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Starting at the train station of Sabóia, this route, the longest of Rota Vicentina, meanders along the Mira River. In it, we feel immersed in the vastness of the space, sounds, and colors of nature. There is no better way to feel springtime in Alentejo.

In the unique waters of the Mira, you can find in abundance everything from fish, to tortoises, to water snakes and otters. The riparian vegetation, dominated by poplars, ash trees, alders, reeds and willows, is a place of refuge and breeding for many species of birds, insects and bats. Wetland reeds and rushes near the shores are essential for migratory birds. Some of these floodplain areas were transformed into agricultural meadows with fresh, fertile soils.

In contrast, the slopes adjacent to the river are arid with sparse, poor soil. As the great 20th century Portuguese writer, Miguel Torga, once wrote, erosion “took all the flesh and left only the bones.” The cork oak is one of the few trees that manages to live with so little, dominating along these slopes overlooking the river. The bark of its trunks, the cork, has great importance in the local economy. The first harvest of cork occurs when the trunk is 70 cm in diameter and 25 to 30 years old. That is why the cork oaks are said to be planted for the grandchildren. The second cork is removed 9 to 10 years later, but the next runs are of higher value. The cork tree has a longevity of 150 to 200 years and its cork can be removed about 15 to 17 times. The harvesting takes place between June and August, a period in which the cork comes off more easily. This is a very specialized job, because it is necessary to peel the cork tree without hurting it.

The rural Alentejo is described by Miguel Torga as a “free world, without walls, that let all the invasions pass and remained untouched, oblivious to the mutations of history.” It is this integrity, but also this toughness and solitude, that can be felt as you walk through some large local agricultural estates, which once functioned as tiny villages with a church and a school.

ROTA VICENTINA GENERAL RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Walk only along the market trails.
-  The circulation of motor vehicles puts hikers at risk. Choose alternative paths.
-  The trails cross private properties; always close gates and fences. The cattle are tame but can get aggressive if you approach their offspring.
-  Respect Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks.
-  Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas.
-  Trails without WC, bring bag and leave the paths clean.
-  Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it.
-  Prepare your hike well, don't run any risks from lack of preparation or planning.

SOS

Emergency: 112
Environment and territory Police Department:
808 200 520

For further information on accommodation, restaurants and nature/cultural activities please contact the local Tourism Office or go to rotavicentina.com

HELP US

For any further information or help regarding the Rota Vicentina, please contact us:

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Download the **Rota Vicentina APP** and take it with you all the information about this route

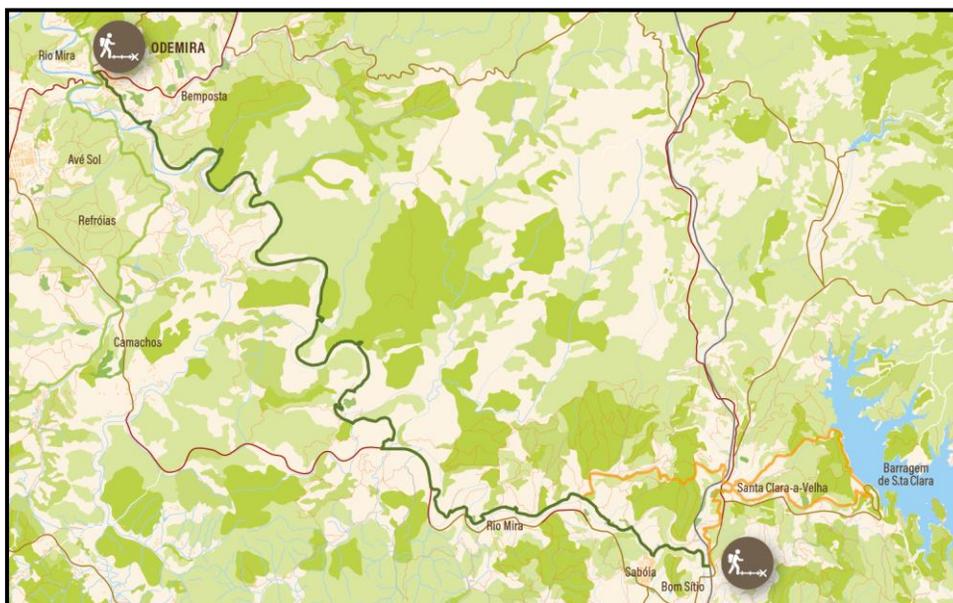




SANTIAGO DO CACÉM » VALE SECO

HISTORICAL WAY | 18 KM

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DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

Start from the train station, pass a large house and turn right after crossing a small bridge. Pass several houses and farms and continue walking straight until you reach the cemetery of Sabóia. The village itself is 300 m further ahead, but the route will continue on your right. After crossing the Mira River, turn left and walk along a meadow for about 1.5 km. Up to this point, the route is marked white, red and yellow, since it overlaps with a Circular Route. From here, the Circular Route turns to the right towards the village of Santa Clara, while the Historical Way continues across a bridge, going straight along the banks of the Mira. After 3.3 km, the trail will lead upwards, revealing a beautiful scenery over the valley. Continue walking, and, after passing an old farm, turn left and start descending until you find a wooden bridge. Cross it and turn right; soon you will see a large wooden walkway. Afterwards, turn to the left and walk for about 150 m, turn right to the northeast and continue walking until you encounter another bridge; then, ascend to the asphalt road. Just before the village of Fonte Santa, exit the road on the right. While there is no cafe here, don't hesitate to ask a friendly local if you need a glass of water – there is plenty of hospitality to be found. The path will follow along a slope – enjoy the spectacular views from the peak. A little further on, pass Monte da Boeira farm and turn right, crossing the river. On the other bank, follow the path on your left, leading through the valley, with the river staying on the left. Little by little, the forest will become denser and you will begin to see large farms.

Fact Sheet

Distance : 33 km

Approximate duration: 10 h

Accumulated climb: 550 m

Accumulated descent: 600 m

Difficult level: Average

Max. / Min. altitude: 100 m / 10 m

Recommended season September till June

Where to start?

Sabóia: at the train station of Santa Clara-Sabóia.

Odemira: at the roundabout with the iron tree sculpture, next to the gas station.

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

At the beginning of the hike, there are several intersections with Circular Routes. Pay attention to the signage and consider prolonging your stay

in this area to hike some or all of these unique routes.

This route is very long and currently has no locations or amenities for overnight stays or meals. Bring food and water. When walking the route, make sure to keep all gates and fences closed.

TIPS

This route can be shortened by 2 km if you start in Sabóia.

