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Part of this route goes along the Seixe River with its clear waters and riparian galleries, which are hotspots for wildlife. The fresh, cool stream contrasts with the dramatic view over the Seixe Valley and São Miguel, which presents to us the final part of the route.

The Seixe River begins in the mountains of Monchique, flows down and finally reaches the Odeceixe Beach. It is an important ecological link between the mountains and the coast.









There are some rare species of fish that can be found in this area like the ray-finned fish (*Squalius aradensis*), classified as Critically Endangered and the gypsy barbel (*Luciobarbus sclateri*), an endemic species of the southern Iberian Peninsula with a status of Endangered. These species need moderately deep, clear running water with stones and vegetation on the banks of the river. Between the loss of this specific habitat and the introduction of invasive species, the quantity of this rare fish species has diminished. In these rivers, different invasive species of fish have been identified, for example, the pumpkinseed fish (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and the eastern mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*). Other characteristic animals of the Seixe River are the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), the Iberian emerald lizard (*Lacerta schreiberi*), different kinds of bats, and dozens of bird species. In the river and the small farming dams, you can still find two species of turtles: the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) and the Spanish pond turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*).

The riparian galleries of the Seixe River contain willows, ashes, alders, and Portuguese oaks (*Quercus faginea*). Sometimes you can spot two relic species of the flora of Monchique: mirbeck's oak (*Quercus canarensis*), an occidental Mediterranean oak which retains its leaves all year long and is one of the rarest species of trees in Portugal; and the pontic rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), a rare bush endemic to the Iberian Peninsula and the region of the Black Sea with high scientific interest for being considered a relic of flora of the tertiary period (*Laurissilva*). This route also boasts one of the rarest arboreal habitats in all of Portugal, home to pungent animals, and small woods of black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), which occupy the land next to the river, coated with ivy and surrounded by common dog-violets and royl fern.

The route also travels along areas of forests of maritime pine, eucalyptus, cork trees and Portuguese oak. In the magnificent Mediterranean brush abounds the wild-olive, Mediterranean buckthorn, sage-leaved rock-rose, fennel, wild asparagus, calamints, laurustinus, strawberry trees, *Cynara algarbiensis*, lavender, gall oak, common heather, Portuguese heath, gum rockrose, *Genista hirsuta*, poplar-leaved cistus, broom, butcher's-broom, wild carrot, and the mastic tree. You can also find birds

like pipits, swallows, wagtails, larks, corn buntings, bee-eaters, black redstarts, common linnets, European goldfinches, and Eurasian stone-curlews. When night falls, the bats start their feasting on insects and the owls search silently for their prey in open areas. In the valley of Seixe River, you can find traces of prehistoric human remains from the time of the Roman and Arabic occupation.

RULES & RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Walk only along the marked 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 a 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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ODECEIXE TO THE RIVER

CIRCULAR ROUTE | 14.5 KM / 16 KM

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DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

Start by walking south along a path that overlaps with the Historical Way. Be careful, when crossing the national road. Afterwards, keep going straight, passing by several houses and farms. After approximately 3 km, the trail will turn left, leading into a pine forest. Once the trail separates from the Historical Way, continue walking right in the direction of Rogil – stay on the trail that follows the yellow and red markings. After 500 m, cross the road and continue walking straight for 1 km. Upon reaching a fork, take a path to the right, which zigzags towards the valley. Continue walking along a gravel pathway until you arrive at a large farm and a small asphalt road. Follow this road for about 400 m walking up. When the asphalt road makes a turn, continue walking straight along a dirt road. After passing some agricultural fields and a forest of cork oaks, turn right at the fork. From there on, you will see several houses. Keep walking along the valley of the Seixe River. When you can see the village of São Miguel, the trail once more joins the Historical way, coming from the village of São Teotónio. Follow the two overlapping routes for about 600 m, and then cross a meadow. As the Historical Way goes straight, you will turn left, ascending along a forest path. Once you reach the top of a hill, take a deep breath and enjoy the incredible view over Vale do Seixe and São Miguel – this is a perfect place for a picnic. The trail continues to the left, leading between hills and a forest of cork oaks, passing by ruins, and then ascending to the cemetery of Odeceixe. Make sure to be careful when crossing the national road on your way back to the starting point.

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



FACT SHEET:

Distance: 14.5 km / 16 km

Approximate duration: 4 h 30m / 5 h 30m

Accumulated descent: 300m / 400m

Difficulty level : Average

Max. / Min. Altitude 130 m / 110 m

Recommended direction

counterclockwise

Recommended season September till June

WHERE TO START?

Odeceixe, Malhadais: by the football field.

Odeceixe: at the beginning of Rua do Rio, in the direction of Largo 1º de Maio (the main square of Odeceixe).

IMPORTANT WARNINGS:

Pay attention to the signs marked in white, red and yellow on the Circular Routes that overlap with the Historical Way. The signs marked with yellow and red are for the Circular Routes.

