

Nacional Park of Peneda-Gerês

In the extreme north-east of Portugal, between the Alto Minho and Trás-os-Montes, the Serra da Peneda and Serra do Gerês constitute the only Portuguese protected area that has been classified as a National Park. It is a world apart, where human activity is integrated in a harmonious manner with nature, preserving ancient values and traditions that can be seen in the community villages of Pitões das Júnias and Tourém.

The exuberant vegetation covering the mountains, exhibit every shade of green, include a holly bush wood - unique at a national level - and endemic species such as the Gerês lily, whose blue-violet colours grace the fields. The rugged mountainous terrain is cut across by rapidly flowing rivers and streams, including many waterfalls, which finally slow down their pace in dams such as those of Caniçada, Vilarinho das Furnas or Portela do Homem. The landscapes are quite stunning.

Keep your eyes peeled, because you may be able to spot a roe deer (symbol of the Park) or its predator, the Iberian wolf. It is more common to come across garrano ponies -which are small wild horses that run freely across the hills. You're also likely to find Barrosã cattle and dark haired Castro Laboreiro dogs, that look after the flocks of goats and sheep which move between the "brandas" and "inverneiras" in the different seasons.

If you want to expend some energy there are plenty of opportunities, since you'll find ideal conditions for practising activities such as canyoning or canoeing. If you just want to go for a walk, follow the winding and well conserved path of the Roman road or "geira" and admire the milestones that are almost 2000 years old. Other itineraries will enable you to see dolmens and cromlechs, mediaeval castles or monasteries and sanctuaries, that are perfectly integrated in the landscape.

ENJOY THIS NATURAL SPACE