

# BEARIZ

Discover the magic



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## THE GARFIÁN ROUTE



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## PRESENTATION

Beariz is as mountainous as any other municipality in the region of Terra de Montes, but its streams flow to the south into the river Avia instead of going west like the rest of them do. This results in its valleys being open and facing south, which gives them more exposure to the sun and therefore slightly higher temperatures than their neighbors up north. The route of Garfián starts in the southern area of the municipality, at the lowest part of Beariz, and continues by going round the Ceo da Bouza mountain. Then it goes down and crosses the nice recreational area of Barcia to finish pretty close to the municipal seat.

The route of Garfián is a pleasant 8 km. walk through the center and south of the municipality of Beariz, with several ups and downs. The shade of the trees will accompany us in our first and last kilometers, whereas in the highest and sunniest stretch we get the opportunity for admiring the amazing scenic views. This route will allow us to know most of Beariz's main features, such as the small villages, the old megalithic sites and nice areas by the streams perfect to have a rest under the trees.

The whole route is suitable for walking, riding a mountain bike or quad biking. But if you go for a SUV you will need to make a detour in the village of Bouza: instead of following the signposts on the road and taking the narrow path to the right, you should go straight ahead until you get to a wider track on your right. When going up this track we should keep our eyes open to see the signposts that will lead us back to the route. Once at the water tank take the track to the left, which is a bit steep but is well signed.

To start the route we need to go to the village of Garfián, cross it and then be alert for an information sign we will find on our left. Next to the sign there is a path and from this point we set off for our journey.

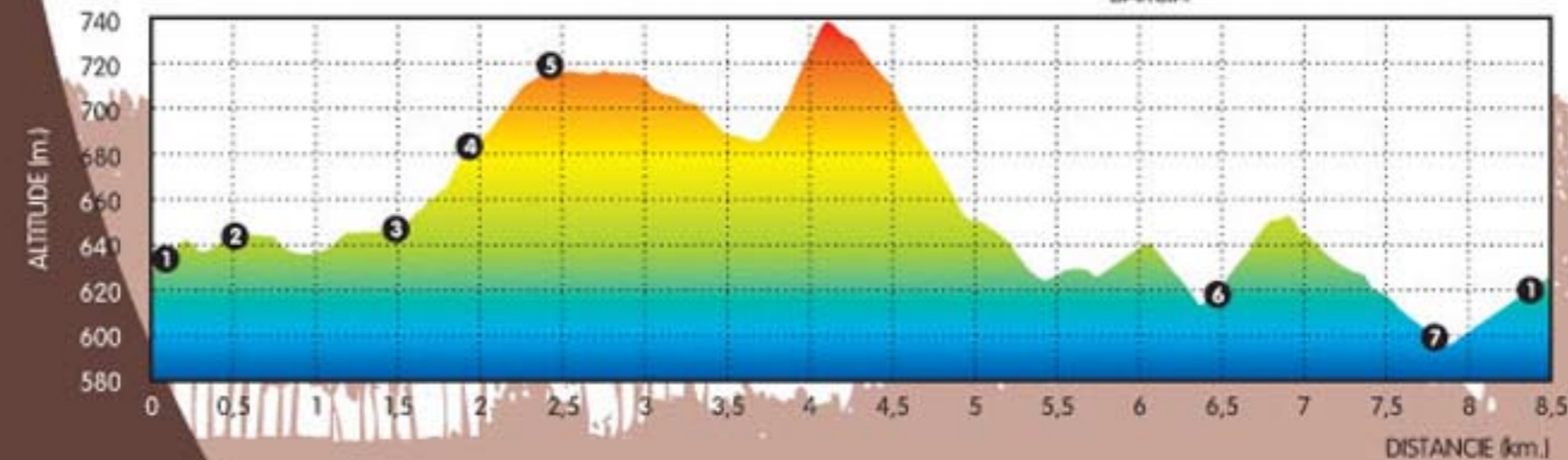
Garfián is a small and concentrated village in the southern part of Beariz.

There is a country inn here and it is mainly surrounded by oakwoods and chestnut groves. Its orientation towards the south and the sheltering mountains provide Garfián with a sunny and hardly windy weather.

On the lower side of Garfián there is a river that used to mark the southern boundary of the historical region of Terra de Montes. The geographers argue over whether this river is the Avia or just one of its tributaries. In the past it was officially known as the Avia, as proved by an account contemporary to the foundation in 1135 of the monastery of Acibeiro (in Forcarei) which states that its land properties bordered at south on the river Avia "when crossing the parishes of Xirazga and Beariz". Nowadays, however, the locals call this stream the Doade. The river will get to the Albarellos reservoir, then become more plentiful and cross the valley of the Ribeiro, to end up flowing into the Miño in the historical village of Ribadavia.



1 CASTRO 2 MÂMOA 3 VILLAGE BOUZA 4 PETROGLYPHS 5 PANORAMIC VIEW 6 RECREATIONAL AREA 7 BRIDGE PEDRIÑA BARCIA

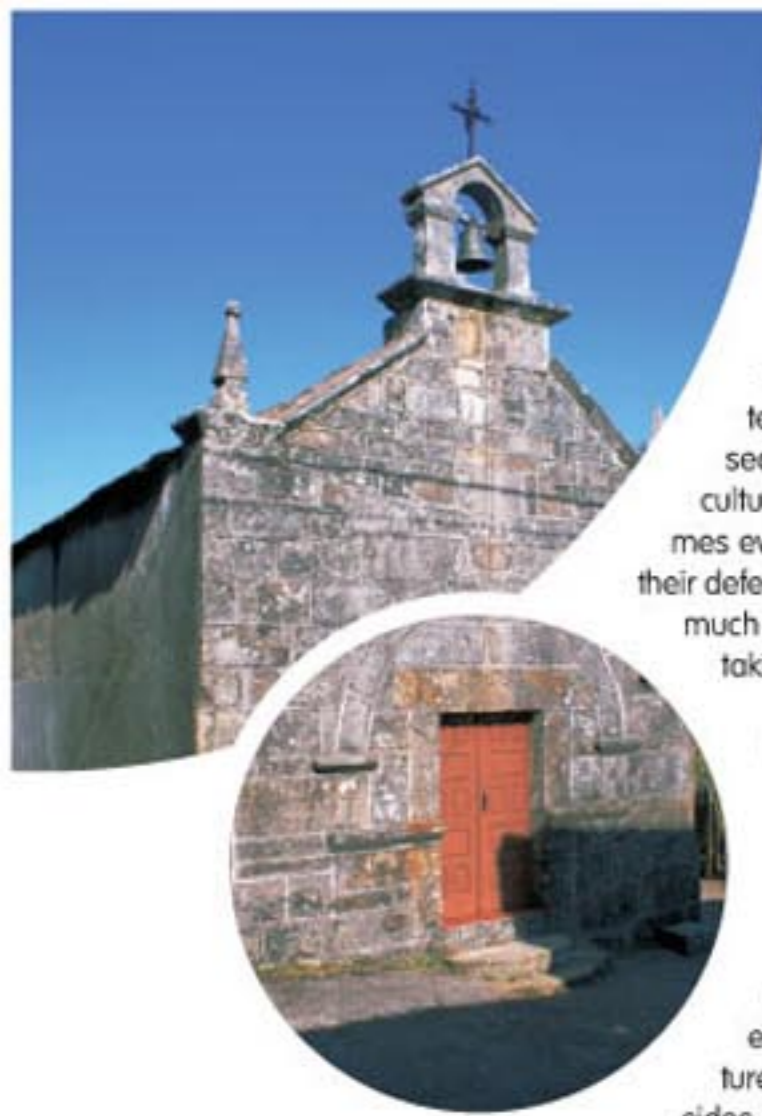


## THE GARFIÁN ROUTE

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The route starts through a nice path surrounded by oaks. On the right we see the "castro" of Garfián. The "castros" are ancient fortified settlements which date back to the 5th or 6th century b. C. They are always located in high areas and their inhabitants are supposed to have been seminomadic, specializing in agriculture. By looking at this type of settlement it becomes evident that our ancestors gave a high priority to their defense. In the nearby "castro" of Magros the land is much more abrupt and we encourage you to visit it by taking another route in the municipality of Beariz.

In the "castro" we see an "aljibe" and several petroglyphs. The "aljibe" is a cistern used to gather and keep rain water. The labyrinth of gorse and all kinds of brambles makes it difficult for us to locate the "castro" from afar, but it is right next to the path. The "castro" has a magnificent wall only on one of its sides and we need to follow it in order to enter the settlement. The interior's most important feature is the "aljibe" carved in the stone and, in one of its sides, three horses of different sizes that seem to be running in perspective towards the water in the cistern. It is not easy to picture

the whole distribution of the "castro" since a lot of the stones formerly demarcating dwellings and walls have been taken and used in later constructions.

Very close to the "castro" we find the necropolis of Garfián. This is the name given to a group of five "mámoas" that have not yet been unearthed. To find them we will need to look carefully, for all those mounds on the ground are in fact "mámoas", which one could say are like dolmens. Each of these incredible tombs has a main part consisting of a circle of vertical stones, and on top of these a big stone slab acting as roof. Nevertheless, what is left nowadays in the top of each "mámoa" is some sort of crater because the slabs were taken out when the "mámoas" were plundered and afterwards the roof was covered with earth. The stone slabs are then visible only when there are excavations. In this case we find all the "mámoas" in their original form, covered with earth to help their preservation.

These megaliths are usually dated as belonging to the 4th or 2nd millennium b. C. and their widespread presence in this area is one of the arguments that has given rise to the idea that the good reputation of the stone-masons from around here is not new.

The wood of small oaks takes us through old paths in a pleasant and easy walk. After almost one kilometer surrounded by oaks and pine trees we get to a road that will lead us to the village of A Bouza.

A Bouza is a small village with old traditional houses. Its name comes from the Celtic word "baudea", which means scrubland, a land that has not been cultivated and is full of scrub (specifically, gorse and any kind of shrub). All these species are abundant in the pine plantations that become visible and stand out in the sides of the Ceo da Bouza.

It is advisable to take water at this point since we are soon setting out for higher and sunnier areas where we will find no springs. There is one though in this village whose water may not be miraculous, but will quench our thirst and drown our sorrows. And not only does this spring irrigate the gardens, clean the houses and give the horses water to drink, but it also has the special gift of speeding up our tongues. People from A Bouza are said to speak so fast because they drink water from the spring of Gilata.

In the middle of the village, we find an old path on the right, hidden between the houses. This has been traditionally used by oxcarts, whose wheels have left ruts on the ground, eroding it over the centuries and shaping the stones as we now see them.

The source of the spring is located up this road by a water tank, where we follow the path to the left. This will take us to wider and sunnier tracks which will allow us to go round the Ceo da Bouza mountain before initiating the descent back to Barcia.

FROM GARFIÁN TO THE BOUZA

STAGE 1

After leaving the water tank behind we cross the track in front of us to admire the views over the western part of the municipality. We will soon surround the Ceo da Bouza and visit the small cavities carved in the slate and their petroglyphs.

We are now crossing pine trees plantations, but some open spaces on our way will give us the opportunity to admire the wonderful panoramic view over the valley, making out in the distance the shape and size of the villages of Alén, Xirazga and Doade. We will also see clearly the oak groves and woods on the river banks in the lower areas, alternating with farmlands around the villages. These lands are usually located towards the south, in the lowest parts of the valley, where there is plenty of water. As we continue up the road we go past many pine trees and the highest lands are overrun with gorse and thickets. More to the west the wind turbines, powered by the wind from the coast, run ceaselessly for there are no higher mountains around, from here to the Rías Baixas.

After going round the mountain we walk down the path, but if you go on a vehicle you should proceed with caution, since there may be gravel and ruts in this pretty steep road which may become dangerous.

From the top of the Rebordiños we walk down a track lined with pine trees and oaks, which will accompany us all the way to the recreational area of Barcia. Here other species more common in the river banks abound, such as the birch, the willow and the poplar. Along with the oaks, these make the perfect complement to a good shade in this welcoming spot.

At the recreational area of Barcia we may rest for a while in the shade of the trees and drink from the spring while listening the relaxing sound of the running water mix with that of the branches swaying in the wind. Here we will get the chance to admire all its sources of life: the insects, the amphibians and the trees, which will be easily distinguished from each other by their leaves.

The leaves of the birch are droopy, small, serrate and rhomboid, ending in a somewhat arrow-shaped tip. Its soft wood has made it the preferred material in the making of farming tools and "zocas" (clogs in English).

The willow's leaves have non-dentate margins and elongate as they grow, becoming three times longer than wider. They are wide at their base and taper to a small rounded or slightly pointed tip. Its bark is the main ingredient of a well-known medicine, one of the most important in history: the aspirin.

The alder has distinct round serrated leaves, neither pointy nor heart-shaped at the base as in the hazel's leaf. Its wood has also been commonly used to make "zocas" and cart axles, and its leaves are good to soothe tired feet.



FROM THE CEO DA BOUZA TO THE RECREATIONAL AREA IN BARCIA

STAGE 2



After leaving the recreational area of Barcia and take the paved road back, then turning right at the school and going round it. When descending, the track connects with the main road, which we will follow to get onto the left to the Ponte Pedriña, a medieval bridge that fell into disuse when a new one was built next to it.

The last stretch in our tour takes us back to the oak wood where we started, and which we may cross to admire the "castro" of Garfián once more. The lucky owners of an oak with long straight trunk and branches may get excellent joists for their houses. However, they are very unlikely in this species and even so, they tend to be knotted and irregular.

We have reached the end of the route of Garfián, where there is a country inn and along which we enjoyed its peace and indigenous woods. The tracks going down and in the opposite direction of our route will also take us close to the river and other charming spots in these lush woods by the river. We could also visit the mill of Guerra by going off the course to the medieval bridge of Baiste, which is to be found at the other side of the village and is clearly marked.



FROM BARCIA TO GARFIÁN

STAGE 3