

# AZENHAS E FORTINS DO GUADIANA

WALKING TRAILS BEJA QUINTOS

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BJA

## SITUATION

Quintos is a small locality situated in the extreme east of the municipality of Beja, where the river Guadiana secures the boundary with the neighbouring municipality of Serpa. At one time fields of cereal covered almost all of this territory and the watermills of the Guadiana ground the grain produced there. These are now ancestral witnesses stopped in time. The rural reality is currently one of a profound change to irrigation with the arrival of the water from the Alqueva lake.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE

Start at the Largo da Ponte in Quintos, head east by the river, along a road that becomes a rural path. Head in the direction of Monte da Gravia dos Pisões where you turn right near the fountain. Here we are in the heart of fertile land, where irrigation reigns thanks to arrival of the water from the Alqueva lake. About one thousand two hundred metres ahead, make a tight turn left, pass through the ruins of what was once the important Monte da Gravia do Meio, after which you begin the descent down the Gravia 'arroyo' to cross its water line which, in times of rain, involves crossing the ford. Climb the southern slope of the 'arroyo' passing by the side of Monte do Telheirinho to turn left and go along the national road n° 1067 for just over two kilometres and half, where you will again turn left towards the Vau watermill, next to the Guadiana river, about a kilometre. On this path, on the right, is the Fountain of Vau de Baixo. Visit the watermill, this and others, with extreme care not to slip or fall into the river. Return to the path to follow the river upstream, where you will come across the fort do Vau or D. Isabel. This is a curious defensive construction, without doors or windows, which served to control the crossings by boat that would take place here. A little further on is the water-mill of Quilos, carry on up the river (cross the Gravia 'arroyo' which, in times of heavy rain, is difficult to cross on foot) until you see the Machados watermill, turning, before reaching this, to a long ascent towards Monte da Gravia dos Pisões. From here do the same initial stretch to arrive at your starting point.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

### VILLAGE OF QUINTOS

Situated in the extreme east of the municipality of Beja, bordering the river Guadiana, with about 250 inhabitants. There is uncertainty about the name Quintos (fifths), which could be associated with the tax paid for these lands to the House of Infantado which had possession in the 17th century or with its geographical position in an area which saw disputes, both between Christians and Moors and Spanish and Portuguese, being referred to colloquially as 'Os Quintos dos Infernos'.

### WATERMILLS OF THE GUADIANA

The mills are cereal mills where the driving force is ensured by the passage of water from the river. These are complex systems involving great engineering works for repression and conduct of water mass, machinery for rotation and energy transmission and finally, powerful grinding stones for grinding cereal. These were usually

private enterprises in which the endeavour and skill of the miller were essential to the success of the enterprise. The last watermill of the Guadiana stopped working in the 1960s.

### THE FORT OF VAU OR D. ISABEL

A curious looking, completely secluded fort, with its side facing upstream in the form of the bow of ship, in order to withstand the frequent floods of the river Guadiana. It was built by D. João IV after the restoration of independence, to control the crossing of the Guadiana which was made by ford or by boat in this precise location.

## NATURAL VALUES

### FLORA AND FAUNA

In the riparian gallery of the Guadiana, in spite of some human intervention it is still possible to see traces of Mediterranean scrubland, many pastures of holm oak with Mediterranean undergrowth of cistus, myrtle and brush wood. Here there is often oleander, poplar and/or willow. The part of the route which follows the river Guadiana is integrated into the Guadiana site, a classification that gives environmental protection status to this area.

With regard to fauna we highlight some terrestrial and aquatic species:

**Mammals:** Hare, rabbit, fox, wild boar, Egyptian mongoose, badger, hedgehog, horseshoe bat, polecat and otter.

**Fish:** Barbel, Iberian nase, spined loach, minnow and roach as natural species and the large-mouth bass, carp and the perch, as introduced species.

**Amphibians:** Ribbed newt, pygmy newt, midwife toad, Iberian painted frog, common toad and natterjack toad.

**Reptiles:** common gecko, ocellated lizard, large psammomachus, blind snake, Montpellier snake, ladder snake and common turtle.

**Birds:** Rufous robin, Sardinian warbler, Spanish sparrow, great spotted cuckoo, bee-eater, melodious warbler, short toed snake eagle, common snipe, common blackbird, European robin, stone curlew, northern lapwing, golden oriole, blue rock thrush.

**Butterflies:** *Melanargia ines*, *callophrys ruby*, among many others, and moths - peacock moth (*saturnia piry*), *cymbalophora pudica* and *rodhometra sacraria*.

There are also numerous dragonflies such as: *orthetrum trinacria*, *Crocothemis eritraea* or *anax imperator*.

### GEOLOGY

The route takes place on the south side of the Ossa Morena Zone (ZOM), an important geological unit that includes the Iberian Massif. In Quintos we find in the commonly named Gabros of Beja, dark coloured, intrusive igneous rocks, but as we approach the Guadiana river 'we dive' into metamorphosed and very deformed rocks that were once at the bottom of the ocean (crust). These rocks (amphibolite, metagabbros, serpentinites, amongst others) constitute the COBA - Complex ophiolites of Beja-Acebuches (in Spain), an ophiolitic belt that separates the ZOM from another important geological unit, the South Zone of Portugal (ZSP).

## ACCOMMODATION IN THE VICINITY

**Herdade do Vau** – Agro-tourism and wine tourism  
Lugar do Vau de Cima - 7800-661 Quintos | +351 966 052 219  
E-mail: reservas@herdadedovau.com | www.herdadedovau.com

## CANOE TRIPS DOWN THE GUADIANA

Another way to enjoy the landscape and the tranquillity that comes with the Guadiana river is to navigate it in a canoe. To do this, you can contact registered companies, which operate in this area, and benefit from another unforgettable experience.

### Emotion – Life on adventure

+351 965 585 718 | +351 925 508 116  
E-mail: reservas@emotionportugal.com

For more information consult **Registo Nacional de Agentes de Animação Turística**: [www.turismodeportugal.pt](http://www.turismodeportugal.pt)

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Tourist Office**: 284 311 913 / turismo@cm-beja.pt  
[www.cm-beja.pt](http://www.cm-beja.pt)

**Parish Council**: 284 893 149

**Medical emergency and in case of Fires**:112

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## FACTSHEET

**NAME**: AZENHAS E FORTINS DO GUADIANA

**PARISH**: UNIÃO DE FREGUESIAS DE SALVADA E QUINTOS - QUINTOS

**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**: Quintos, Beja

*From Beja to Quintos go along the EM 511, turn left to the EM513 and left again to the EM39, go past the bridge at the entrance to the village, parking directly on the right where you will see the information board for the route.*

**TYPE OF ROUTE**: Circular

**DISTANCE**: 14.8 km

**APPROXIMATE DURATION**: 4 to 5h

**TYPE OF SURFACE**: Nature trails and rural tracks

**UNEVENNESS**: A long incline

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY**: Somewhat difficult

**GROUND**: Beaten track

**STARTING AND FINISHING POINT**: Quintos

**GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES**: N37°57'46" W07°42'21"

**ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP**: N°s 522; 532 from to IGeoE

**WHERE TO PARK**: There is parking at the location

**REGULATIONS**: GUADIANA SITE / NATURA 2000 NETWORK

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stock up on food and water in one of the cafés or grocery stores in the village;
- Follow the indicated tracks;
- Respect private property, always close gates;
- Respect nature;
- Avoid noises and attitudes that disturb the tranquillity of the area;
- Don't leave litter or vestiges of your passage. Tracks without toilet, take a bag and leave the track clean;
- Be very careful with the cattle, because although docile they usually react with aggressiveness when strangers approach their offspring;
- Do not light fires;
- Use comfortable clothes and shoes and take a hat and sunscreen;
- Calculate the time of the route in order to finish before dark;
- Not advisable in periods of intense rain, because it becomes difficult to cross the Gravia Ravine on foot;
- In the summer avoid the hottest parts of the day;
- Be careful in hunting season between August 15 and February 28;
- Be friendly with the locals, elucidate them about the signage of the route and ongoing activities.



MAP

