

# BREATHE

Go with the flow

A WORLD NATURE IN THE RÍAS BAIXAS



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# When nature becomes a spectacle

A WORLD OF NATURE IN THE **RÍAS BAIXAS**

Lush, green countryside which breathes magic. **The best sunset in the world** as seen from majestic islands. Beaches where the word “paradise” takes on a new meaning. **Nature has been more than generous with the Rías Baixas.** It has gifted us **incomparable landscapes, beaches, mountains, cliffs, woods, dunes, islands, etc.,** and any adjective falls short when describing the immense natural wealth our land boasts.



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# NATURAL HERITAGE



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Flora and fauna have found a perfect environment in which to flourish unspoiled and undisturbed here.

The Rías Baixas' seabeds are unparalleled in the world, with unique species that can only be found here.

**Take a deep breath, then let it out slowly: nature is calling you.**

## **PARQUE NACIONAL MARÍTIMO - TERRESTRE DE LAS ISLAS ATLÁNTICAS DE GALICIA**

### **VIGO, BUEU AND VILAGARCÍA DE AROUSA**

Considered one of the finest examples of ecosystems typical of Spanish Atlantic coasts and seabeds. The National Park comprises the archipelagos of the Cíes islands at the entrance to the Vigo ría, Ons island in the Pontevedra ría and the islands of Cortegada and Sálvora in the Arousa ría, as well as the marine waters of their natural environments.

At the end of 2014, the park obtained its quality label with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism for the promotion and preservation of natural heritage, granted by the foundation Europarc. It has also been an OSPAR zone for the protection of the marine environment since 2008.

**ISLAS CÍES.** The definition of paradise. Situated in the Vigo ría, the Cíes are a group of three islands, Monte Agudo, Faro and San Martiño, and other small islets, whose seabeds are of significant interest and biological wealth. None of them is inhabited, allowing their natural beauty to be preserved intact and protected. The best way to discover them? By walking along planned routes, visiting the ornithological observatory, the lighthouses and the archaeological remains. On these islands, visitors can enjoy the fine sandy beaches with crystal clear waters, one of which is a nudist beach, as well as other little coves, which make these islands a true place of dreams. It should be noted that Monte Agudo island, also known as North island, has what is considered the best beach in the world, Rodas beach.



**ISLA DE ONS.** Facing the Pontevedra ría lies the Ons archipelago, made up of Ons, Onza and As Freitosas islet. Its scenery competes on equal terms with the Cíes islands in its beauty and it is full of life, a result of the upwelling of deep waters rich in nutrients. Ons Island is inhabited today, presenting visitors with an opportunity to learn about the way of life of a small rural coastal community.

**ISLA DE CORTEGADA.** Situated well within the Arousa ría (at the mouth of the River Ulla), it provides the National Park with its renowned biological wealth, home as it is to Europe's largest laurel forests.

**ARCHIPIÉLAGO DE SÁLVORA.** Belonging to Ribeira Municipality, in the province of A Coruña.



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**TRAILS.** Different guided trails are available to the general public when the ferry services are operating: Easter week, weekends in May, June, July, August and September. Guided trails, open to the public from May to September, are free of charge and in order to participate those interested are advised to book at one of the islands' information points. The trails can also be followed without a guide.

#### **ISLAS CÍES**

Monte Faro Trail  
Faro da Porta Trail  
Alto de Príncipe Trail  
Monteagudo Trail

#### **ISLA DE ONS**

South Trail  
Faro Trail  
North Trail  
Castelo Trail

#### **ISLA DE CORTEGADA**

Circular Trail

# PARQUE NATURAL MONTE ALOIA TUI

The first place in Galicia to be granted the status of Nature Reserve (1978) and a Special Protection Area for Natural Values, Monte Aloia is an extraordinary vantage point situated in the Serra do Galiñeiro (Galiñeiro Mountain Range). It contains magnificent environmental values, such as the “Carballeira de la Ermita” (La Ermita oak wood), cork oak woods, large holly trees and natural vantage points over the River Miño.



**TRAILS.** Various different trails are available for visitors to discover a natural environment that offers amazing panoramic views.

- Tripes Mill Trail
- Paredes Mill Trail
- Monte Aloia Botanical Trail

## NATURAL WONDER: FRAGA DE CATASÓS LALÍN

Also known as the Oak Wood of Quiroga, it is one of the most important landscapes in inland Galicia. The wood accommodates unique and beautiful botanical species. Its grandness lies in the size of its chestnut and oak trees, some of which are thirty metres tall and in some cases five metres in diameter, making them among the tallest in Europe. It also forms a part of the unique formations in the Galician Tree Catalogue. An idyllic trail links the wood to the Pazo de Quiroga (Quiroga Country Manor), which inspired the author Emilia Pardo Bazán to write her novel “The House of Ulloa”.



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## PROTECTED WETLAND: **COMPLEJO INTERMAREAL UMIA - O GROVE, A LANZADA, PUNTA CARREIRÓN Y LAGUNA BODEIRA**

### **AROUSA AND PONTEVEDRA RÍAS**

This spot, declared a Natural Environment under a General Protection Regime and a Special Protection Area for birds, is situated in the O Grove peninsula, covering the estuary of the River Umia to Cambados. Found here are the salt pans which give the area its name: O Salnés. It is perhaps Galicia's most valuable wetland for its biotic and abiotic elements, making it an important ornithological reserve.



## AREAS OF ESPECIAL PROTECTION OF NATURE VALUES - **SITES OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE**

**COMPLEJO INTERMAREAL A RAMALLOSA / ESTUARIO A FOZ DO RÍO MIÑOR.** These marshlands lie in the Bay of Baiona, on the southern side of the Vigo ría. They are protected from the sea by a coastal sand bar and the Ladeira beach; it is a natural environment based on halophiles and a source of sustenance for migratory birds who stop over here in winter.

**BAIXO MIÑO.** An extensive stretch of the River Miño which flows along the southern edge of the Baixo Miño, Condado and Paradanta. At its mid-point, it undergoes important geo-morphological and ecological changes and the tidal influence becomes more noticeable, creating flat islands made up of sediments and covered by grasslands, as well as forming banks of sand and silt.

**BRAÑAS DE XESTOSO.** Situated between Tabeirós and Deza, the Brañas de Xestoso constitute the most important concentration of acidic sphagnum moss, an extraordinarily rare and fragile habitat. As well as the wetland, the uniqueness of this natural environment lies in the existence of many different species, such as a small population of little bustards, characteristic of grassland habitats.

**CABO UDRA.** Cabo Udra lies in the Aldán ría, an appendix of the Pontevedra ría, with pretty coastal stretches spread out between rocky cliffs and beaches, such as Mourisca beach, and the coves of Ancoradouro and Lagos. The Cape Udra Nature Classroom, a blue flag award winning centre, helps visitors to understand the importance of this natural environment and its biological value.

**COMPLEJO ONS, O GROVE.** Situated between the Arousa and Pontevedra rías, it is made up of four distinct areas: the Arousa ría, where we find Punta Carreirón and various rocky islets with a large surface area of marine waters. To the south, the bay of O Grove and the estuary of the River Umia, which create a protected bay with extensive intertidal expanses. Lastly, the Ons archipelago occupies the southern part of the zone, encompassing an area that is host to a series of hugely interesting marine waters.

**COSTA DA VELA.** A group of spectacular beaches which range from Barra nudist beach to cape Home, featuring Robaleira and Subrido Points, as well as Melide beach (which has the best views of the Cies).



**ENSENADA DE SAN SIMÓN.** At the bottom end of the Vigo ría, and where the mouth of the River Verdugo joins the tidal waters, we find marine flats rich in bivalve shellfish and numerous wintering birds. And it is here where, watching over the landscape, we find the island of San Simón, muse of medieval “cantigas” (poems set to music) setting of tales by Jules Verne and witness to the treasures of galleons sunk in the Battle of Rande.

**GÁNDARAS DE BUDIÑO.** From a geological point of view, the Gándaras de Budiño are situated on one of the main fault lines or depressions that cross Galicia from north to south.

Over time, a group of wetlands have developed as a consequence of the seasonal flooding of the river, forming natural lakes. This is an area of peat bogs, seasonal and permanent lakes and flooded meadows, bringing together more than 150 species of vertebrates, among which feature 80 species of nesting aquatic birds and one of the most significant communities of riverbank woodland in Galicia.

**ISLAS CÍES.** The Cíes islands are composed of alkali feldspar granite, with enclaves of mica schists, quartz schists and paragneises from the Cabo Home-A Lanzada zone. Their western face is sheer, made up of marine crag formations and a large number of sea caves, while the eastern side presents a much softer profile, with long, sandy beaches.

**ISLAS ESTELAS.** This small archipelago is situated at the mouth of the Vigo Ría and is home to well-preserved seabeds. The group of islands serves as a habitat for a small colony of seabirds, such as the yellow-legged gull or the cormorant.

**MONTE ALOIA.** Partly made up of the Galiñeiro mountain range, this is an area of highlands which looks directly over the Baixo Miño valley. Its unique tree cover, ethnographic importance and archaeological remains lend it extraordinary scenic beauty and make it a prime tourist attraction.

**RÍO LÉREZ.** Following the course of the River Lérez, whose source is in the Candán mountain range, we come across vantage points, riverside recreational areas, and the Campo Lameiro rock art sculpture ensemble, one of Galicia's most important itineraries.

**RÍO TEA.** A peaceful landscape, tinged with alders and autochthonous woodland, stretches out along the banks of the River Tea, and is an ecological point of reference. It has excellent river beaches and exposed granite outcrops.

**SERRA DO CANDÁN.** This landscape of old eroded mountain ranges preserves vast open horizons with few population nuclei. Christened as Terra de Montes (Land of Hills), water springs from its hills and flows into the Umia, Lérez and Ulla rivers.

**SERRA DO CANDO.** A mountain range which serves as a natural boundary with Ourense, revealing highland landscapes with scrubland, small expanses of oak forests and riverbank woodland, such as willow forests.

**SISTEMA FLUVIAL ULLA-DEZA.** The River Ulla flows for almost 130 km through some of Galicia's most traditional landscape, alongside meadows, trails and pazos to run into the Arousa ría. It also forms the provincial boundary between A Coruña and Pontevedra.

**SOBREIRAIS DO ARNEGO.** This natural space constitutes one of the main forest covers typical of the Atlantic landscape, with Mediterranean species found in the Ulla river basin. Oak and cork trees feature among the most representative species found here.

## SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA FOR BIRDS (SPA)

**ISLAS CÍES.** This natural environment largely untouched by human activity is outstanding for its scenic and geological value, its ecosystem and the uniqueness of its flora and fauna. As a SPA for birds, it is specifically protected to prevent pollution and the deterioration of nesting sites.

**ISLA DE ONS.** This marine and terrestrial ecosystem holds an important colony of sea-birds and its seabeds are an example of rich biodiversity. The upwelling of cold currents opposite the coastline of the Rías Baixas makes its waters rich in nutrients and oxygen, providing the main characteristics of the biological wealth of its environment.

### **COMPLEJO INTERMAREAL UMIA - O GROVE, A LANZADA, PUNTA CARREIRÓN Y LAGOA.**

The joining of the River Umiá's fresh water with the Atlantic Ocean's salt water gives rise to an impressive number of ecosystems made up of large expanses of sand, intertidal flats, marshland and the only coastal lagoon in the province of Pontevedra. It is a UNESO Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar). But it is precisely the importance of this spot for a multitude of waders and wintering birds that makes it internationally renowned.

**ESTUARIO DE MIÑO.** From the source of the River Miño to its mouth, the tides and horizontality of the land allow for the existence of meadows along the banks of this navigable river and islets such as Goián or Isla Canosa. A unique natural environment, spotted with ornithological observatories, natural vantage points and walking trails.



## PRIVATE SPACES OF INTEREST

**SERRA DA GROBA - BAIONA, O ROSAL, OIA.** This is a unique area on the Atlantic coastline, where different mountain ecosystems join the coast and which boasts some of the most spectacular views of the Miño valley and the Cíes islands.

**SOBREIRAIS DO FARO - OIA.** Belonging to the parish of Viladesuso (Oia), it features 70-year-old “Quercus Suber”, as well as a large variety of autochthonous species.



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# THE RÍAS



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Not only does the province of Pontevedra have **three spectacular rías**, it also has **cliffs, islands, ports, hills, beaches and stunning landscapes**, making it the perfect place for all types of visitors.

From boats passing through to sporadic inland trips, Pontevedra is generous and offers an **unforgettable experience**.

**LA RÍA DE AROUSA** is the most extensive and is characterised by the presence of many little islands and reefs which act – as does the island of Sálvora – as a natural breakwater. The area of deep water situated in the protected zone of the O Grove peninsula, in the bay that forms a part of the Umia – O Grove Intertidal Zone, stands out. This ría is an ideal place for boats to anchor and for recreational boating and sailing, encouraging visitors to get involved in all kinds of water sports.

**LA RÍA DE PONTEVEDRA** is the most regular and the River Lérez the most important river course that flows into its cove. It contains several islands, including Tambo and Ons, the latter forming a part of the National Park. This ría also stands out not only for its biological wealth but also for its richness of nutrients, good illumination and the movement of its waters.

**LA RÍA DE VIGO** stretches out like a marine spearhead, narrowing as it reaches its end. After the Rande bridge, from where we can see the traditional floating mussel beds perfectly lined up, the ría opens out again to form the cove of San Simón. At its entrance, like a ship made of stone run aground in the ocean, lie the famous Cíes islands, one of Galicia's most beautiful landscapes.

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# RIVERS



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The importance of **the river environment** in the **Rías Baixas** does not lie only with the beauty of their landscapes. Following their courses involves exploring **places of immense biological, historical and ethnographic wealth**. Whether it be discovering a dense forest, walking along a trail, relaxing on a river beach or listening to the soothing sound of flowing water, all are reasons enough for visitors to lose themselves **in places that will never cease to surprise us with some or other treasure to be found**.

**RÍO ULLA.** One of the rivers that carries most the most water and one of the longest in Galicia. Its most important tributary is the River Deza, which lends its name to a region of significant biological interest, with important tungsten, tin and olivine deposits.

**RÍO UMIA.** It begins in the parish of Aciveiro (Forcarei) to meander its way through the municipalities of Forcarei, Cerdedo-Cotobade, A Estrada, Cuntis, Moraña, Caldas de Reis, Portas, Barro, Vilanova de Arousa, Meis, Ribadumia and Cambados for 63 km. At its mouth, it creates marshes which, depending on the season, attract a large quantity of migratory birds.

**RÍO LÉREZ.** Classified as a Site of Community Importance, the River Lérez begins in the Candán Mountain Range (Forcarei) 900 m above sea level. Its course reveals river-side woodland and autochthonous deciduous communities of oak, chestnut, birch and pine woodland. Riverside plant and animal species are also well represented, and the river itself has high potential for fish spawning and rearing.

**RÍOS VERDUGO Y OITAVÉN.** In the areas close to its source in the O Cando and O Suído mountain range, the River Verdugo is voluminous and its waters are turbid, but its course becomes more gentle as it progresses, joining the River Oitavén to eventually flow into the Vigo ría.

**RÍO MIÑO.** In the southern interior of the province, flowing through the municipalities of: Crecente, Arbo, As Neves, Salvaterra do Miño, Salceda de Caselas, Tui, Tomiño, O Rosal and A Guarda. The most important river in Galicia and bordering Portugal, it runs for 307 km to flow into the Atlantic ocean between the towns of A Guarda (Galicia) and Camiña (Portugal).

# NORTH MAP. Not to be missed...



## NATURAL BEAUTY

- 1 Isla de Cortegada
- 2 Illa de Arousa
- 3 Complejo Intermareal Umia – O Grove
- 3 Isla de A Toxa (O Grove)
- 4 Fervenza do Toxa (Silleda)
- 5 Islas de Gres (Vila de Cruces)
- 6 Estuario del río Ulla
- 7 Lagoa Sacra (Forcarei)
- 8 Brañas de Xestoso (A Estrada, Forcarei, Silleda)
- 9 Jardín botánico y carballeira de Caldas de Reis
- 10 Laguna de Mina Mercé (Valga)
- 11 Espacio natural río Barosa (Barro)
- 12 Sistema fluvial río Lérez
- 13 Fraga de Catasós (Lalín)
- 14 Bosque de secuoyas de Poio
- 15 Laguna Pedras Miúdas (Catoira)
- 16 Serra do Candán
- 17 Serra do Cando



## BEACHES

- 1 Playa fluvial de Vilarello (Valga)
- 2 Playa O Campanario o de Bamio (Vilagarcía de Arousa)
- 2 Playa de O Preguntoiro (Vilagarcía de Arousa)

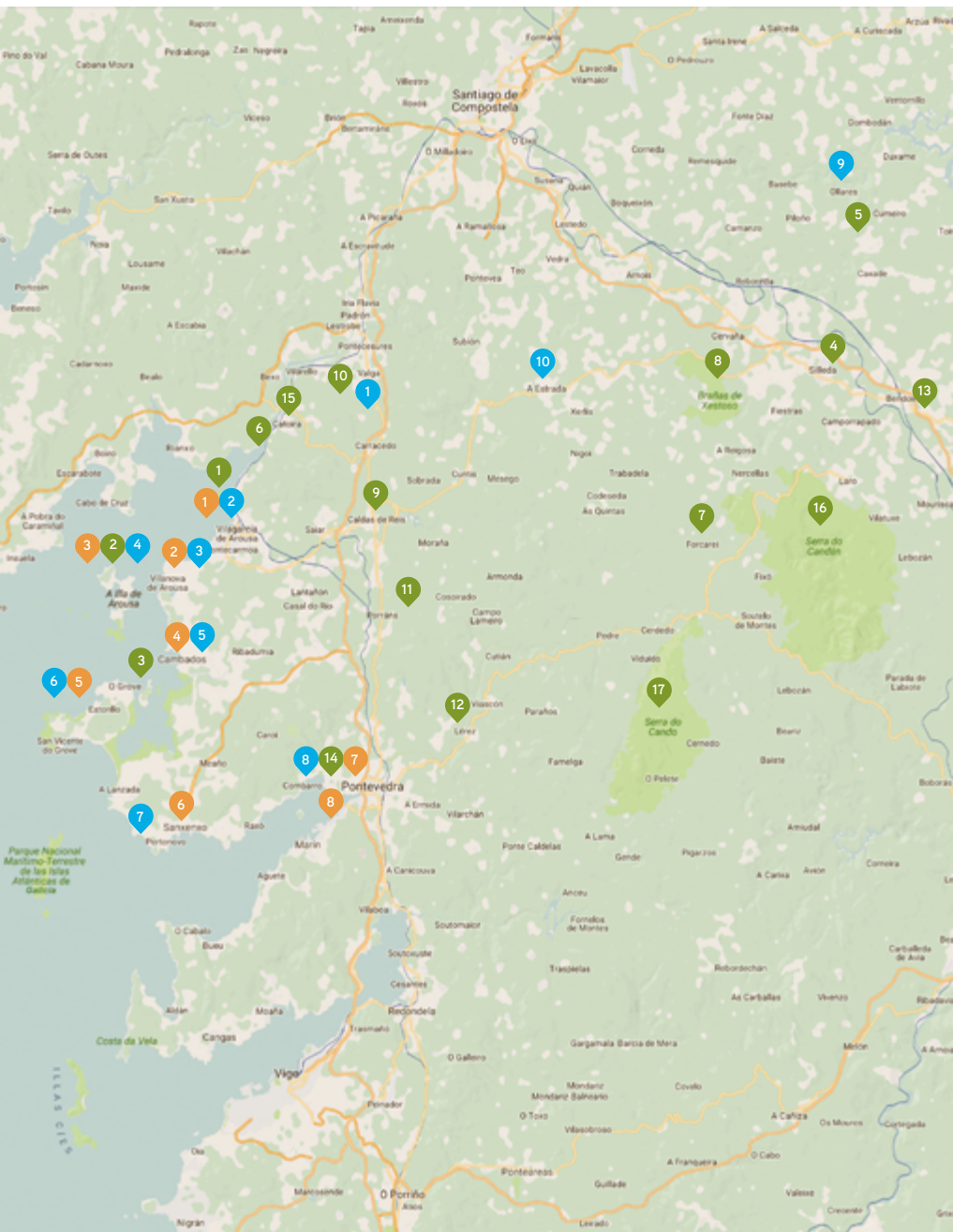
- 3 Playa de O Terrón (Vilanova de Arousa)
- 4 Playa Area Secada (A Illa de Arousa)
- 4 Playa de O Bao - Camaxe (A Illa de Arousa)
- 5 Playa Fontiñas (Cambados)
- 6 Playa Area da Cruz (O Grove)
- 6 Playa Mexiloeira (O Grove)
- 6 Playa de A Lanzada (O Grove/Sanxenxo)
- 7 Playa de Silgar (Sanxenxo)
- 7 Playa de Montalvo (Sanxenxo)
- 7 Playa de Canelas (Sanxenxo)
- 7 Playa de Baltar (Sanxenxo)
- 8 Playa de Xiorto (Poio)
- 9 Playa fluvial de A Carixa (Vila de Cruces)
- 10 Playa fluvial de Liñares (A Estrada)



## PORTS AND HARBOURS

- 1 Puerto de Carril (Vilagarcía de Arousa)
- 1 Puerto de Vilagarcía de Arousa
- 2 Puerto de Vilanova de Arousa
- 3 Puerto de O Xufre – A Illa de Arousa
- 4 Puerto de San Tomé – Cambados
- 5 Porto Meloxo (O Grove)
- 5 Puerto de Pedras Negras (O Grove)
- 6 Puerto de Portonovo (Sanxenxo)
- 6 Puerto de Sanxenxo
- 7 Puerto de Combarro (Poio)
- 8 Puerto de Pontevedra





# SOUTH MAP. Not to be missed...



## NATURAL BEAUTY

- 1 Serra do Suído (Fornelos de Montes)
- 1 Embalse de Eiras (Fornelos de Montes)
- 1 Fragas del río Barragán (Fornelos de Montes)
- 2 Gándaras de Budiño (O Porriño)
- 3 Parque Natural Monte Aloia (Tui)
- 4 Estuario del río Miño
- 5 Río Tea (Salvaterra do Miño)
- 6 Salinas del Ullóo (Vilaboa)
- 7 Lago Castiñeiras y Espacio Natural de Cotorredondo (Vilaboa/Marín)
- 8 Costa da Vela (Cangas)
- 8 Cabo Home (Cangas)
- 9 Serra da Grova (Gondomar)
- 10 Estuario A Foz do Miñor – A Ramallosa (Nigrán)
- 11 Cabo Udra (Bueu)
- 12 Islas Cés
- 13 Isla de Ons
- 14 Islas Estelas
- 15 Ensenada de San Simón
- 16 Serra de O Argallo (A Guarda/O Rosal)



## BEACHES

- 1 Playa de Mogor (Marín)
- 1 Playa de Portocelo (Marín)
- 2 Playa Area de Bon (Bueu)
- 3 Playa de O Con (Moaña)
- 4 Playa de Mendiña (Cangas)

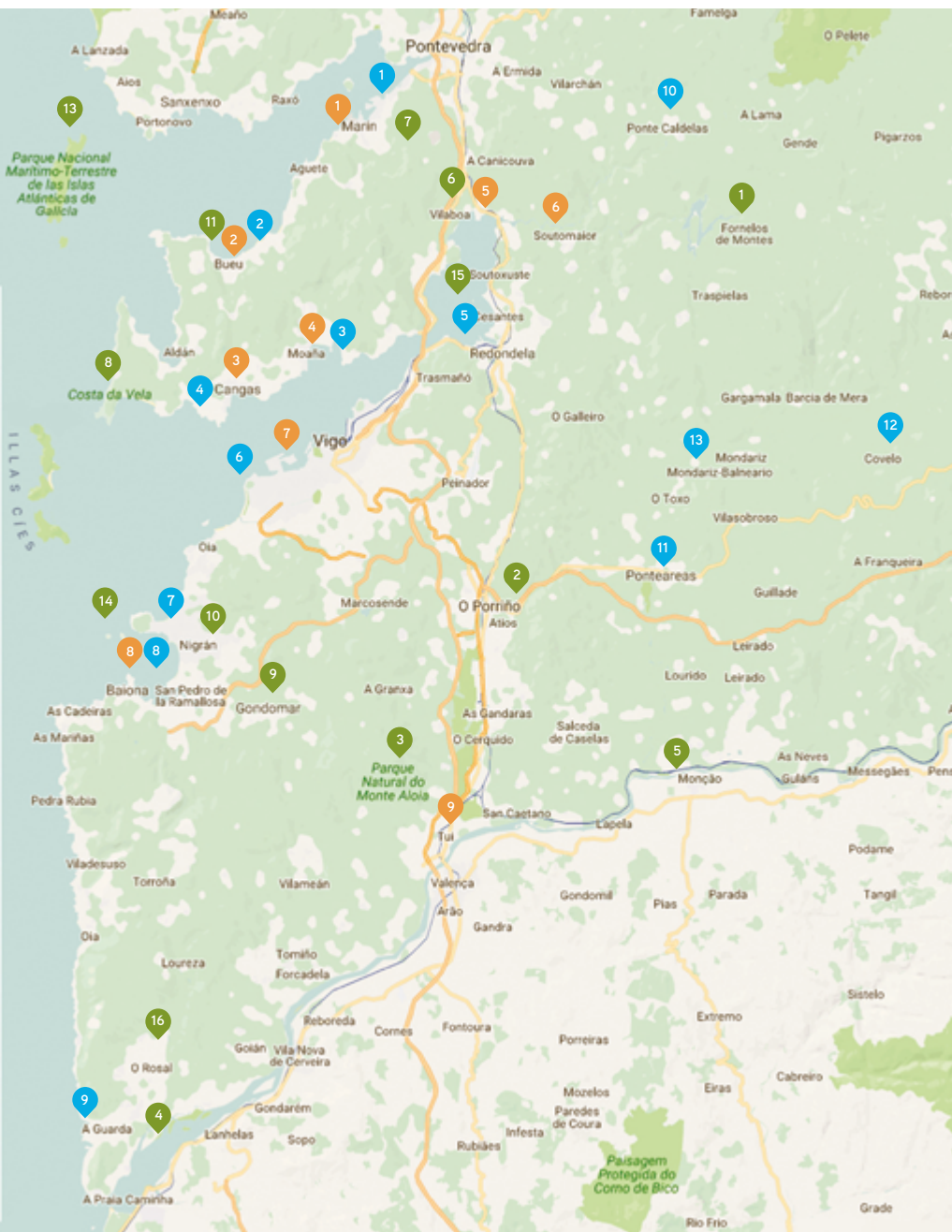
- 4 Playa de Rodeira (Cangas)
- 4 Playa de Liméns (Cangas)
- 4 Playa de Areamilla (Cangas)
- 5 Playa de Cesantes (Redondela)
- 6 Playa de Samil (Vigo)
- 6 Playa de O Vao (Vigo)
- 6 Playa de Canido (Vigo)
- 7 Playa América (Nigrán)
- 7 Playa de Patos (Nigrán)
- 8 Playa de Barbeira (Baiona)
- 8 Playa A Riveira (Baiona)
- 8 Playa de Os Frades (Baiona)
- 9 Playa de O Muíño (A Guarda)
- 9 Playa de Area Grande (A Guarda)
- 10 Playa fluvial de A Calzada (Ponte Caldelas)
- 11 Playa fluvial de A Freixa (Pontearreas)
- 12 Playa fluvial de Maceiras (Covelo)
- 13 Playa fluvial de O Val (Mondariz)



## PORTS AND HARBOURS

- 1 Puerto de Marín
- 2 Puerto de Beluso (Bueu)
- 3 Puerto de Aldán (Cangas)
- 3 Puerto de Cangas
- 4 Puerto de Domaño (Moaña)
- 5 Puerto de San Adrián de Cobres (Vilaboa)
- 6 Puerto de Arcade (Soutomaíor)
- 7 Puerto de Vigo
- 8 Puerto de Baiona
- 9 Náutico San Telmo (Tui)







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