annex II of the Habitats Directive: orange-spotted emerald (Oxygastra curtisii), allis shad (Alosa alosa), twaite shad (Alosa fallax), Iberian nase (Chondrostoma polylepis), Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar), gold-striped salamander (Chioglossa lusitanica), Iberian emerald lizard (Lacerta schreiberi), wolf (Canis lupus), Pyrenean desman (Galemys pyrenaicus), otter (Lutra lutra), greater horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum), and lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros).

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Climate

The Alto Minho sub-region, which includes the Site 'Serra de Arga', has a temperate Mediterranean climate influenced by the Atlantic. The Mediterranean climate is characterised by matching higher precipitation values with lower temperatures, resulting in a cool, wet winter and a warmer, drier summer. The Atlantic influence is evident throughout the Alto Minho, largely due to the condensation barrier in north-west Portugal in the form of the mountains of Arga, Peneda, Gerês, Alvão and Marão, which increases dampness and, consequently, rainfall levels throughout the year and causes a homogenisation of temperature.

In the Serra d'Arga, in the period from 1970 to 2000 and for January and August, respectively the coldest and warmest months of the year, the average mountain-top temperatures ranged from 5 to 17°C. Rainfall registers an annual average of 1,000 to 2,400 mm and relative air humidity varies between 80% and 85%, which often causes the occurrence of the characteristic mountain fog that frequently features in popular proverbs.

Cloudiness from the Atlantic crowning the Alto da Coroa



Eastern slope of the Serra d'Arga

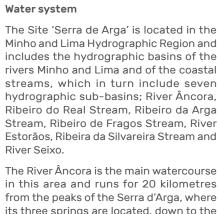


Weir on the River Âncora, beside the São João picnic area

Relief

The territory of the Site 'Serra de Arga' is characterised by a high altimetric amplitude which occurs in just 14 kilometres, from the peaks of the mountain to almost the Atlantic coast, through the valley of the River Âncora. Most of the territory is about 300 metres above sea level, occupying the granitic massif of the mountain, whose extremely steep slopes rise to an altitude of 700 metres.

From this level upwards the mountain tops flatten out, and this is where you can find the largest plains: Grande, São João and Chão das Sizedas, among which are several elevations such as Espinheiro, which at 825 metres is the highest point in the mountain.



The River Âncora is the main watercourse in this area and runs for 20 kilometres from the peaks of the Serra d'Arga, where its three springs are located, down to the sea in Vila Praia de Âncora. Its main tributaries are the River Poço Negro, the River Paradela, the Ribeira de Amonde Stream and the Ribeira de Gondar Stream.



Granite rock with six basins in the Serra d'Arga

Geology

Both from the landscape and the architecture it is easy to see that the mountain consists mainly of granite and schist. About 75% of the land is granite rock, which is mainly located in the batholith of the Serra d'Arga and towards the end of the Âncora river valley. This plutonic rock is characterised by the coarse grain of two micas with rare mega-crystals, which is constantly eroded by its exposure, resulting in a tabular to spheroidal disjunction.

The schist occupies approximately 25% of the area and these metamorphic rocks are mainly located in the area surrounding the batholith of the mountain and the central section of the River Âncora and that of its major tributaries. Outcrops with aplite-pegmatite and quartz veins cover

the lithological contact zone between granite and schist rocks. The fracturing and alteration of granitic and schist-magmatite rocks, combined with geomorphological characteristics and high rainfall, provide the region with good hydrogeological conditions, being numerous the permanent springs.

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Fauna and flora

A total of 548 taxons of vascular flora have been recorded in the Site 'Serra de Arga'. of which 70 are exotic and 478 native. The latter include 32 RELAPE (Rare, Endemic, Localised and Threatened or in Danger of Extinction) species, such as fragrant thrift (Armeria humilis subsp. odorata), Carex durieui, Dryopteris guanchica, Dryopteris carthusiana, Genista berberidea and figwort (Scrophularia bourgaeana). The latter is endemic to the Iberian Peninsula but its existence in Portugal was questioned: it had been seen only once, in 1978, making it one of the rarest examples of Portuguese flora. The Serra d'Arga is also the only place in Portugal where Laserpitium prutenicum subsp. duriananum can be found.

The forest patches, mainly in the valleys of the River Âncora and its tributaries, are dominated by stands of maritime pine (Pinus pinaster) and bluegum eucalyptus (Eucalyptus globulus). However, you can still find species of native deciduous trees, mainly in productive woodlands and riparian galleries. The woodlands are often a mixture of common oak (Quercus robur), cork oak (Quercus suber) and, here and there, beech (Fagus sylvatica) and riparian galleries of birch (Betula alba), alder (Alnus glutinosa), ash (Fraxinus angustifolia) and willow (Salix atrocinerea). Beside villages you can also find orchards with different species of fruit trees including olive (Olea sp.), sweet chestnut (Castanea sativa) and walnut (Juglans regia).







Garranos in Chã de São João

Records suggest that in the Site's area and along the final section of the River Âncora, bird species number 126, mammals 33, reptiles 12, amphibians 10 and fish 5. Of these, only 4 are considered exotic. The species considered endangered in Portugal include the great spotted cuckoo (Clamator glandarius), European honey buzzard (Pernis apivorus), Montagu's harrier (Circus pygargus), European nightjar (Caprimulaus europaeus), common sandpiper (Actitis hypoleucos), common tern (Sterna hirundo), gold-striped salamander (Chioglossa Iusitanica), Pyrenean desman (Galemys pyrenaicus) and the wolf (Canis lupus).

Species endemic to the Iberian Peninsula and abundant in the area are also worthy of mention: the Iberian painted frog (Discoglossus galganoi), the Iberian frog (Rana iberica), Bosca's newt (Lissotriton Boscai), the Iberian emerald lizard (Lacerta

schreiberi) and Bocage's wall lizard (Podarcis bocagei).

As for mammals, ten of the 33 species recorded here are bats, among which the greater horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum) and lesser horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) are considered vulnerable. Otters (Lutra lutra) are also found in the area, along with the iconic herds of Garrano ponies (Equus caballus).

Ichthyofauna found in the area include the European eel (Anguilla anguilla) and the three-spined stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus), shad (Alosa alosa and Alosa fallax), Iberian nase (Chondrostoma polylepis) and salmon (Salmo salar), the latter being a critically endangered species. In Portugal, salmon can only be found between the rivers Lima and Minho.

Landscape

Abruptly emerging from the surrounding schist is the rocky outcrop that forms the heights of the Serra d'Arga; a vast ellipsoidal area of granite rock, approximately 9 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide — the batholith of the Serra d'Arga — that occupies 82% of the territory of the Site 'Serra de Arga'.

The landscape is characterised by the extremely steep granite slopes of the mountain that eventually level off after they reach a height of about 700 metres.

It is there that you can find the largest of the plains — flat, poorly drained depressions, varying in size and swept by Atlantic winds — one of the most characteristc natural elements of this mountainous landscape.

The Chā Grande, Chā de São João and Chão das Sizedas, where herds of Garrano ponies and cattle can often be seen grazing, adding to the bucolic character of the landscape, are the most emblematic of these Serra d'Arga plains.



Strongly contrasting with these flatlands, the surrounding area has rocky granite outcrops, composed mainly of blockfields, but where other features of geological interest such as basins, giant's kettles, pedunculated and fractured rocks revealing pseudostratification can also be seen.

Countless watercourses emerge from the highest points in the mountain, some of them deeply embedded in the regular slopes of the batholith such as the Enxurro, Lapa Ladrão and Póvoa brooks — springs of the River Âncora, to the east, and the Ribeiro de São João Stream, to the north.

The vegetation mainly consists of dense heaths of gorse and heather, sparce patches of herbaceous plants and, here and there, characteristic pine trees isolated on the granite slopes and small clusters of birches on the larger plains. You can also come across small woodlands and riparian galleries consisting of native broadleaved species such as common oak, cork oak, birch, alder, holly and others on the flatlands at the bottom of the batholith and beside villages, especially Arga de Baixo, Arga de Cima and Cerquido, and along the watercourses that cross this area.



Penedo das Couves plain





This is a very sparsely populated and wild area where, apart from the population clusters previously mentioned, the only human impact worthy of mention is the religious architecture in the form of, for example, the Monastery of São João d'Arga and the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Minho, the ruins of forest rangers' houses and the Fojo do Lobo, a unique example of the ancestral relationship between humans and wolves, in Alto do Cavalinho.

Given their height and their isolation from the surrounding area, the granite peaks of the Serra d'Arga offer some of the best views in the Alto Minho. On their flat granite tops there are countless breathtaking viewpoints where you can see the expanse of land ranging from the highest points of the Peneda-Gerês National Park to the Atlantic Ocean and between the valleys of the rivers Minho and Lima.

Panoramic view over Cerquido and the valleys of the rivers Estorãos and Lima

Leaving behind the granite territory of the batholith, the landscape of the Site 'Serra de Arga' changes dramatically at lower altitudes with flatter lands made of schist, along the narrow valleys with more fertile soils of the rivers Âncora and Galego, Ribeiro de Amonde and Ribeira de Gondar streams, between 100 and 250 metres above sea level. Beyond the Site's territory, but naturally inseparable from its landscape, are the villages of Espantar, Trás-Âncora, Montaria, Amonde and Orbacém, which make maximum use of these alluvial plains and meadows for agriculture and livestock grazing. In some places, especially Trás-Âncora and Espantar, facing each other along the banks of the River Âncora, crops are grown on wide terraces supported by stone walls with trellises to support vines, orchards and olive groves, providing one of the most characteristic and beautiful images of this landscape.

The forest area, mainly consisting of bluegum eucalyptus and maritime pine, encompasses this landscape mosaic.

However, you can still find small to medium-sized stands of native species such as common oak, cork oak, alder, willow, ash and holly in riparian galleries, property perimeters and productive woodlands beside the villages.

Finally, another characteristic element of this landscape surrounding the Site is the small properties, called cantões de gatenho, bordered by dry stone walls, which are generally used for forestry purposes.

View over Trás-Âncora and its terraces







Between the western schist slopes of the Serra de Amonde and the waters of the Atlantic, a vast granite basin opens up to show the valley of the River Âncora and, in its centre, the last part of the Site's territory, along the banks of the Âncora and its major tributaries and fertile alluvial plains.

This luminous Atlantic basin has a dispersed but dense settlement system, typical of the Minho region, with Vila Praia de Âncora at the top, where intense agricultural activity is developed in the interstices.

Small to medium-sized maritime pine forests, riparian galleries and thickets with ash trees, alders and willows, complete this agroforestry mosaic.

Surrounding this mosaic, and on the steepest terraces of the surrounding mountains, is a dense forest, beyond which the slopes are covered by heaths and sparse vegetation, from which granite outcrops emerge, practically barren and similar to the landscape at the highest points of the granite batholith of the Serra d'Arga.





Valley and agricultural fields of the River Âncora (above)

Atlantic basin of the Âncora and Alto da Espiga (opposite page, bottom)

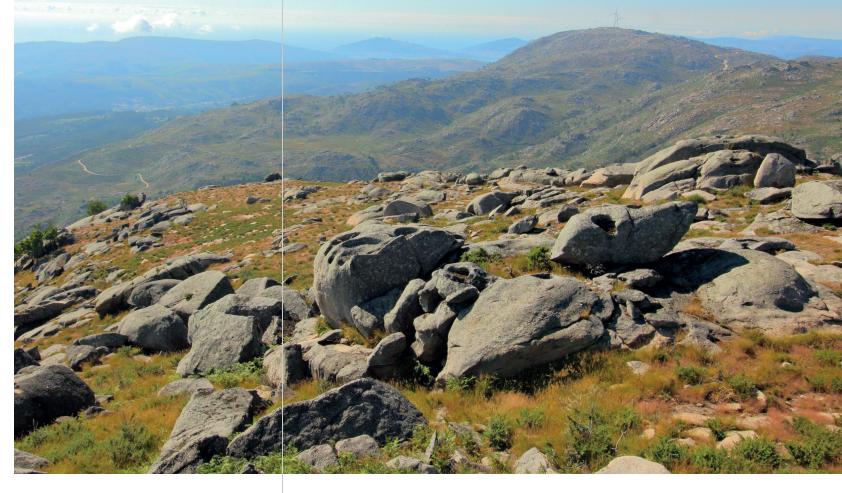
Alluvial plain and riparian gallery of the River Âncora (left)

When exploring the territory of the Site 'Serra de Arga' it is possible not only to have a feeling of complete oneness with nature; with the fauna and flora of the mountain and rivers, in the heart of a densely populated region, but also to appreciate the villages, the cultivated terraces and alluvial plains that dot the hillsides and the bottom of the valleys, and the wealth and abundance of uses and customs, testimony to the age-old relationship between man and this landscape. The natural and built environments combine in a unique landscape of immense scenic diversity and great beauty, surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic, Minho and Lima.

> View over the blockfields and Pedra Alçada from Alto do Corisco (right)

Aerial view over of the Chã de São João (bottom left)

View over the Ribeiro das Pombas Stream alluvial plain (bottom right)



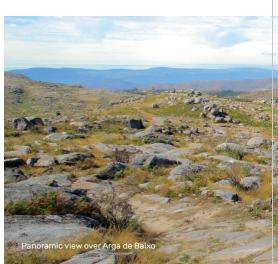


















Architectural heritage

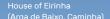
HOUSES AND FARMS

The traditional building methods used in the Serra d'Arga are evident from these rustic buildings — rectangular in shape, with two floors, schist walls, cornerstones and lintels of granite and tiled gable roofs.

On the lower floor is the space for livestock or for carrying out domestic chores such as bread making (store). On the upper floor, with only one room for the whole family, there is a small granite wood-fired oven used for cooking and heating.

The most important farms are, undoubtedly, the mountain houses, which present all the most characteristic elements of the traditional farming houses of the Serra d'Arga: a main building consisting of two floors (store and living space), built from granite and schist; a yard or semi-covered

interior walled-in patio, surrounded by animal shelters and a space for storing manure; a long, narrow granary built from granite, with a threshing floor; granite and schist walls and fertile plots located along the banks of one of the numerous watercourses that flow through the mountain. The House of Eirinha in Arga de Baixo is an excellent example of a mountain house.





WATER FOUNTAINS

The many man-made water fountains testify to the importance of water throughout the Serra d'Arga and the Âncora valley. Following or crossing the numerous watercourses, occupying strategic positions, half-buried in the soil or leaning on small earth retention walls, beside a staircase leading up to a mill, dam or irrigation channel, dozens of such fountains — with considerable heritage value — can be found in the area.

SHEPHERDS' SHELTERS

The two shepherds' shelters of Arga de Cima and Montaria, 550 and 780 metres above sea level respectively, are the only surviving structures of their kind in the mountain and still provide compelling evidence of a harsh rural way of life.

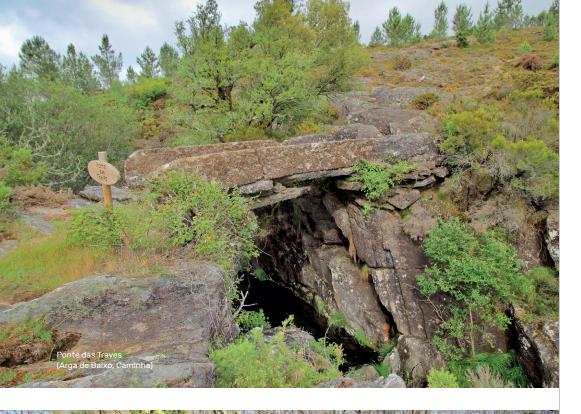
Salgueira water fountain (Arga de Baixo, Caminha)

Shepherds' shelter (Arga de Cima, Caminha)













BRIDGES AND PONTOONS

Some bridges and pontoons are a curious form of crossing the watercourses of the Serra d'Arga and the Âncora valley on foot.

One such pedestrian bridge is the rudimentary Ponte das Traves (Bridge of Slabs), which is set on rocky outcrops and whose name comes from its base in megalithic stone slabs and sideguards.

Dating back to the end of the 17th or early 18th century, numerous pontoons made from longitudinally aligned single stone slabs provide a path across the River Âncora in Freixieiro de Soutelo (Viana do Castelo), such as the Pontão do Hilário, Pontão da Tábua, Pontão do Cais and Pontão da Alhada.

Also of interest is the Pontão do Lobo (Wolf's Pontoon), built in the middle of the 17th century as a means of crossing the Regato da Fraga Brook, in Arga de Cima, on foot. The pontoon consists of an original arch made with vertically positioned granite slabs that resemble the backbone of a wolf, one of the most emblematic species in the Serra d'Arga.

MILLS

The mills are among the traditional buildings that were offundamental importance for the economy of the region, and were dependent on one of the structuring elements of the mountain: the hydrological network.

Water and rivers have always been a part not only of this mountainous landscape but also of the local economy, the fertile farmlands, working and social gathering spaces. Due to its agricultural past, the Âncora valley presents an extremely important industrial/artisanal heritage — a symbol of how the local human population mastered nature while maintaining its ecosystems.

There are around 800 of these traditional structures in this territory, which can be classified into two categories: the mountain mills (especially from 100 metres above sea level) and the plain mills.

The mountain mills are extremely rustic constructions, made out of loose stones, with a tiny narrow door and gable roof made of schist or granite sheeting.





Orbacém Mill (Caminha)

Some of the plain mills contain small equipped workshops used for maintenance of milling equipment. In the Serra d'Arga, only three of these larger structures can be found, all dating back to the end of the 17th century, amongst which is the Orbacém Mill (Caminha).

SHRINES AND NICHES

In the Serra d'Arga, numerous shrines and niches can be found alongside old roads and crossroads, attracting devout passers-by.

Cut into the sides of houses or boundary walls, or standing more prominently on roads or bridges, these small monuments are usually protected by a small iron grate and feature a painted wood or tile panel showing the souls in Purgatory under a crucified Christ.

CROSSES AND LARGE CROSSES

There are crosses at the sides of the roads and crossroads; on bridges, walls of private properties, and the gates of the oldest houses and farms; and close to churches, chapels and sanctuaries.

Large crosses (cruzeiro) can be found at crossroads near more rural villages, many of them dating back to the mid- or late 17th century. Some are associated with particular religious rituals, such as the Cruzeiro da Ladeira (or Clamores), an obligatory stopping point for pilgrims on their way to the São João d'Arga Pilgrimage. Others appear on houses and wealthier and larger farms. Some, such as the Cruzeiro da Presa in Arga de São João, were once used as an unusual means of measuring irrigation water in the Serra d'Arga.



- A Shrine of Ponte de Saim (Orbacém, Caminha)
- **B -** Cruzeiro da Presa (Arga de São João, Caminha)
- **C** Cross at the side of the road (Estorãos, Ponte de Lima)
- **D -** Cruzeiro da Ladeira (Arga de São João, Caminha)







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CHURCHES, CHAPELS AND SANCTUARIES

Small rural chapels, most of which date back to between the mid-17th and the first half of the 18th century, are scattered throughout the Serra d'Arga and the Âncora valley. Many have become pilgrimage chapels and sanctuaries.

The most important of the pilgrimage chapels are the Chapel of Senhor do Socorro, in Montaria, and Santo Antão or Santo do Alto, in Arga de Cima.

Sanctuaries worthy of mention are the unparalleled Sanctuary of São João d'Arga in Arga de Baixo, decreed a National Monument (Decree no. 18/2013, of 24 June), as well as the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Minho, in Montaria.

The most significant chapels built from the second half of the 18th century onwards were the private ones belonging to the richest houses and farms, and those built at the request of members of religious orders, such as the Senhora da Rocha Chapel in Arga de Baixo, ordered to be built by Father João Manoel Dom F. Caldas in 1828/1851.



Sanctuary of São João d'Arga, in Arga de Baixo (bottom left)

Chapel of Senhora da Rocha, in Arga de Baixo (left)

Chapel of Senhor do Socorro (1853), in Montaria (below)

Chapel of Santo Antão (1939), in Arga de Cima (bottom)







IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

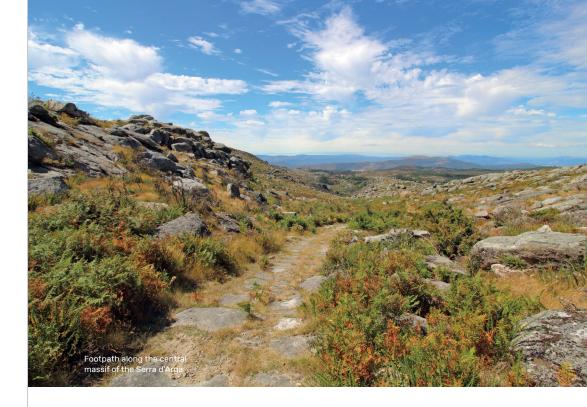
Dams, tanks and channels are the most important irrigation systems in this area. The dams and tanks guarantee the irrigation of large portions of land, divided by numerous plots, where the water runs through a gulley, channel or aqueduct.

GRANARIES

Granaries are one of the most important constructions in the traditional economy of the Serra d'Arga and surrounding regions, and indispensable on all farms. The size of the structure used for storing corn is generally an indication of the economic status of their owners. The most traditional granaries are made of granite and wood, and raised above ground level.







PATHS

Built along earlier Roman routes, the medieval paths that run through the Serra d'Arga can be classified into two types: roads and footpaths.

Existing paths are divided into roads for vehicles and people and are usually dirt or gravel tracks, allowing more direct and easy access between the different mountain villages.

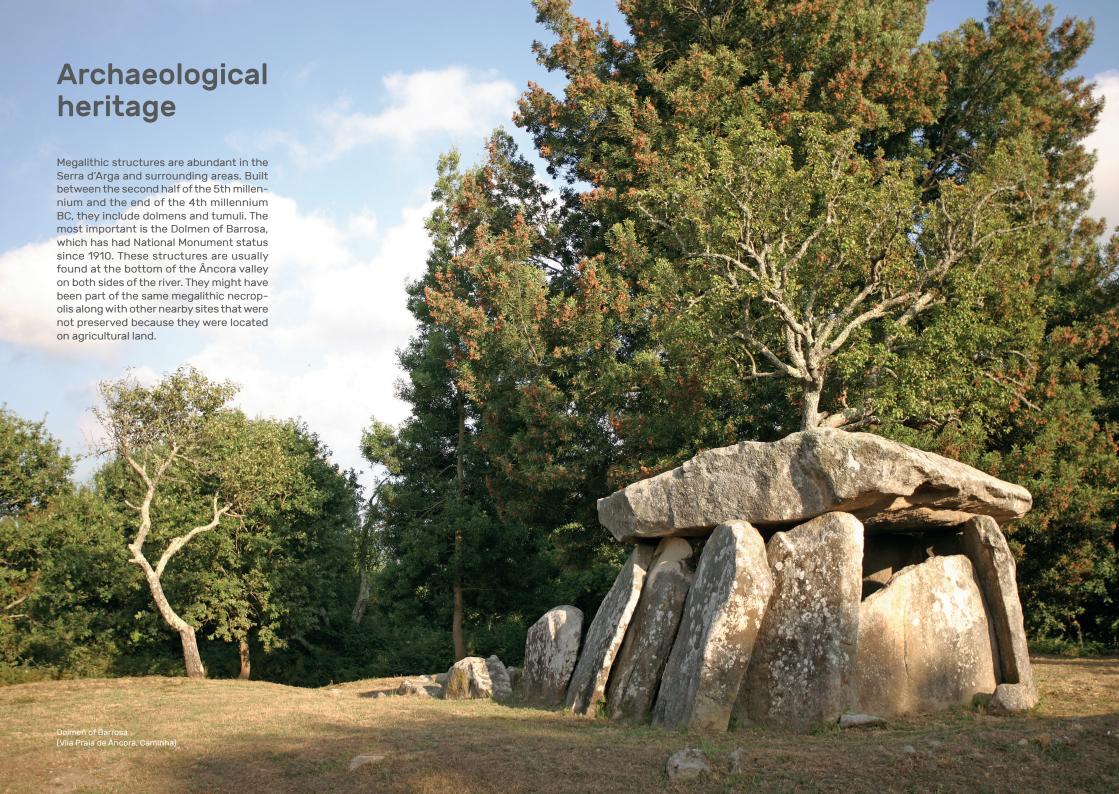
Footpaths are tracks and pathways made of granite slabs, only intended for people and animals, that wind their way across the valleys and steep slopes. These paths were also used by hundreds of pilgrims making their way on foot to the Sanctuary of São João d'Arga.

BOUNDARY WALLS

In the Serra d'Arga you can also find traditional boundary walls with stone gates — anteiras — which establish the borders between arable land and public spaces.



Stone gate on a boundary wall



Intangible cultural heritage

There is a wealth of local culture in the Serra d'Arga, reflecting the identity and characteristics of the people of the area.

The local oral traditions are rich in tales, sayings, vernacular vocabulary and legends — expressions that reveal the wisdom of the people of this mountain when it comes to agriculture and dealing with the harsh climate.

This folk wisdom is deeply connected with the land and its produce — concerning for example the location of fields, water sources, sun exposure, and climatic conditions (wind, frost, rainfall, fog and temperature) — and is revealed in a vernacular vocabulary rich in references to agricultural, milling and domestic life.

Some of the local legends, such as those of the Serra d'Arga, the River Âncora and the Marriage Boulder, are linked to specific places in the mountain.









The first two refer to the origin of the names 'Arga' and 'Âncora', the latter to the popular belief of single girls on pilgrimage to a large rock located near the Sanctuary of São João d'Arga.

Also worthy of mention are the most profusely religious legends, such as those of Santo Aginha, Senhora das Neves, Santo Antão and São João.

The legend of Santo Aginha is still an important reference nowadays. Arga de São João is popularly known as the hamlet of Santo Aginha and, throughout the Serra d'Arga, there are still many place names linked to its legend.

Most of these legends were reflected by the construction of churches and chapels, some of them transformed into pilgrimage sanctuaries where the aforementioned saint is venerated. Examples of this appropriation are the pilgrimage chapels dedicated to Santo Antão — where the São Silvestre Festival is celebrated — and to Senhora das Neves, in Caminha, and to Santa Justa. in Ponte de Lima.



It is precisely the true devotion to the patron saints of the various villages scattered across the mountain that is the backdrop to the flurry of festivities that take place in this area, one after the other starting in May, reaching their peak in August with the presence of emigrants from the area. Most of these popular festivals, such as Nossa Senhora do Rosário's, in Arga de Cima, include processions with flowers and floats, masses and sermons, bass drummers and concertinists, bands, folk groups and traditional gastronomy.

Similar to the rest of the Alto Minho region, in the midst of this universe of entertainment are the pilgrimages, with their rich popular religious ceremonies, demonstrating the important role they play and their multiple characteristics. These are

the largest regional events when villages join together in droves to catch up on the latest news, do business, strengthen relationships and enjoy themselves dancing and singing to the sound of guitars and concertinas. It is on these pilgrimages that the most characteristic aspects of local cultures, tastes, customs and folklore emerge.

The pilgrimages of São João d'Arga (Arga de Baixo) and Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Minho (Montaria) are two very exuberant public festivals that take place in the Serra d'Arga. Their specific nature stems from the importance given to aspects relating to religious beliefs and to entertainment, such as food and drink, costumes and pilgrims singing and dancing.





















The festivals and pilgrimages also include fairs with tents selling food and drink, makeshift taverns with gastronomic specialities, and local handicrafts.

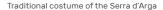
Regional dishes include goat kid with prickled broom rice, sarapatel, and Serra d'Arga cod with corn bread.

Also typical are the traditional smoked products, currently made only by private households, and the famous grape bagasse with honey.

- A Serra d'Arga stew
- B Traditional smoked products in Arga de Cima
- C Grape bagasse with honey
- D Serra d'Arga goat kid
- E Pot broth
- F Sarapatel
- G Corn bread
- H Corn bread from the bowl from the Âncora valley
- I Rice pudding

Traditional costumes are also worn at festivals and on pilgrimages. The typical Serra d'Arga costume is very colourful, with red, purple, blue and green standing out on a black background.

The most popular costume is that of the lavradeira (countrywoman), consisting of flat black slippers, knee-high stockings, a skirt with embroidered linings, apron, pouch, linen shirt, waistcoat, two special lavradeira handkerchiefs, and two or three linen or tow petticoats.





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Base Cartography:

ESRI, 2019; CAOP, 2016; ICNF, 2017

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