

# Rutas por Galicia

## Ferrol-Ortegal



### San Andrés de Teixido - Santiago de Compostela

**Itinerary:** San Andrés de Teixido - Cedeira - Valdoviño - Ferrol - Naron - Neda - Fene - Cabanas - Pontedeume – Miño – Bruma – Santiago de Compostela.

Andrés de Teixido, it's highly recommended to make a small stop to admire the view from the village's viewpoint, where we can even have a small break in the existing rest area located right beside it. Once in the village, we'll find a wide range of typical local souvenirs, usually linked to the tradition, legends and mysticism still so obviously alive around the area.

### STAGE 1

Our chosen route starts out at the "Garita da Herbeira" point ([W 7°94591°N 43°72352°](#)), right beside the highest cliff in Europe, a mighty 614 metres of vertical drop from its highest point into the ocean. The natural beauty of the scenery makes it a privileged spot to really appreciate the combination of mountain and sea, which will become a constant feature in our route.

After enjoying the magnificent and unique landscape, we'll begin a light descent towards the village of San Andrés de Teixido (around 5km). On our way down, it shouldn't come as a surprise if we come across wild livestock, being horses, cows or even goats, freely roaming and grazing away around the crags of the "Serra da Capela". Further down the road, we'll pass by the "Cruceiro de Punta Robaliceira" ([W 7°97252°N 43°71202°](#)), a sort of religious stone cross very popular all over the Galician region and mainly located at crossroads.

Right before we enter San



It's almost compulsory to visit the very famous local shrine (more than 500 years old), where tradition says "you shall go when you die if you didn't go while you were still alive". The saying it's inspired on a local legend according to which, after the hermit (San Andrés) complained about his loneliness, Jesus promised him that no one would enter the Kingdom of Heaven without visiting his hermitage first. Inside the sanctuary it is well worth it to admire the impressive amount of offerings to the patron saint laid by the altar at any time of the year. Afterwards, tradition also dictates a trip down to the "Tres Caños" fountain ([W 7°98513°N 43°70932°](#)), where the water is said to have the power of being able to reveal one person's future.

Once on the move again, the winding road downhill will take us into the village of Cedeira (around 17,6 km), a fishing village located by the Atlantic Ocean, where we'll be greeted by its tasty and generous gastronomy and rich anthropological history. And with this, after an unforgettable and very revealing first day, stage one of our route will come to an end.



## STAGE 2

The main AC-566 road that goes from Cedeira to Valdoviño/Ferrol will be the main reference for the second stage of our trip. Although there are indeed alternative local roads and tracks that could be used in order to avoid the heavy traffic on the AC-566, we do not recommend them, as the state they are in leaves a lot to be desired. It's strongly advisable to stop at the village of Vilarrube ([W 8°07'21.3"N 43°6'38.58"E](#)). Its idyllic beach and the beauty of its lagoon will make the break worthy of it while at the same time we can get our breath back, as next we'll be faced with an uphill stretch of the road with plenty of bends and traffic. We'll pass by the Pantín beach, known worldwide for hosting every season one of the events of the Surfing World Cup. In fact, the whole of this area is extraordinarily well suited for all sorts of water sports including windsurfing, body board and surf. Eventually, we'll arrive at the village of Valdoviño, where we can find the largest sandy areas in our route and the unique Frouxeira lagoon, a very important humid ecosystem included in the official list of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and also in the European protected spaces and ornithological observatories list.

Heading now for the city of Ferrol, we'll take a right turn and enter the AC-116 road. This road repeatedly branches off towards the incredible amount of beaches spread throughout this particular area (Meirás, Campelo, Cobas...). Any time could be good to take one of the multiple diversions along the way and visit any of those beaches and sandy areas.

Back on the AC-116 road we will continue going Ferrol bound, and before entering the city we'll go first through the San Mateo neighbourhood (belongs to the nearby town of Narón) and from there on we'll only have to follow the road signs pointing toward Ferrol city centre

## STAGE 3

We'll set off from the Port of Ferrol, which is incidentally the starting point of the ancient English pilgrimage way to Santiago de Compostela (known colloquially as the English Way), as pilgrims coming from England used to disembark at this port after their maritime journey from the British Islands.

We'll go by the walls of the Military Arsenal, as over the centuries Ferrol went from being a small fishing village in its origins to become one of the biggest military strongholds in Spain. Nowadays, it still is the most important Naval Station in North-western Spain. Afterwards we'll pass beside the "Navantia" shipbuilding yards, located on the same premises where more than 250 years ago, King Philip V of Spain ordered to build the back in those days largest shipyards in Spain.

After going across the Caranza neighbourhood in the outskirts of the city, we'll head for the

satellite town of Narón going first through the Gándara industrial state and following then the Avenida del Mar, which runs by the estuary and will take us into the small village of Neda.

From this point on, we'll come across a vast amount of many forms of religious art: the Iglesia do Couto (church), the Monastery of San Martiño de Xubia, which belongs to the Cluniac order since the 12th century and has a facade dating from the 18th century. Running by the main entrance to the monastery we can find a path leading uphill. We'll follow it until we reach the top, where we'll find a stone cross. Once there, we'll proceed to make a right turn to take another path known as "Camiño do Salto", which will lead us to the village of Neda. There we'll find the first hostel only for pilgrims of many existing throughout the route. We can also visit the churches of Santa María and San Nicolás, both featuring the characteristic elements of the later gothic period.

Our next stop will be the town of Fene. Not so long ago this particular town was one of the most densely populated councils in Galicia not so long ago, due to the proximity of the Navantia (formerly known as Astano) shipbuilding yards (one of the biggest in Europe in their prime time) located at the southside of the Ferrol estuary, where most of the residents also worked. But after a series of industrial crisis in the late 80's and early 90's, saw both its population as well as the production of the shipyards falling into a steady decrease.

After Fene we'll aim for the town of Cabanas. Along the way between these two towns, we'll find the Molino Sucursal del Priorato (a mill with its waterwheel still working) and San Martiño do Porto church, with a very interesting baroque style front.





As we are about to enter the town of Cabanas, we'll be welcome by the pine area and sandy area of "A Madalena" beach. From there, we'll only have to go all the way down the promenade by the seaside, until we reach the stone bridge over the Eume River. Once we have crossed over to the other side, we'll be entering the town of Pontedeume.

#### STAGE 4

The magnificent bridge over the Eume River will be the first mark we'll find of the influence and importance that the Andrade dynasty had around the area for centuries. It was built by order of Fernán Pérez de Andrade in the 14th century. When finished, it had 79 arches and it came with a little chapel and even a small hospital attended by a hermit. After successive alterations and revamps over the years, nowadays it only keeps 15 of the original arches.

Before we resume our trip again, we also recommend a visit to the Santo Agostiño convent, the As Virtudes chapel and the so-called Homage Tower, the only remains still standing of the once magnificent Andrade family castle dating from the 14th century.

Although it could take almost a whole day, it would be well worth visiting the area known as Fragas do Eume, declared nature reserve since 1997 and Europe's largest Atlantic forest with more than 9,126 hectares of different kinds of woodland, including riverbank forests of black poplars and alders, also ferns and mosses (characteristic of the park) and even two rare species of daffodils. Oak forests can be found further up the mountainous slopes. And although the flora is the real jewel of this natural reserve, it also shelters a large number of animal species (some in danger of extinction), from small amphibians to reptiles to larger species such as the wolf or different types of birds of prey.

After visiting this unique treasure of nature, we can resume our journey, once again following on the ancient tracks of the English Way towards Santiago de Compostela. Next in our route we'll come across the village of Miño, one of the most important summer resorts in the area. We'll then have to alternate dirt tracks with the main N-651 road. When using the N-651, it's strongly advisable to circulate on the hard shoulder and to take the necessary precautions, as it is a road with a heavy volume of traffic.

We'll eventually make our way into the town of Betanzos, former capital of one of the seven historical Galician provinces, by crossing over the Mandeo River using the A Ponte Vella bridge. Wandering around the streets we'll come across monuments, buildings and different cultural features that will give us a deeper look into the noble past of this town, and will also help us to understand how important and influential the legacy of the House of Andrade is around the area.

From Betanzos we'll continue towards the village of Abegondo, encountering along the way both the San Antonio de Cos and Santiago de Meangos churches. Combining dirt tracks with some asphalted stretches we'll reach the end of the stage four of our route, which ends in the village of Bruma.

#### STAGE 5

Using the Bruma local chapel as our point of departure, we'll start the last stage of our journey by heading now for the village of Ordes. But before we get to Ordes and once we have reached the village of Seixo, extra attention should be paid, as there are many roads out of it, being the one leading to the small village of Cabeza de Lobo the one we should pick. All along this final stage of our 5 days trip we'll be able to better appreciate the main elements of the traditional Galician culture, as they become more and more evident now, especially when it comes to the very typical countryside and rural houses.

Also during this last stage, the constant changes from roads to dirt tracks and vice versa will become a more regular feature, but that certainly shouldn't worry or even annoy us in the slightest, as already a feeling that the end of our journey is near can be sensed in the air.

By this point, legs will feel lighter and our speed will probably pick up, and even though we'll be able to see in more than one occasion the A-9 highway, our route will only take us through the ancient and traditional paths used by pilgrims over the centuries. Next, the village of Sigüeiro should be a reference point for us, as from there on, there'll be only 15 km left to reach our final destination.

We'll still have to cross over the Tambre River and go through the village of Sionlla, from where we can already make out Santiago de Compostela in the distance. As we enter Santiago de Compostela, we'll be greeted by the "Monument to the Pilgrim", and from there, in order to get to the city centre, we'll take first the Basquiños Avenue, where most likely we'll come across some of the many pilgrims that arrive at Santiago on any given day. We'll pass then between the convents del Carmen and Santa Clara, go down the San Roque Street, then Algalia Street to eventually come out into the Cervantes Square, only a few steps away from the Cathedral. We'll pass by the convent of San Martiño Pinario to after 5 wonderful days finally reach our goal: the truly magnificent, imposing and worldwide famous Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

