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This long distance path along Southwest Portugal begins at the emblematic Santiago do Cacém Church, a city with a strong connection to the pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Since the Middle Ages pilgrims pass here coming from the Promontorium Sacrum, the mythical destination of this historic journey now recovered through Rota Vicentina.

This section of the trail is dominated by cork trees, the Alentejo's emblematic species. Vieira Natividade, a well-known Portuguese forester, said: "No other tree gives us so much while requiring so little". The cork tree is crucial to the local economy and supports an extraordinarily wide-ranging ecosystem. Cork oak forests also support various economic activities such as beekeeping, nature orientated tourism, the collection of edible or medicinal mushrooms (and even mushrooms used in the making of cosmetics), as well as husbandry of local animal breeds such as the famed black pig of the area and several different species of Alentejo cows.

Being an evergreen species, cork oaks provide shelter and food right up the food chain the whole year around. They are home to numerous insects and spiders which provide food for a wealth of different birds and there are over fifty different species that commonly nest in cork forests, among which can be found at least three different species of eagle, the short-toed, booted and Bonelli's. Other species of wild-life, such as the wildcat, genet or weasel can also be found.

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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Certified by the European wide label "Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe".



Footpath registered and approved by FCMP, integrating GR 11 / E9, connecting Sagres to St. Petersburg.

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





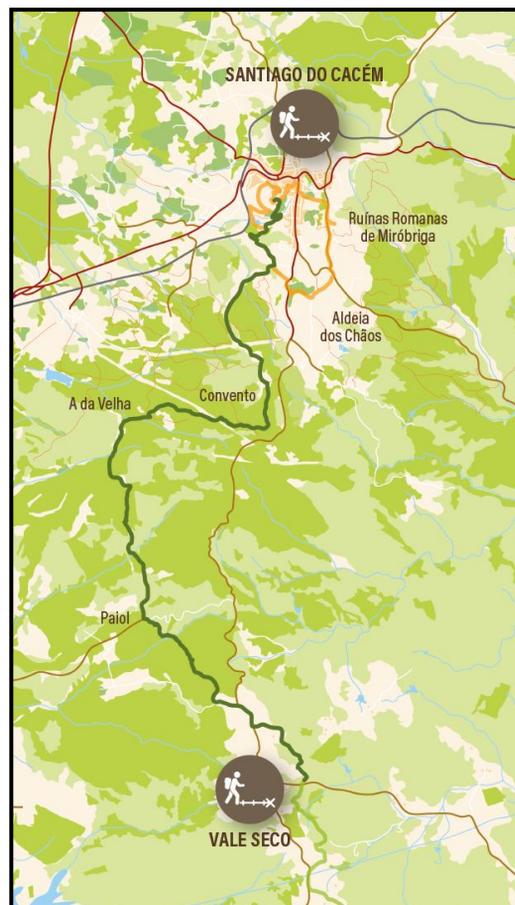
SANTIAGO DO CACÉM » VALE SECO

HISTORICAL WAY | 18 KM

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DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

Say farewell to the Church of Santiago do Cacém and to the impressive view from the top of the city, as you walk down a cobblestone road until it crosses the Passeio das Romeirinhas. From here, a narrow trail between stone walls will lead you to the park, which you will have to cross and then, go through a gate in the fence. Afterwards, the 1st section of the Historical Way proceeds through a rich landscape, characterized by the abundance of cork oaks and leaving the farms and the houses behind. The views of the Church, the Castle of Santiago do Cacém and the coastline of Sines will embellish the scenery until you reach the old Convent of Nossa Senhora do Loreto. Here, only 1 km away from the trail is the village of Paiol, where you can find two cafés; whereas the trail itself will pass through old walled ruins, sandy paths, areas with a predominance of cork oak and streams of water. At the crossroads, leading to the village of Paiol, turn left and then turn right descending below the line of eucalyptus trees. You will pass through a beautiful valley, rich in native vegetation and walk along narrow winding paths before climbing again besides a ruin and crossing the national road N120.



Fact Sheet

Distance : 18 km

Approximate duration: 6 h

Accumulated climb: 350 m

Accumulated descent: 400 m

Difficult level: Easy

Max. / Min. altitude: 270 m / 110 m

Recommended season September till June

Where to start?

Santiago do Cacém: at the Church of Santiago do Cacém, descending towards the Parque Urbano do Rio da Figueira.

Vale Seco: on the N120 road, between Cercal and Santiago, on the road to the Campilhas reservoir. 1st crossroads on the dirt track.

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

This section overlaps with other routes.

Pay attention to the signs.

Tips

Refreshments along the way: At 12.5 km,

making a detour of 1 km, you will reach the village of Paiol.

Accommodation in Vale Seco: Vale Seco has little offer of accommodation in the area. Book in advance.

Santiago do Cacém is a city full of history. Take advantage of your stay to do the Circular Route Historic Santiago and get to know the main points of interest.

