



Discovering the Natural and the Archaeological
Heritage of the Côa Valley

Combined visit Faia Brava (Biologists Trail)
+
Archaeological Park (Penascosa) + Côa Museum

The result of a happy cooperation between the **Côa Park Foundation** and **ATNatureza**, a one-day visit programme has emerged for a true immersion in the Natural and Archaeological Heritage of the Côa Valley.

A full day that allows to know more about the wild nature of the Faia Brava Reserve, to "dress" the skin of the Palaeolithic hunters in search of wild herds and enjoy the engravings of the largest open air museum.

PROGRAM

Morning - Visit to Faia Brava Reserve

Meeting Point: Near the Church of Vale de Afonsinho

Hour: To be arranged

The Programme starts in the morning with a guided walk of approximately 2.5Km along the Biologists Trail in the southern part of the Faia Brava Reserve, the first and only Private Protected Area in Portugal. There are approximately 1000 hectares dedicated to wild nature conservation where the great Eagles (Golden Eagle and Bonelli's Eagle) and the Vultures (Egyptian Vulture and Griffon) dominate the rocky cliffs locally known as "faias". The Viewpoint of "Milhoteira" is one of the highlights of the visit where it is possible to reach the escarpment of the "Faia Brava" that gives the name to the Reserve and is a strategic point to observe the great birds that dominate the skies and admire the wild Côa in all its splendour. During the visit it will be possible to observe the herds of "garranos" horses and "maronesas" cows that roam in the Reserve freely and thus retreat to the Upper Palaeolithic and "imagine" a group of hunters spotting their target. The representations of wild horses or Auroques (primitive bull) are the most engraved elements in the rock art site of the Côa Valley affirming its importance/admiration and respect for wildlife.

The visit allows to enjoy the Wild Nature of the Côa Valley, to get to know some important wild species of the Faia Brava Reserve and "feel" the sensation of being a Palaeolithic hunter and to admire the herds of "wild" horses and cows, without a doubt a good beginning to feel the Côa Valley and to know the natural and archaeological heritage.

Afternoon - Visit to the Rock art site of Penascosa

Meeting Point: Castelo Melhor

Hour: To be arranged

The **Penascosa** site is located on a large river beach on the right bank of the Côa river, in the municipality of Vila Nova de Foz Côa, in the parishes of Castelo Melhor and Almendra. The visit starts in the Castelo Melhor Reception Centre. It is followed by an off road vehicle, with a Côa Museum guide, by a dirt road through the fields planted with almond and olive trees, along about 6 kms.

On the way between the village and the river we can see, from the opposite bank, Quinta de Ervamoira (Ramos Pinto), famous for its wines and for the vastness of its vineyards, and which has a Local Museum. Shortly after we arrive at a river beach on the right bank of the Côa, in an open valley area, where the river still flows in its natural course. From the car park to the last rock visited are about 300 meters on foot, through a wide and flat area that does not offer difficulties, only being necessary to ascend by stone stairs to the last two rocks.

To finish the programme visitors will have a free visit to the **Côa Museum**

The Museum was designed by Camilo Rebelo and Tiago Pimentel, a team of architects from Porto. Built in January 2007, it was inaugurated on July 30, 2010. The conception of the building is based on the idea that "Paleolithic art in the Côa Valley is perhaps the first manifestation of "Land art".

Although it is one of the largest Portuguese museums, it is graciously built, with part of its volume as if set on the top of the hill on its left bank, above the mouth of the Côa, celebrating the meeting of the region's two world heritage sites: the Prehistoric Art of the Côa Valley and the Vineyard Landscape of the Douro.

If by far the building resembles an enormous outcrop erupting from the ground, a closer inspection reinforces this perception, since mineral pigments were used in the concrete and the façade was treated superficially imitating the natural irregularities of schist, the predominant rock in the region. According to the descriptive memory of the July 2005 preliminary draft, the "unique presupposition" of the Museum is its perfect "integration in the landscape, converting its body, although in a "strong and affirmative gesture", into a "subtle, sensitive to the topography, little modifying the profile of the mountain and dialoguing with the landscape".

Note: These visits should take place within 48 hours.