

Warning: this is a document to support the walker, not being allowed to be reproduced for commercial purposes, without the written authorization of Rota Vicentina®.

This is Historical Way's most mountainous section as well as a physically demanding one, with long ascent segments on harsh and irregular terrain. But you will be rewarded with breathtaking views over the plains and the Atlantic ocean, right from the top of the hills.

The flatter areas of this section are liberally peppered with small orchards, vegetable patches and low-intensity farming, while in amongst the undergrowth can be found the remains of the area's iron and manganese mines which operated here for over 40 years. The old mineshafts are now home to large colonies of several species of bat that work tirelessly, night after night, both as pest controllers and seed spreaders. Every single night each bat eats 50% of its body weight in insects.

The southern part of this section becomes hillier and offers walkers some spectacular scenery, such as Rocha de Água d'Alte, and the breathtaking views of the coastline. Underground streams sometimes bubble up onto the surface into springs that feed small streams, and the flora is unique, dominated by the beautiful and aromatic gum rockrose (*Cistus ladanifer*). The only blot on the horizon is the view of the ubiquitous eucalyptus plantations, a major cause of several losses to the area, soil in erosion, water due to the tree's insatiable thirst, natural habitat due to its monoculture, and, of course, countryside employment. However, it is quite interesting to see how the local flora explodes whenever it finds an open, sunny area among the eucalyptus trees. Nature could flourish here, given the chance. After Penedo, you don't even have to leave the trail to find some very rare species as they grow on the hard and dry soil right beside the path.

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





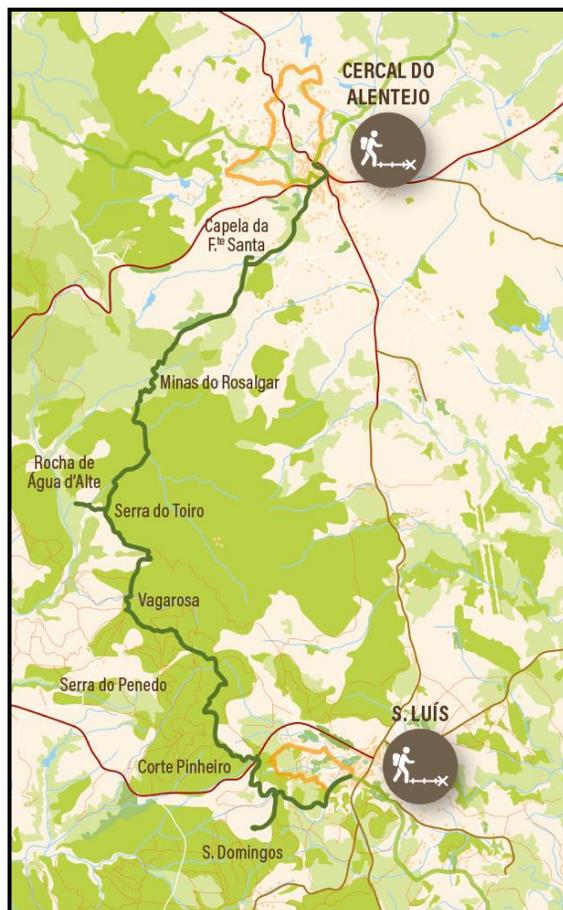
CERCAL DO ALENTEJO » S. LUÍS

HISTORICAL WAY | 20,5 KM

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DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

This section starts at the roundabout of Cercal. Head 300 m along the road towards Vila Nova de Milfontes and turn left, passing by a football field, where the asphalt ends giving way to a dirt road. Soon, you will pass by a small chapel - the Ermida da Fonte Santa. About half an hour later, you will reach a viewpoint – from here, you can enjoy the first sights of the sea, the Mira River and Vila Nova de Milfontes. The descent afterwards will reveal several ruins and the old mine galleries of Rosalgar, hidden among the vegetation. Closed in the late '90s, the mines are now inhabited only by bats. After descent through a lush valley, you can take a detour of 600 m on the right to reach the top of the Rocha de Água D'Alte – a cliff that impresses by its sheer size and, during the wet season, turns into a waterfall of about 17 m in height. After returning to the trail, you will find the ruins of an old warehouse. From here, take the first turn on the left and start climbing up. Located on a mountain range and characterized by rocky outcrops, the Penedo ridge stands out as an island of biodiversity in a landscape covered mainly by eucalyptus trees. Continue walking through the woods until the trail crosses an asphalt road. Shortly before arriving at São Luís, don't miss the ascent to São Domingos – a peak of 329 m, from where you can truly appreciate the grandeur of this area and the superb views of Porto Covo, Sines, the ocean, and the village of São Luís.



Fact Sheet

Distance : 20,5 km

Approximate duration: 7h

Accumulated climb: 500 m

Accumulated descent: 500 m

Diffiucult level: Average

Max. / Min. altitude: 324 m / 60 m

Recommended season September till June

Where to start?

Cercal do Alentejo: at the roundabout of Cercal do Alentejo (Largo dos Caeiros), follow the road towards Milfontes.

S. Luís: next to the bus stop on the N120 which crosses São Luís, head towards the Church.

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

You will not find any refreshments along the way. You should bring water (1.5 L) and enough provisions for a walk that is one of the most demanding of the Rota Vicentina.

TIPS

A demanding section: As the final part of this section can be a little exhausting, you can shorten it by going directly to São Luís by the Circular Route. You will lose, however, the São Domingos mountain range (the highest point of the Historical Way - 329 m).

