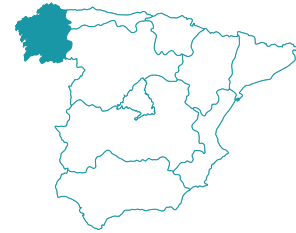




The capital of the province of Galicia is Santiago de Compostela, whose Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage site and which is famed for its spiritual dimension, which draws thousands of pilgrims to the city every year. However without wanting to detract in any way from this lovely city and its colossal cathedral, Galicia has much more to offer. It is known as the “land of a thousand rivers”, due to the watercourses that run down from the mountains – ranges that mark the region off from its neighbours Portugal, Asturias and León – into its characteristic *rias* (downed non-glacial river valleys). And with its some 1,200 km of coastline, Galicia has a wealth of contrasts and a vivid natural beauty. Its relative geographic isolation has meant the region preserving its own language (Galician) and culture, which have an affinity with those of Portugal. Nevertheless, many locals also speak Spanish (Castilian). The abundance of rivers enables Galicia to supply hydroelectric power to the rest of Spain. This is also a region with fairly high precipitation, because of its altitude and proximity to the sea. Rias, beaches, headlands, ports and islands make up the coastal landscape, with some dramatic stretches such as the Costa da Morte (Coast of Death) and the famous Cabo Fisterra (also known as Cape Finisterre), while the interior features green hills and valleys, scattered with isolated stone villages and ancient churches. It is a predominantly agricultural region dotted sparingly with towns, as well as having a few very active ports in coastal cities such as A Coruña and Vigo. It is in these cities, too, that Galicia really comes to life, with urban centres packed with restaurants, bars, shops and many other attractions. The fresh fish and shellfish, and dishes such as *caldeirada galega*, a well-seasoned fish stew, are among the culinary specialities that are not to be missed.





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GALICIA



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- 1 - Inside Santiago Cathedral, Santiago de Compostela.
- 2 - Octopus Slices, Galicia.
- 3 - Horses Sculpture, Vigo.
- 4 - Celtic Menhir Monument, A Coruña.
- 5 - Herreos of Combarro, Pontevedra.
- 6 - Plaza del Obradoiro and Cathedral, Santiago de Compostela.





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- 7 - Coastal Village View, Cambados.
- 8 - Santo Domingo de Bonaval Convent, Santiago de Compostela.
- 9 - Wicker Basket Shop, Vigo.
- 10 - Plaza Mayor, Ourense.
- 11 - City Council, A Coruña.
- 12 - Pleasure Boats Moored, Betanzos.



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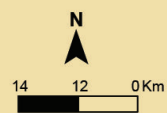
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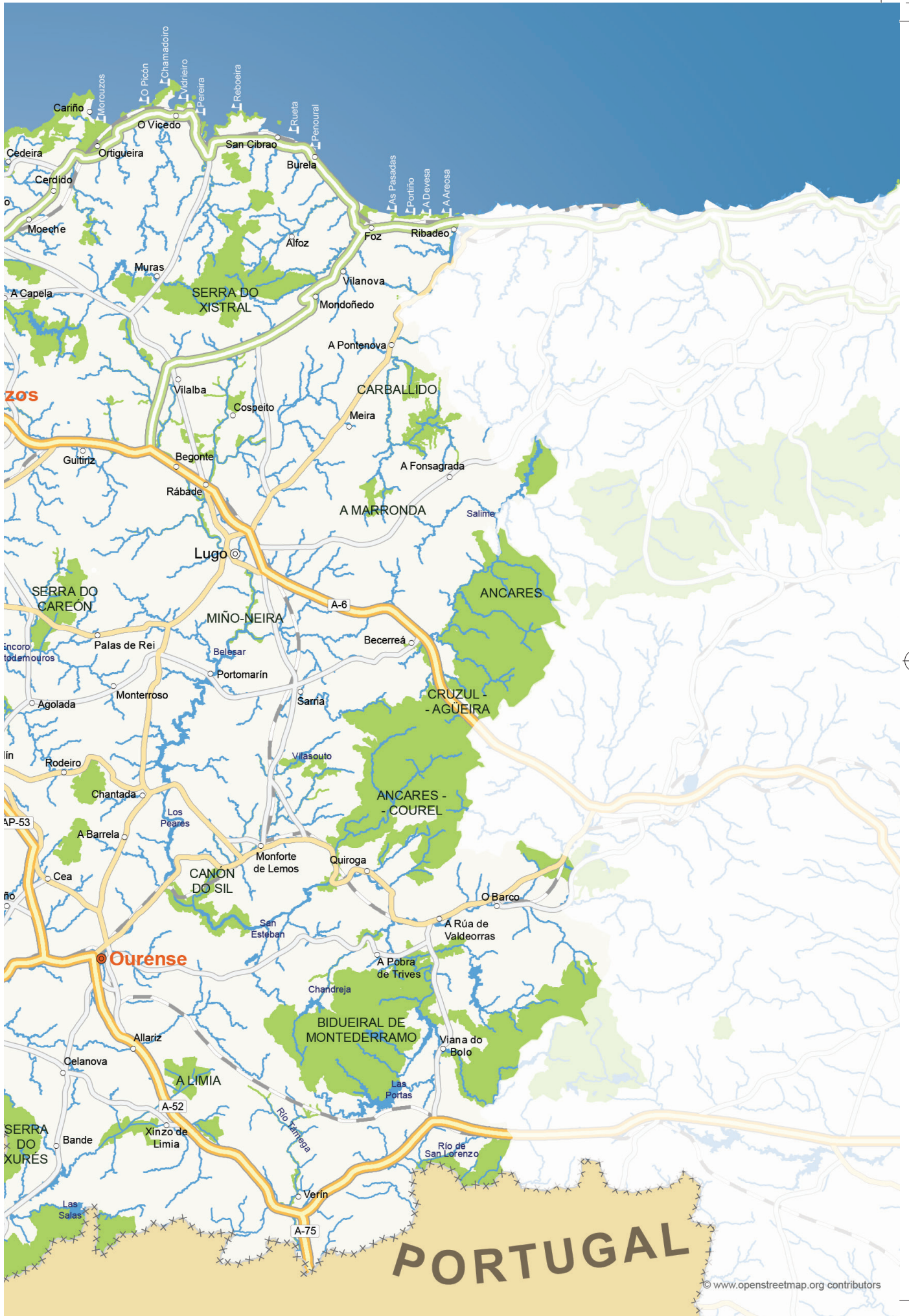
GALICIA

- 13 - Arosa Estury, O Grove.
- 14 - Hostal de los Reyes Catolicos, Santiago de Compostela.
- 15 - Folk Clothes, Galicia.
- 16 - Minho River and Bridge, Ourense.
- 17 - St. Mary Cathedral, Tui.
- 18 - Faro Corme, Costa da Morte.



ATLANTIC OCEAN







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Though not a top tourist destination, A Coruña (La Coruña in Spanish) is worth discovering. It is a tranquil port city that sprawls along a small peninsula, with a fabulous seafront, that joins it to the mainland in abrupt fashion. The sea breezes and the cries of seagulls are a constant presence. The city was attacked by the English in the 16th century, but resisted valiantly, thanks in part to María Pita, whose heroic feats led to her name being given to the main square. In the past, many of the city's inhabitants left in search of a better life in the Americas, but today it is one of the region's most prosperous cities. Sailors called it the glass city because of the glazed façades that dominate the view from the port, but many of the city's buildings exude the same Modernist aura. While known for its pristine beaches and busy ports, the city – which is also home to the Zara fashion brand – has its own very cosmopolitan way of life and a very lively bar and *taberna* culture, offering everything from tapas to seafood platters, not forgetting the wine bars of the Zona de Vinos.

WHAT TO SEE

Torre de Hércules. This spot north of the city was chosen by the Romans to build a lighthouse in the 1st century BC. Still, the stone structure some 50 metres high that can be seen today, on a sloping carpet of green, was only built in 1790. Only the steps and cupola are original, from the Roman lighthouse. Climb the 234 steps inside the tower for panoramic views of the city, the coast and the unusual sculptures in the nearby Parque Escultórico. ☎ 981 223 730. Avenida de

Navarra, s/n. ⌚ Summer: Daily 10am-9pm; Winter: Daily 10am-6pm.

Praza de María Pita. The most central square in the compact old town of A Coruña, with a regular shape and a fortified patio, this bears the name of a local woman who marked the city's history and earned the status of heroine. When English troops besieged A Coruña in 1589, breaching the walls and starting an attack on the old town, it was the valour of María Pita in killing an English standard-bearer that revived the fighting spirit of the city's flagging defenders. It is not known precisely how María Pita killed this enemy soldier, but in the bronze statue at the centre of the iconic square she holds a spear in her right hand. "Whoever has honour, follow me!" she is said to have cried. On the square named after her stands the grand city hall (*concello or ayuntamiento*), as well as innumerable cafés.

Museo Arqueológico y Histórico. This museum, which opened in 1968, exhibits and conserves items that help tell the story of the city since pre-historic times. One of the most important parts of the collection is museum's location itself: the **Castelo de San Antón**. This fortress, built in the 16th century, located right in the port and next to the sea on the island of Pena Grande, was essential to the city's defences against the English armada in 1589, despite being unfinished. The exhibition is split into three sections: mediaeval art and heraldry, archaeology, and history. The first section is located next to the entrance and the bailey while second section is inside and on the ground floor. The cistern where water was collected for use at the castle is also located here. The upper garden and the terrace feature murals and reproductions of different historical periods. The Casa del Gobernador explores the history of the city and, more recently, of the fortress itself. There are rooms that focus on the Baroque and the 19th century. It is also worth visiting the neoclassical vestry and chapel of the castle's church. ☎ 981 189 850. Paseo Alcalde Francisco Vázquez, 2. ⌚ Tuesday to Saturday: 10 am-7.30 pm; Sunday and Public Holidays: 10 am-2.30 pm. Closed on Mondays.

Museo de Belas Artes. The museum was originally founded in 1922, but has only been located in Convento de las Capuchinas, which was refurbished for that purpose, since 1995. The museum's collection includes paintings, sculptures, ceramics, decorative arts and archaeology, with eight different rooms. There is one room focusing on Goya paintings and another on the work of Galician ceramicist Sargadelos. Works by Murillo, Tintoretto, Rubens and Sorolla are some of the features of the other six rooms, which focus on themes as diverse as the Baroque period, portraits of



the 18th and 19th century court, and regional painting and sculpture of the 19th and 20th centuries. ☎ 881 881 700. Rúa Zalaeta. 🕒 Tuesday to Friday: 10 am-8 pm; Saturday: 10 am-2 pm and 4.30 pm-8 pm; Sunday: 10 am-2 pm. Closed on Mondays and Public Holidays.

WHAT TO DO

Walk along the seaside board walk. It is said to be the largest seaside board walk in Europe. On one side is the vast blue sea and on the other the beautifully glazed shopping galleries. Straight ahead is the huge board walk that takes us from one side of the city to the other, with many boats moored alongside it. Along the route is the green expanse of the sculpture park and Torre de Hércules as well as a sculpture of a giant octopus, on land but with his tentacles dangling into the sea. This is one of the most photographed landmarks and may be a reference to *pulpo a la gallega*, a regional octopus dish. As the seaside board walk is so long and walking along its entire length could take over three hours we recommend doing it in stages or stopping once or twice along the way.

Go up Monte de San Pedro. This former defensive stronghold northwest of the city centre still has two cannons that attract many visitors. The biggest draw, though, is the excellent vantage point that this green hill affords, with incredible views over A Coruña and the coast. As well as a picnic area with tables and barbecues, there is a children's playground. Monte de San Pedro has parking, but the panoramic lift – a glass sphere that leaves from down by the seafront – makes for a more pleasant journey, starting with the sea below you.

Visiting Cúpula Atlántica. This glass structure is an observatory and the only 360-degree covered viewpoint in Spain. It houses exhibitions and interactive elements about A Coruña and its history. It also has a café and restaurant. Parque del Monte de San Pedro. 🕒 Tuesday to Sunday: 11.30 am-7.30 pm. Closed on Monday, Jan 1 and Dec 25.

Take a detour to Cabo Ortegal. This being a coastal city, it is very easy to go from the city streets of A Coruña to other parts of the craggy, jagged coast of northern Spain. The lush vegetation, dizzy precipices and stunning ocean views start from around Cedeira, on the way to the Serra da Capelada, 12 km away, the **Mirador Garita de Herbeira** (viewpoint) offers an impressive view from 600 metres up of steeply jutting rocks at an angle of almost 80°. From up here, and when there is a clear sky, you can see as far as the Sisargas

Islands and the Estaca de Bares headland. Around you there is only the green and mountainous coastal landscape and a small stone house with a domed roof, built in the 18th century. Continuing northwards, you reach the extraordinary **Cabo Ortegal**, a cape about an hour and a half from A Coruña, on the outskirts of Cariño, which marks where the Bay of Biscay meets the open Atlantic. As it thrusts out beyond the rocks around it, the cape appears to cut through the water like the prow of a ship. You get a real sense of its scale; it also has a wealth of geological, morphological and ornithological interest, not to mention its beauty. From here, continue down through **Ortigueira**, a remote fishing village in a photogenically pretty setting, which in July hosts the Festival Internacional do Mundo Celta de Ortigueira, an event dedicated to the folk music of regions considered to be Celtic. Among hidden treasures here is the **Praia do Picón**, a windy beach with large waves that is a favourite with surfers.

WHERE TO EAT

€ **Culuca Cociña-Bar.** A modern restaurant in the centre of the city with two distinct areas: the restaurant and the bar. It is renowned for its tapas and cocktails, as well as the ensaladilla, a kind of potato and vegetable salad. ☎ 981 978 898. Avenida de Arteixo, 10. 🕒 Monday to Friday: 9 am-midnight. Closed on Sunday.

€ **Mesón do Pulpo.** As the name says (translates as "House of Octopus"), it is especially famous for its octopus dishes. It is an informal and very straightforward restaurant, with efficiently prepared meals. ☎ 981 202 444. Calle Franja, 9-11. 🕒 Monday to Saturday: noon-4 pm and 8 pm-midnight. Closed on Sundays.

€ € **Adega O Bebedeiro.** This authentic restaurant, with its traditional and welcoming décor, is normally filled with locals so you need to book ahead. Along with delicious Galician meals, the desserts and wines are also very good. ☎ 981 210 609. Calle Ángel Rebollo, 34. 🕒 Monday to Saturday: 1 pm-4 pm and 8.30 pm-11.30 pm; Sunday: 1 pm-4 pm. Closed on Sunday evenings.

€ € **El de Alberto.** Rustic restaurant with a modern style, decorated with colourful paintings and vintage objects. It offers traditional cuisine with a gourmet touch, with well-made Galician dishes, the highlights of which is the fresh fish, such as cod and red mullet. ☎ 981 907 411. Calle Ángel Rebollo, 18. 🕒 Tuesday to Saturday: 1.30 pm-4 pm and 9 pm-midnight; Sunday: 1.30 pm-4 pm. Closed on Mondays.

€ € **Penela.** Large, well-decorated restaurant. Has a huge menu of traditional dishes, notably the tortilla de



Betanzos, a dish made with finely sliced fried potatoes mixed with scrambled egg and cooked in the oven. ☎ 981 209 200. Plaza de María Pita, 12. 🕒 Monday to Saturday: 1.30 pm-4.30 pm and 8.30 pm-midnight; Sunday: 1.30 pm-4.30 pm. Closed on Sunday evenings.

€ € € € **Árbore da Veira.** Ideal for celebrations or special days, this excellent restaurant is a unique gastronomic experience with modern cooking techniques used on the best products. ☎ 981 078 914. Carretera Fuertes, Monte de San Pedro. 🕒 Monday to Thursday: 1.30 pm-3.30 pm. Friday and Saturday: 1.30 pm-3.30 pm and 9 pm-10.30 pm. Closed on Sundays, Public Holidays and Dec 24.

🛒 WHAT/WHERE TO BUY

Queso San Simón da Costa. A smoked cheese with protected designation of origin. This soft textured cheese with a distinct flavour is traditionally from Galicia, but enjoyed throughout Spain and abroad.

🎭 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Jun. Hogueras de San Juan. A festival with pagan origins that was adopted by Christianity, celebrated on the 23rd of June. It marks both the Summer solstice and the festival of St. John. It involves lighting giant bonfires with the ancient idea of making the sun stronger.

Aug. Fiesta del Pimiento. This celebration takes place in the village of Herbón and pays tribute to the delicious bell pepper produced in Padrón area and that is a cornerstone of the Galician cuisine. There are several gastronomic competition, food tastings and musical performances during an entire day.

📍 TOURIST OFFICE

☎ 881 881 278. Calle Celedonio de Uribe 2. 🕒 Monday to Friday: 10 am-2 pm and 4 pm-7 pm; Saturday: 11 am-2 pm and 5 pm-7 pm; Sunday and Public Holidays: 11 am-2 pm.



This small town, 24 km from A Coruña, is a fertile valley that separates the rivers Mendo and Mandeo and is an essential stop for anyone that enjoys the charms of small mediaeval towns. Betanzos, Bringatium to the Romans and Carunio in mediaeval times, is famous for its well preserved historical centre that has a number of enchanting churches such as the churches of San Francisco and Santiago. The clock tower and the town's walls, which still have three of its four original gateways, are two other unmissable sites. Betanzos is also known for its rustic and welcoming taverns which usually have a laurel twig over the door, for good luck. They serve generous food portions with light and fruity local wine. The town is also host to a number of festivals, notably a mediaeval feast at the beginning of July and Fiesta de San Roque, in August, when an enormous handmade and uniquely decorated hot air balloon is launched.

🚶 WHAT TO DO

Visit the historic centre. The historical centre of this almost entirely stone-built town is the living and well-preserved witness of many generations of fishermen and merchants that have established themselves here since the 13th century, when the town was founded. It is worth the trip to enjoy the views over the Chelo River and the details of the manor houses.

Walk along the riverside. The walk along the Chelo River area in Betanzos is fabulous: A mixture of almost untouched nature and a welcoming rural town. Along the river within the town you can see small boats moored and a mediaeval stone bridge.

WHERE TO EAT

€ **La Casilla.** Small restaurant with a beautiful garden where you can enjoy the famous potato tortilla. ☎ 981 770 161. Carretera Castilla, 90. 🕒 Tuesday to Sunday: 1 pm-4 pm and 8.30 pm-midnight. Closed on Mondays.

€ € **San Andrés.** Cosy place with a traditional regional menu. It offers fresh fish dishes and excellent quality seafood. ☎ 981 772 044. Rúa dos Ánxeles, 4. 🕒 Tuesday to Saturday: 1 pm-4 pm and 8.30 pm-11 pm; Sunday: 1 pm-4 pm. Closed on Mondays.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Aug. Fiesta de San Roque. The city's patron saint is celebrated with a rich and varied cultural and religious schedule of events occurring between the 14th and the 25th of August. The peak of the celebrations is the launch of a giant decorated hot air balloon and during the procession of Caneiros, traditional boats that are decorated and float along the river in a procession.

TOURIST OFFICE

☎ 981 776 666. Praza de Galicia, 1. 🕒 Weekdays: 10 am-2 pm. Closed on weekends.



The Coast of Death earned its unusual and frightening name from the fact that along this particularly rugged

coast, where the Atlantic Ocean crashes furiously onto the land, there have been many shipwrecks as well as oil spills. The Prestige, in 2002, was one of the most notorious of the latter – even if there are no longer any traces of its crude here. The Costa da Morte is the bit of coast between Muros, just outside Santiago de Compostela, and Malpica, near A Coruña. It is a place of legends and drama, since this was, from ancient times and long thereafter, believed to be the edge the world. It has a rural, wild feel, with small fishing villages, sea ports, imposing capes – while Fisterra is the best known Cabo Touriñán is Spain's most westerly point – each with its distinct lighthouse, and fantastic beaches with their imposing rocks and lush vegetation running up to the edge of the fine white sand, with the choppy blue sea beyond.

WHAT TO DO

Walk to Cabo Fisterra. Ancient mariners believed this was the westernmost point of the continent. The famous Jacobeu trail to Santiago de Compostela passes through here. The route should be done on foot and the small effort is worthwhile: the wild landscape, the rough tides on one side and calm on the other ending with an impressive sunset over the ocean.

Visit Playa de Carnota. A beach stretching for over 7 kilometres long that is considered to be the largest in Galicia. It is also a nature reserves for a number of sea bird and animal species because of its sand dunes and salt water marshes.

WHERE TO EAT

€ **Tira do Cordel.** This restaurant is one for lovers of seafood. If the weather is nice, enjoy your meal on the terrace with a stunning view of the sea. ☎ 981 740 697. Lugar de San Roque, 2. 🕒 Tuesday to Saturday: 1.30 pm-4.15 pm and 9 pm-11.15 pm; Sunday: 1.30 pm-4.15 pm. Closed on Mondays.

€ € **O Centolo.** Restaurant with a splendid view over the marina. It has a varied seafood menu and the lobster rice is one of the main dishes along with the sea bass. ☎ 981 740 452. Bajada del Puerto. 🕒 Daily: Noon-4.30 pm and 7.30 pm-midnight.

€ € **Ó Fragón.** Located in a modern building, this restaurant serves local produce in simple, tasty dishes. The organic products and excellent olive oil should not be missed. ☎ 981 740 429. San Martino de Arriba, 22. 🕒 Daily: 1.15 pm-4 pm and 8.15 pm-10.30 pm.