

After spending the winter waiting for reinforcements for an assault on the Lines, Masséna became convinced that his task was impossible and, with his soldiers exhausted and practically starving due to Wellington's scorched earth order on his retreat, ordered a retreat to Salamanca. Allied troops pursued and harassed the French rearguard constantly, which, ably commanded by Marshal Ney, secured the necessary time for their compatriots in a series of clashes in Pombal, Redinha, Casal Novo, Foz de Arouce, and Sabugal.



British light cavalry.



Portuguese infantry.

Once back in Spain, the French marshal reorganised his troops and, in an attempt to hold Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, engaged the allied army at the Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, where he was repelled. As a result, the Portuguese fortress was evacuated and retaken by the allies, which completed the liberation of Portugal.

Battle of Bussaco.



Napoctep

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Napoleonic routes between Spain and Portugal

The objective of the Napoctep Project is the creation of a series of tourist routes associated with the presence of Napoleonic troops in Castilla y León and Central Portugal. The routes elaborated are the following:

Route 1st Invasión of Portugal.

Route 2nd Invasión of Portugal.

Route 3rd Invasión of Portugal.

Wellington Route.

Route of Siege and Great Battles.

Route of Napoleon and the Englishman's Run.

Guerrilleros Julián Sánchez el Charro and el Empecinado Route.



0700_NAPOCTEP_3_P Project co-financed by the European Fund Regional Development ERDF within the framework of the Interreg program V A Spain – Portugal (POCTEP) 2014-2020.

DL VA 984-2021



Route 3rd Invasion of Portugal

from Salamanca to Sabugal

André Masséna, Prince of Essling.

In the summer of 1810 Napoleon's troops invaded Portugal for the third time. Beforehand they had overcome resistance by the Spanish armies and had conquered practically the whole of Spain. The last bastion to fall was Ciudad Rodrigo. It was time to take back Portugal.

Almeida surrendered after a chance incident blew up its ammunition dump. Marshal Masséna, in charge of the expedition, planned to take the clear road to Lisbon. Lord Wellington tried to stop him first at the Battle of Bussaco but, in spite of his victory, the French general was able to manoeuvre to continue with his advance.



French engineers.

It was only when he reached the Lines of Torres Vedras, two rings of carefully fortified hills along the Tagus River to the Atlantic Ocean plus an additional one to cover a possible re-embarkment of troops by the British navy, that the shocked Imperial Marshal would realise his task was greater than his resources.

British bivouac.



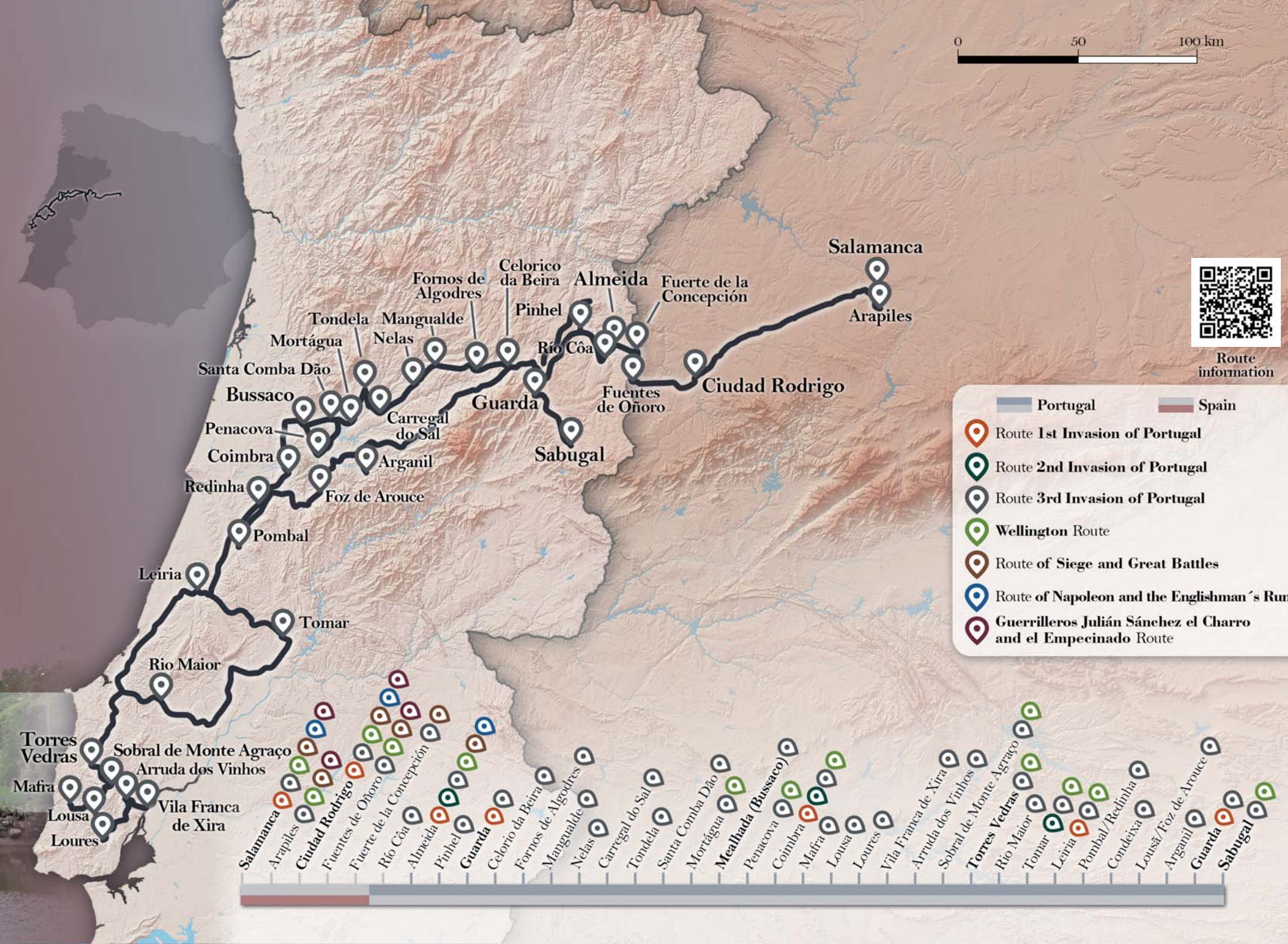
The Trail of the Third Invasion of Portugal is planned as a return journey. Starting in Salamanca we head southwest, following in the footsteps of the invaders, crossing over into Portugal all the way to the Lines of Torres Vedras. There we journey to several places along the two outer lines of large fortifications which successfully protected Lisbon in the winter of 1810-1811. Afterwards, we move north to Sabugal with the allied troops who pursued the French retreat once they became convinced their task was impossible.



Mafra National Palace.



Bussaco Palace Hotel.



The Lines of Torres Vedras constitute a fantastic tourist attraction in and of themselves. They are complemented by several interpretation centres, Forte de Alqueidão, Sobral, Torres Vedras, which give us a clearer idea of their purpose, construction, workings, and performance. Bussaco, Mortágua, Almeida, and Ciudad Rodrigo also have exhibitions exploring the war and traditions of the age. The Castle of San Felices de los Gallegos and the Fort of the Conception witnessed fighting between troops in that period. You can stay at the latter, as well as at the Parador Hotel in neighbouring Ciudad Rodrigo, at the Bussaco Palace Hotel, or at the Anadia Palace in Mangualde.



"Mortágua in the Battle of Bussaco" Interpretation Centre



Castle of Pombal.



Fort of São Vicente on the Lines of Torres Vedras.