



Day 16 | TRADITION AND BIODIVERSITY

Bofinho ➡ Seica

The sixteenth day of the Route **begins in the village of Bofinho** (parish of Pelmá), at the Chapel of Saint Anthony (at the junction of Rua da Fonte and Rua da Capela) and **ends in Seica**, at the Main Church (Rua da Igreja). It covers 26 km, which can be completed in around 6 hrs, and consists of a combination of local roads and footpaths. It makes its way through a hilly terrain with climbs of around 200 m, and is a **medium level of difficulty**.

It crossed the Municipalities of Alvaiázere and Ourém and makes its way through a **zone of geographical transition** between the Sicó Mountains Massif and the Estremadura Limestone Massif of the Aire and Candeeiros Mountain Ranges. Diverse forms of agriculture are undertaken on this regions' s gentle slopes, upland plains and irrigated valleys. At the outset of this day's walk we continue close to the **River Nabão**. Within a landscape setting in which the **biodiversity** is wholly apparent, ancient **olive groves** and **centuries-old vines** abound. Over the course of the day, the Route passes through **small, rural villages**, as well as a **number of towns**, noteworthy for their urban nature.

The **Cultural Heritage** is rich and multifaceted. It is imbued with vitality and a **respect for tradition**. The pilgrim-walker can discover **churches and chapels** of striking historical and artistic value, as well as rural **houses, estates** and **presses**, in addition to more humble constructions such as picturesque **fountains** and troughs, historic **windmills** on the hills and small **watermills** along the rivers. You can also sample the **delicious local produce**, such as the maize bread and goat cheese.

Make your way out of **Bofinho along a track** and immerse yourself in nature as you head towards **Olho do Tordo**. The place name refers to the site where the ground water flowing out of the limestone soil forms a fast-flowing river. Along the banks of the river you can find old watermills.

Continue on, surrounded on all sides by **oak and olive trees**, in a setting wholly characteristic of the karstic massif; the **karst pavements** (limestone rock formations) are worthy of note. Thanks to the **biodiversity** of this area the flora is characterised by abundant native species, such as **wild orchids** and **aromatic herbs** (rosemary, thyme, jerusalem sage and broom). There is also a great variety of **fauna** with a wide range of animals, and in particular, birds (thrushes and red-legged partridge), rabbits, hares, boar, foxes and the renowned Schreibers' bent-winged bats that live in rock cavities.

As you draw closer to the **villages in the floodplains**, supplied with abundant water, along the left bank of the River Nabão, you will see 'courelas' (small plots of land) used for traditional agriculture (maize, wheat, potatoes, vegetables). They are especially visible on the outskirts of the village of **Pelmá**.





Cross the **River Nabão** and head into **Freixianda**, in the Municipality of Ourém. The town stretches along the river's right bank, and it is a good place to take a break. The **Main Church** is dedicated to Our Lady of the Purification, and it has a tower in the centre of its façade and inside three naves. In front of the church there is a stone cross. Having crossed the town centre, you come to **Aventeira**, and will pass by the **Chapel of St. Peter**.

Having left Casal do Pinheiro, you once more enter an area of verdant woods, and with nature on all sides continue until you reach **Rio de Couros**, a parish that

dates back to the eighteenth-century. As you enter the village you will see the **Main Church**, which is an interesting modern building (1964-1967).

The Route continues through fields, skirting the small villages and houses scattered across the parish of Caxarias.

Soon you will reach **Seiça**, where at the **Main Church** (Rua de Igreja) the day's walking ends. The church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Purification and its historic architecture was renovated in the seventeenth century. It has a simple façade with a side bell tower and inside it has a single nave with a chancel where the oldest works of art are conserved; of particular interest is the fourteenth-century wooden sculpture of the Virgin suckling the Christ Child (Madonna Lactans).

This parish created in 1517 provides the necessary logistical support for pilgrims. Flowing through the village is the **Seiça stream**, which runs into the River Nabão. In this river there is a rare species of Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*). If you wish to find out about the local history, visit the **House-Museum of Seiça**, a local ethnographic museum.

