



Day

[5]*30 km*
± 8h30

➔ 39°22'53" N 8°42'34" W

Day 5 | UNDER THE SHADE OF THE OLIVE TREES

Santarém ➔ **Monsanto (Alcanena)**

The distance between the city of **Santarém** and the village of **Monsanto** in the municipality of Alcanena is around **30 km** and can be covered in about **8 hours and 30 minutes**.

This long and intense leg of the Route gives it new meaning and geographical orientation, entering into the mountainous territory of the karstic massif, where the **Natural Parks of the Aire** and **Candeeiros Mountain** ranges are located. For this reason, we suggest that you divide the day's journey into five sections, with stops in between.

The plateau of the **Santo António mountain** range marks the transition to this area of steep slopes, with mountains and cliffs, deep valleys and small valleys dedicated to agriculture. This is also the ancestral territory that separates and connects the river plains of the Tagus River to the Coast.

Within this diverse but predominantly mountainous and rural landscape with a few urban centres is anchored the genesis and history of the apparitions and the **Sanctuary of Fátima**. Viewing points appear along the track at several places in the mountains to reveal magnificent landscapes where olive groves predominate.



➔ 39°23'34" N 8°42'38" W

This long walk begins in a riverside landscape. Little by little, we begin to notice the contrasts between the urban area of the lezíria and the rural mountainous interior. On the ridge to the north of **Santarém** extends the peri-urban area that surrounds the historical city.

Then, from Póvoa de Santarém onwards, the **Cabanas stream** area becomes the focus of the landscape. The path crosses the well-shaded thalwegs or low areas, interspersed with vineyards. Along the hillsides emerge forests of cork trees, olive groves and oaks.

Further north, a new landscape opens up on the horizon with more fragile soils and where the temperature range becomes more extreme. The terrain becomes more undulating, rugged and the path alternates between sheltered low-lying zones alongside fresh water courses and high areas, sometimes following dry and windy ridges. In the driest areas, holm-oaks and olive trees predominate.

➔ 39°24'16" N 8°42'4" W



Organising your day in phases, start the first stretch of your journey between **Santarém** and **Azóia de Cima**. The distance to be covered is 8 km over around 2 hours. Departure from the city is made by the old Military Road.

In **Azóia de Baixo** you can take a short detour to visit **Póvoa de Santarém**, visiting the **Quinta de Vale de Lobos** (where the writer Alexandre Herculano lived out his last days), the **Quinta de Cabanas** and the **Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Luz** (Main Church of Our Lady of Light) which originated in a 17th-century chapel.

The town of **Azóia de Baixo** was developed along the extensive main road punctuated by houses. The **Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Conceição** (Main Church of Our Lady of the Conception) features a bell tower attached to the main façade and the stone lintel portal, on which the date of the building's 1709 restoration is engraved. Inside, it has 17th-century gilded wood retables, a high altar with an image of Our Lady of the Conception and walls covered with 18th-century tiles representing the Eucharist.

The **tomb of Alexandre Herculano** is located in the churchyard, where the ashes of this writer remained between 1877 and 1888 before being transferred to the Chapter House of the Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon.

Take the opportunity to rest before starting the **second stretch** of your journey **between Azóia de Baixo and Advagar**, which covers 7 km in around 2 hours. Some of the Route is quite inclined, which makes for good resting spots. One of these is at **Quinta de Cabanas** and another at **Quinta de Val Flor**, though permission from the owners is required.

When leaving **Azóia de Baixo**, head for **Casais de São Brás**. Further on, continue along a road parallel to the **Cabanas stream** until passing over the bridge to **Quinta de Cabanas**, hidden in the trees. This Quinta consists of a set of buildings arranged around an open rectangular courtyard next to the main entrance.

Consult your map and follow the road that goes along the ridge to **Advagar**. Here you can take a break before

starting out on the third stretch between **Advagar** and **Arneiro das Milhariças**, a distance of 6 km and around 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Leave **Advagar** by the road that connects to **Santos**. The Route begins in an undulating area covered with holm-oaks and olive trees. Properties in the area feature rocky outcrops and woods of wild olive trees, holm-oaks, pines and kermes oaks remaining from the old territorial compartmentalisation.

Passing through **Santos**, continue descending in the direction of **Pernes**, continuing towards **Casais das Milhariças** by a dirt track that rises to cross Arneiro das Milhariças. Continue to **Arneiro das Milhariças**, a village with a heterogeneous group of houses scattered over a small elevation on which the **Main Church** stands out, built in 1671 to replace a chapel founded in 1608.

Start the fourth and final section of the day's walk, a 6.5 km section between **Arneiro das Milhariças** and the springs of the **Alviela River**. This walk lasts around 2 hours, with an ideal spot for a break being at the summit of **Três Moinhos**, between **Arneiro das Milhariças** and **Chã de Cima**.

Head towards **Espinheiro** and continue to the mountain range that rises to the north-east over the cultivated floodplain of the River Centeio. On a dirt track that runs through this plain, climb the steep slope to the summit. The view here extends for many kilometres over the extensive panorama of olive groves, fig trees and maritime pines.

In the middle of this section, between the end of the ascent and the village of **Chã de Cima**, are three deactivated windmills, an excellent place for a short break. Chã de Cima is also a good place for a break, where there is a small recently-built chapel.

After crossing the village, head north towards the springs of the **Alviela River**. On the way, you can make a short detour through **Malhou**, a village where the **Parish Church** (dedicated to the Divine Holy Spirit) stands out, with a baroque façade erected in 1634. Sebastião Duarte de Alviela and his son were buried here in 1664.

Continue the path through the **municipality of Alcanena**, passing through **Amiais de Baixo**, a parish created by decree on 25 June 1851, when it broke away from **Malhou**. It belonged to the Patriarchate of Lisbon until the creation of the diocese of Santarém on 16 July 1975 by the Papal Bull *Aposticae Sedis Consuetudinem* of Pope Paul VI. It currently belongs to the archpriesthood of **Alcanena**. The town's **Main Church** is dedicated to Our Lady of Grace.

Head towards the **river beach** until you reach the poplar trees that border one of the banks of the **Alviela River**. The river runs pure and smoothly here to the small dam next to the poplar trees. Enjoy the shade and regain your strength before resuming your journey. Close by, the **Carsoscópio Ciência Viva Science Centre** explores the history and life of this ancestral territory.



►►36°56'39"N 10°22'39"W

OLHOS DE ÁGUA DO ALVIELA | one of the six permanent karst springs of the Extremadura Massif and the one with the largest flow. It is located in the transition zone between the Massif and the Tagus Tertiary Basin, of which the feeding basin extends 180 km² underground. Up to 17.000 litres of water flow per second, which is around 1.5 million cubic metres a day. From 1880, it was one of the main sources of water supply to the city of Lisbon, through the Alviela Aqueduct. At the beginning of the track we can enjoy the Olhos D'Água do Alviela river beach.



➔ 39°26'43" N 8°42'36" W

CARSOSCÓPIO is a science and technology space forming part of the National Network of Ciência Viva Centres. The visit to this stimulating modern facility allows us to learn about the evolution of the Extremaduran Limestone Massif over 175 million years and the water courses running under it. Through an interactive system, visitors can "enter the skin" of a bat, one of the ancestral inhabitants of the caves and underground cavities that characterise the geology of the calcareous soils of the Aire and Candeeiros Mountains Natural Park.

Quinta de Alviela is an 18th-century manor owned by the Alviela estate. Entering through its baroque portal, the L-shaped architectural complex includes a small chapel dedicated to Santa Isabel. The main building is located on the upper floor, due to the flooding of the Alviela River. On the façade, the access staircase is topped by a Renaissance loggia and the portal is decorated with the family shield (a quartered shield, with the coats of arms of Henriques, Castros, Pedreiras and Vasconcelos-Ribeiro) and topped by a cross. The Quinta de Alviela complex is completed with a box-wood garden.

Be sure to follow the interpretative route of **Olhos d'Água do Alviela**, an attractive path between the spring of the Alviela River and the Amiais stream gully. The unique geological conditions also feature characteristically Mediterranean vegetation.

At the Lapa da **Canada** cave, the **Amiais stream** takes a 200-metre course and, further downstream, has shaped an important natural karst structure – the karst window – which allows us to observe the stream navigating below along the various limestone caves formed over millions of years. These caves are home to colonies of bats. The stream flows back to the surface before flowing into the Alviela River. In one of the passages, it produces a narrow fluvial-karst canyon, embedded in the landscape with steep slopes. At the beginning



of this canyon is a dark well (a karst cavity protected by a concrete dyke which, in the rainy season, expels high-intensity water).

After contemplating this landscape of rare beauty, start the fourth stretch of this journey between the spring of the **Alviela** River and **Monsanto**, covering 2.5 km over around 1 hour.

➔ 39°27'51" N 8°42'40" W



Pass over a bridge to the left bank and climb a steep dirt track that runs through a forest of cork oaks, oaks, stone pines and strawberry trees. Further on, the path becomes narrow and winding under an oak forest. The dirt path disappears under a carpet of leaves, making the landscape even more beautiful. Continue on to **Monsanto**, where support facilities are located. Deserving of a visit is the **Igreja do Espírito Santo (Church of the Holy Spirit) in Monsanto**, a baroque temple from the 18th century, with a portal flanked by images of St. John the Evangelist and Our Lady of Conception.

If you want to make a detour through **Alcanena** to spend the night at the main town of the municipality, take the national highway that connects it to Monsanto, following the left side of the road with caution.

