

CAMINHOS DA GAL

WALKING TRAILS BEJA TRIGACHES

PR
6
BJA

SITUATION

Trigaches is a village located in the extreme northwest of the municipality of Beja. Essentially rural, this land is known for the stone found there and which will have fuelled the construction of the city of Beja throughout the ages, that is to say 'Trigaches marble'. The lime kilns that are located in the parish were also an important testimony to the activities of the quarry. The canal that connects the Alvito dam to the Pisão dam passes through here and is part of the Alqueva water transportation system. A fact which has been progressively transforming the landscape due to the change in the type of agriculture practiced here - dry arable/irrigated.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE

Start in the church square, in Trigaches following the route markers until you reach a windmill that has been converted into a house, turn right here. A short distance ahead is an American type wind powered water pump that until very recently aspired to water from the depths of the earth with just a little breeze. A little further make a sharp right turn, continue over flat terrain flanked by cultivated fields. Further on, after turning left, you can see an ancient olive grove, continue until you reach the quarry. The doors that once served as the entrance have been replaced by large blocks of marble stones to avoid unwanted visitors, since, although the quarry remains active there are no extractions taking place at the moment. You should go along to the left and jump over the stone in an area in which it is much lower and enter. Here you can enjoy an almost unexpected amazing landscape. To get a better perspective go along the left side of the well, to the point where you can observe the quarry at length. Take a moment to contemplate, take photos or just let yourself be. Take special care not to slip and fall on this stretch within the quarry, especially if you take children! You are not permitted to dive, nor swim! To resume the walk go back to the entrance and follow the same stretch, turning right into the olive grove. You arrive at a lime kiln, which was disabled in the first decade of the 21st century. Here you can obtain more information by consulting the Information Panel. Follow the path down to the canal, which carries water from the dam of Alvito to that of Pisão, and is part of the Alqueva enterprise, the largest artificial lake in Europe. Cross an area of small farms and further ahead, now at the entrance of the village, pass by the public wash house which is still used by the villagers today, and through a small marble manufacturing industry, carry on up the road to arrive at the point at which you started.

POINTS OF INTEREST

TRIGACHES VILLAGE

It is located in the extreme northwest of the municipality of Beja and has about 464 inhabitants. There is uncertainty about the origin of the name Trigaches, however, legend has it that a king came with his army to conquer this land from its few inhabitants, ordering the ransacking of their homes in the search for bread and wheat. One of the warriors having found a barn full of wheat would have screamed 'I've found wheat' - trigo acho - from whence

came Trigaches.

Trigaches is the most recent parish in the municipality of Beja's, but the occupation of that territory dates back to prehistory, as proved by recent archaeological findings made in the course of excavations resulting from the implementation of the Alqueva enterprise. Notably the necropolis from the first iron age (7th to 5th century BC) of Vinha das Caliças, in whose graves were found weapons and various objects that point to close contact with the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin (Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek). Just outside Trigaches, there are traces of a Roman baths, probably belonging to a villa on the site.

TRIGACHES QUARRY

The exploitation of the Trigaches quarry may have originated in Roman times.

Until the 1950s this exploitation was associated with the production of lime, an important industry in this region. It was at this time when the exploitation of the quarry for civil construction purposes began. The quarry was divided into small plots, like small gardens. With the decline in the civil construction industry and the availability of other materials for construction the demand for its marble was reduced significantly. Trigaches marble has fuelled the construction of the city of Beja throughout the ages. Examples of such use are the Roman capitals on display at Beja Regional Museum, the castle keep or the pavement of the Praça da República. Extraction is currently suspended but the quarry is still active. The little material that was taken for the production of lime also ceased when the lime kilns stopped producing in the first decade of this century.

LIME KILN

The ovens are located next to the limestone or marble extractions. The stone used to get lime in Trigaches is the marble from the quarries (CaCO_3) which after a chemical process obtained by boiling the stone at, approximately 900°C , turns into quicklime (CaO). This process depends on the size of the oven, the type of stone used, fuel quality and even weather conditions. In the Trigaches ovens this task took about 8 to 9 days and involved three men working day and night so that combustion took place continuously.

NATURAL VALUES

FLORA

Most of the soil of the parish is given over to extensive or mixed farming with cereals and olive crops and fallow land. There is an area of oak pastures within the ancient marble quarries. Wild orchids are just a part of the diverse flora found in the parish. The Orchidaceae family in Portugal comprises of about 70 species. In the municipality of Beja about 20 species have been identified, examples of which are the *Ophrys bombyliflora* and *Cephalanthera longifolia* (L.) Frisch. Our orchids are very small in size so you need to watch your step so as not to trample on them. The area of the Trigaches quarry is one of those where these rare little beauties can be seen. Here, some very rare species have been identified. Many of them are threatened with extinction, so it is important to protect them, preserving their habitat and especially not picking them.

In the quarries there is an abundance of *Cynara* type thistles that feed the *Melitaea aetherie*, one of the rarest butterflies of Portugal (Red List - Vulnerable/endangered) which has a resident population near S. Brissos.

FAUNA

Reptiles: Montpellier snake, ladder snake.

Amphibians: Common toad, Iberian ribbed newt.

Mammals: rabbit, hare, badger, Egyptian mongoose, hedgehog.

Birds: great spotted cuckoo, partridge, quail, common magpie, many other sightings are referenced to the riparian zone of the nearby Pisão dam.

ACCOMMODATION / WINE TOURISM IN THE VICINITY

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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Tourist Office: 284 311 913 / turismo@cm-beja.pt
www.cm-beja.pt

Parish Council: 284 999 215

Medical emergency and in case of Fires: 112

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FACTSHEET

NAME: CAMINHOS DA CAL

PARISH: UNIÃO DE FREGUESIAS DE TRIGACHES E S. BRISSOS - TRIGACHES

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Trigaches, Beja

From Beja to Trigaches go along the IP8/N121 towards Lisbon, at about 4 km at the roundabout turn right towards the airport. When you reach the village turn right and go to the end of the road where you turn right again. Go as far as the Church Square where the route starts.

TYPE OF ROUTE: Circular

DISTANCE: 6.7 km

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 2h

TYPE OF SURFACE: Nature trails and rural tracks

UNEVENNESS: None

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: Easy

GROUND: Beaten track

STARTING AND FINISHING POINT: Trigaches

GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES: 38°05'24.0"N 7°58'17.1"W

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP: N°s 509; 510

WHERE TO PARK: There is parking at the location

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;
- 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

