



XUNTA
DE GALICIA.



Ferrol



Ferrol Vello
a walk of
history and life

Ferrol



WE ARE HERE IN FERROL VELLO, THE OLDEST PART OF THE CITY. THE AREA DATES BACKS TO AN ANCIENT COASTAL FORTIFICATION WHICH GREW INTO A SEAFARING TOWN BASED AROUND THE FISHING PORT. NOTHING REMAINS OF THAT OLD TOWN OF THE CASTRO PEOPLE EXCEPT ONE OF THE STREETS WHICH IS STILL KNOWN AS RÚA DO CASTRO.

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN, WHICH HAD A PORT FOR GOODS AND FISHING, BARELY GREW UNTIL THE 18TH CENTURY, WHEN THE SPANISH CROWN CHOSE IT AS THE LOCATION TO ESTABLISH A NAVAL ARSENAL AND SHIPYARDS BECAUSE OF THE PROTECTION OFFERED BY THE ESTUARY'S NARROW MOUTH. FERROL WENT FROM BEING A SMALL FISHING VILLAGE TO ONE OF GALICIA'S' LARGEST INDUSTRIAL CITIES. NOWADAYS, THERE ARE NO MEDIEVAL BUILDINGS LEFT IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, BUT THE ORIGINAL PLOTS OF LAND AND ROAD LAYOUT FROM THE PAST HAVE BEEN PRESERVED.

FOR FERROL, THE NAVAL BASE AND THE SHIPYARDS ARE STILL PART OF ITS IDENTITY, BUT WE CANNOT OVERLOOK THE FISHING SIDE OF FERROL OR THE PORT, WHICH LIVE ON IN FERROL VELLO AND WHICH WE WILL DISCOVER IN A STROLL ITS STREETS.

Essentials

A Paseo da Mariña



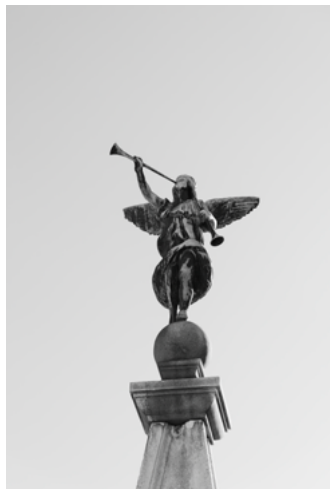
B Iglesia del Socorro



C Iglesia de San Francisco



D Fuente de la Fama



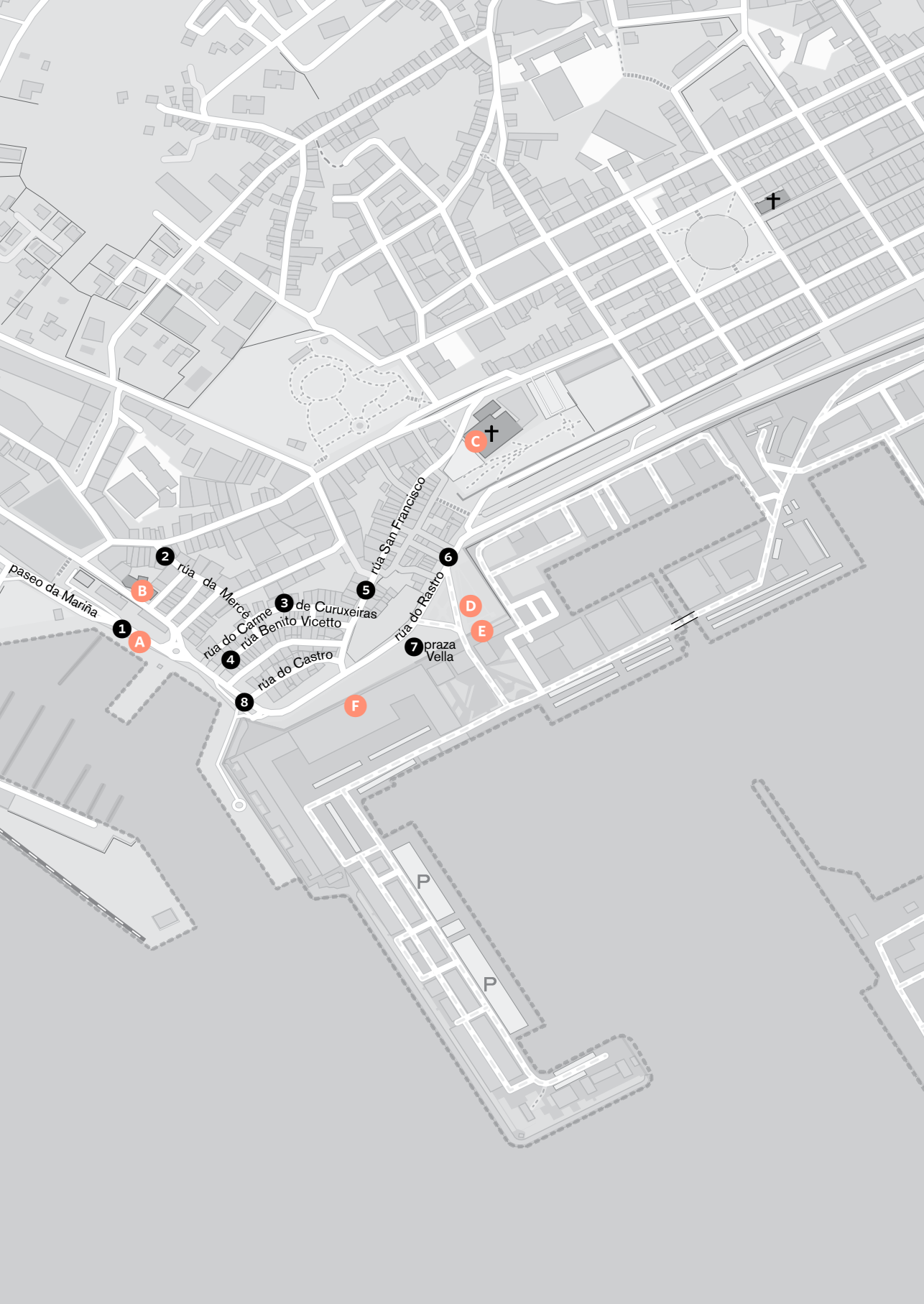
E Puerta del Parque del Arsenal



F Sala de armas del Arsenal



The route



- 1 Paseo da Mariña
- 2 Rúa da Mercé
- 3 Rúa do Carme de Curuxeiras
- 4 Rúa Benito Vicetto
- 5 Rúa San Francisco
- 6 Rúa do Rastro
- 7 Praza Vella
- 8 Rúa do Castro



Ferrol

Ferrol Vello

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We begin our tour facing the estuary, an eternally calm sea which looks more like a lake than an ocean. On **Paseo da Mariña** ¹ (Marina Promenade), where we can see recreational boats moored alongside other

fishing boats, we can find the municipal tourist information and pilgrim office and, almost next door, a small but beautiful garden, known as the **JARDÍN DE LA RANITA** (Little Frog's Garden), because of the dolphins and frogs by local artist Xan Braxe which decorate the fountain in it.

Our walk begins by the sea. Walking along the side of the dock, we reach the **LONJA DE FERROL** (Ferrol fish market), where sailors unload the day's catch for the auction. There are two auctions every day: one at 6:30 a.m. and another one at 2:30 p.m., both of which you can attend to view the activities and the produce which comes from the sea. The star product is the clam, in all its different varieties: grooved carpet shell, pullet carpet shell or Japanese carpet shell. Yet there is also a leading role for crustaceans, such as

P. ANTERIORES Praza Vella, Jardines de Herrera

PÁGINA OPUESTA Paseo da Mariña

ABAJO A girl playing in the fountain of the Jardín de la Ranita





spider crabs or velvet crabs, as well as for a wide variety of fish. The fish market offers us a marvellous view of Ferrol's seafront, which is well worth stopping to admire.

On our way back to the Paseo da Mariña, where we set off from, we make a stop in front of a small rationalist building. This is the old passenger terminal, which has been converted into the *A Maruxaina* restaurant, which offers vegetarian options and a large terrace with views out over the estuary.

Just behind, some stairs lead us to the BALUARTE SAN XOÁN (St. John's Bulwark), where the remains of the walls built in the 18th century to protect the city can be found. From the garden we are treated to beautiful views of the port.

Opposite is the IGLESIA PARROQUIAL DEL SOCORRO (Parish Church of Succour), built in the 18th century when Enlightenment thinkers decided to rebuild the old Medieval churches of Ferrol or to build new neoclassical ones. Inside we can admire the venerated images of the Virgen del Socorro (Our Lady of Succour) and the Cristo de los Navegantes (Christ of the Sailors) which go on a procession during the Semana Santa Easter cele-

FACING Aperitif at A Maruxaina with the Iglesia Parroquial del Socorro in the background

ABOVE Bastion of San Xoán



brations, which has been declared a Festival of International Tourist Interest.

Taking advantage of the fact that we are by the sea, lovers of aquatic adventures can find, very close by on rúa do Socorro (Succour street), the Escuela de Actividades Marítimas El Galeón (El Galeón School of Maritime Activities), which, in addition to diving and sailing lessons, can arrange boat hires and aquaskipper classes. Opposite, Oliva Bar e Levar brings back the flavours of the old port taverns, with homemade food using fresh local produce.

In terms of places to go for a meal, the O Camiño do Inglés restaurant, nearby at no. 77 rúa Espartero, run by the award-winning chef Daniel López is a tempting choice. The food there makes for an innovative menu, which blends traditional and contemporary cuisine using exotic produce.

Continuing along **rúa da Mercé 2**, the granite paving brings us to old houses that are a mix of styles and periods. At the intersection with **rúa do Carme de Curuxeiras 3** there are almost always pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Traditionally the Jacobean travellers taking the English Way arrived in Ferrol by boat from Ireland, the



United Kingdom, and northern Europe, and continued on foot or on horseback from the port to the tomb of the apostle. Today, they no longer come by boat but they do start their journey in the port of Curuxeiras and

ABOVE Iglesia de San Francisco
BELOW View from Jardines de Herrera



then continue along this street and, like us, head towards **rúa Benito Vicetto** 4.

Anyone keen to pick up a postcard or souvenir of their trip to the city can find one of those special historical places to get them here. This is the only tobacconist in the neighbourhood, located at 15 rúa Benito Vicetto. It is called *Estanco No. 1* (Tobacconist No. 1), which gives us an idea of how old it is. The licence was granted in 1944 to the widow of a crew member of the Balears cruiser, one of the many who lost their husband when the ship sank in 1938, in the middle of the Civil War. This terrible tragedy hit many families in Ferrol and the government gave them

assistance in opening businesses to help them overcome the precarious situation they found themselves in.

We follow the pilgrim route and come to **rua San Francisco** 5, the neighbourhood's main street. Various vermouth bars, pubs, wine bars, and tapas bars make this a lively street, including *Josefa's Bar*, which provides a modern take on classic dishes and the *Frank* restaurant, which serves fresh, high-quality produce in contemporary dishes.

No. 40 is home to the *La Cubana* dry-cleaners, a family business where the managers are third-generation dry-cleaners and experts in cleaning all types of garments, from

ABOVE Gate of Arsenal Militar park
BELOW Fountain of La Fama



admirals' uniforms to the grease on shipyard workers' clothes.

At the end of the street, we find the *IGLESIA DE SAN FRANCISCO* (church of Saint Francis), on the site where the convent and temple founded by Fernán Pérez de Andrade at the end of the 14th century were once located. In the 18th century, with the need to expand the city due to the arrival of the Naval Base and the Navy, the Enlightenment thinkers decided to demolish the convent and build a new neoclassical church as a military parish. It is odd that the towers are missing from the façade of the church. The blame for this lies with the Navy, who blocked them, because it would hinder the views from the new construction project which, ultimately, never happened. Finally, Ferrol was left without the new project and without the church towers.

Inside the church we can admire carvings by the great 18th century artist José Ferreiro.



These include the image of Santa Bárbara (Saint Barbara), patron saint of artillery and protector against storms and lightning. The artist used his own wife as a model for the carving. Francisco Franco was baptised in the church's baptismal font.

Next to the Iglesia de San Francisco are the JARDINES DE HERRERA (Herrera Gardens), nestled between the noble building of the Parador hotel and the current headquarters of the Naval Archives. This is the place to enjoy the best views of the estuary, the arsenal, and the shipyards. In the centre stands the MONUMENTO AL BRIGADIER CHURRUCA (monument to Brigadier Churrucá), who died in combat in the bitter Battle of Trafalgar against the troops of Admiral Nelson in 1805. Next to it is the SCULPTURE OF THE MARQUÉS DE ENSENADA (Marquis of Ensenada), by César Lombra,

FACING Arsenal Weapons Room
ABOVE Boleros at the Taberna Puerto Chico
BELOW Praza Vella



in tribute to the main promoter of Ferrol Arsenal in the 18th century.

The gardens lead on to the FERROL HOLY WEEK MUSEUM, which covers the rich variety of images and objects used in this celebration, which was declared a Festival of International Tourist Interest.

Continuing along **rúa do Rastro 6**, we come to the **Praza Vella 7** (Old Square), where we find the PUERTA DEL PARQUE DEL ARSENAL MILITAR (Military Arsenal Park Gate), a monumental entrance to the military site that was built in the 19th century and inaugurated on the occasion of Queen Isabel II's visit to the city in 1858. There is always a marine stationed on guard at the entrance where a magnificent coat of arms of Felipe V is displayed. If we move a little closer, we can spot the old fountain of Fame, which was built in 1786 and is today a monument depicting a winged figure holding two trumpets



PÁGINA OPUESTA, ARRIBA Detalle de una embarcación en puerto

PÁGINA OPUESTA, ABAJO Chocos en la taberna Anca ARRIBA Muelle de Curuxeiras

aloft, one of which represents good repute and the other ill repute.

Close to the arsenal there is a beautiful red modernist building that houses the *Taberna Puerto Chico*. Here we can enjoy produce from the estuary, or even better, have some in an evening meal here, as on weekends bolero music is usually played as the late evening entertainment. The place is decorated with musical instruments and seafaring objects which are a clear reference to its love for music and the type of food on offer.

On our way to the port, we can see the imposing old SALA DE ARMAS DEL ARSENAL (Arsenal Drill Hall), a neoclassical building inside the Naval Base that is still visible from the street. Today, it is used as a military residence and is a good example of the Enlightenment design of engineer Francisco Llobet and architect Julián Sánchez Bort, who sought to display Royal power without



sacrificing functional use, a typical concern in rationalist thought of the time.

When we get back to the Curuxeiras dock, the ideal thing to do is to take a seat and enjoy the scenery from one of the many terraces in the cafeterias lining the Paseo da Mariña.

Taberna Anca, with sailing and football-themed decoration, opened in the nearby **rúa do Castro** 8 (Hillfort street) in 1962. Its founder was Deportivo de La Coruña player Alfonso Fernández Anca, who made the bar a meeting place for the whole neighbourhood. The star dish is cuttlefish served in its own ink, but any of the dishes will allow us to sample the flavours of the estuary, cooked fresh in the traditional way.

And if we want to discover more of Ferrol and its sea, we can climb aboard one of the ships which cruise the estuary, leaving from the Curuxeiras quay, because Ferrol Vello and its sea have been intimately linked since the very beginning and cannot be separated.

Ferrol estuary cruises and crossings to Mugardos

These two activities allow us to see what Ferrol is like from the sea by sailing along the estuary. The estuary cruise lasts one hour and begins and ends at the port of Curuxeiras. The crossing to Mugardos is in a boat which takes us to this fishing village located just opposite Ferrol, on the other side of the estuary, where it is traditional to eat octopus cooked using the village's own "a la mugardeza" recipe.

Parque Raíña Sofía and Aquaciencia

Given how close it is, just outside Ferrol Vello, we can go on a visit to the PARQUE RAÍÑA SOFÍA (Queen Sophia Park). The entrance is next to a wonderful modernist building, the CHALET ANTÓN, built in 1916 by the brilliant architect Rodolfo Ucha Piñeiro.

The park holds the enticing prospect of a relaxing stroll among the statues of illustrious figures, fountains, and peacocks which strut all over the enclosure. In addition, in the upper part, we find AQUACIENCIA (lit. Waterscience), an educational park about water where adults and children can have a great time trying out different experiments and machinery powered by water. Admission

is free and it opens every day of the week, except Sundays and Mondays.

Arsenal Militar

A guided tour of the ARSENAL MILITAR (Military Arsenal) is a good way to get into the Naval Base, which is only open to the public for tours or on special occasions when it holds open days. Once inside, we can admire the 18th century neoclassical buildings and

FACING Las Meninas de Canido is an innovative outdoor contemporary art experience

BELOW Cruises on the Ferrol estuary depart from the port of Curuxeiras



Other related guides



facilities which surround a magnificent dock where the most modern ships in the Spanish Navy are moored. Normally, these guided tours are scheduled for summer, Easter, and some long weekends. For more information,

you can visit the port's tourist information office, located in the Paseo de la Marina.

Canido Neighbourhood

In the neighbouring district of Canido, we can take in LAS MENINAS, an innovative open-air contemporary art experience. It all began when local artist Eduardo Hermida decided to paint one of the façades of a dilapidated house. Subsequently, other creators, including international artists, joined the initiative which uses Las Meninas by Velázquez as a reference. This project has not only revitalised the neighbourhood, it has also turned it into a great open-air art museum, which grows every year as more works of art appear on houses, walls, party walls, and bins. Everything is a blank canvas in this great art studio.



ABOVE Chalet Antón

BELOW Wallace fountain of Parque Raiña Sofia



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