



 XUNTA  
DE GALICIA

 Xacobeo 21-22

Ferrol



*Magdalena neighbourhood*  
a walk of  
history and life

# Ferrol



THIS TOUR TAKES US AROUND THE MAGDALENA NEIGHBOURHOOD, ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE IN GALICIA DUE TO THE LAYOUT OF THE STREETS: A RECTANGLE OF SIX LONG PARALLEL, EQUIDISTANT STREETS CROSSED BY ANOTHER NINE TO FORM A PERFECT GRID, WHICH THE LOCALS, FERROLANOS, CALL THE CHOCOLATE BAR. THIS ODD LAYOUT DATES BACK TO THE 18TH CENTURY WHEN THE SPANISH CROWN ESTABLISHED THE MAIN NORTHERN NAVAL BASE, WITH ITS SHIPYARDS AND ARSENAL, HERE.

IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THE HUGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO MOVED HERE TO WORK ON THOSE GREAT PROJECTS, THE CITY NEEDED TO BE EXPANDED WITH NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS. THIS IS WHY MAGDALENA WAS BUILT AS A COMPLETELY NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD ON THE LAND PARALLEL TO THE ARSENAL AND OLD CENTRAL WORKSHOP. THE AIM WAS TO HOUSE THE OFFICERS AND ENGINEERS AND GIVE FERROL THE TRADE TO SUSTAIN A GROWING POPULATION.

TODAY, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN REFURBISHED OR REBUILT, THE LAYOUT REMAINS THE SAME AND MANY OF THESE BUILDINGS ARE ALMOST THREE CENTURIES OLD. THE ENLIGHTENMENT CAN BE FELT IN THE RATIONALITY AND BALANCE OF THE TOWN PLANNING.



# Essentials

A Exponav and Museo Naval



B Teatro Jofre



C Praza da Constitución



D Casa Romero



E Concatedral de San Julián



F Fishmonger and market









# Ferrol

## Magdalena neighbourhood

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We begin our tour in the **Praza de Galicia** (Galicia Square), commonly known as Correos (the Post Office), as we can find the

beautiful regionalist building from the 30s there. Just opposite is the striking **TEATRO JOFRE** (Jofre Theatre), which was inaugurated in 1892, although its façade was remodelled years later by the architect Rodolfo Ucha Piñeiro who added new details and modernist decorations. Currently, it offers a great and varied programme of cultural activities throughout the year.

The **CASA ROMERO** (Romero House) is also in this square. This is another of the great works of Rodolfo Ucha, who began his career as an architect in the city in 1909 and gave it a modernist look which we can see in countless works throughout the neighbourhood. Dating from 1910, Casa Romero is one of his best creations, its façade has a whole range of modernist details, such as the use of exotic and plant-inspired decorative elements

**FACING** Casa Romero

**BELOW** Afundación at Praza da Constitución







in different materials such as iron, wood, glass, and cement.

The [MONUMENTO A LOS CAÍDOS EN ÁFRICA](#) (Monument to the Fallen in Africa), from the 1940s, and the [ARSENAL GATE](#) lie opposite. This 18th century gate is still one of the main

**ABOVE** Detail of Teatro Jofre  
**BELOW** Monumet to Caídos en África  
**FACING, ABOVE** El Capuchoncito  
**BELOW** Pastelería Gascó



entrances to the military facilities and its façade boasts the coat of arms of King Charles, who finished the building works on this naval base, as marked on the original plaque from the time.

The Praza de Galicia is the start of the [Alameda de Suanzes](#) **2** (Suanzes Boulevard), a beautiful garden which also extends through the Canton de Molíns (Mills Canton) and is considered the first public alameda, or tree-lined boulevard, in Galicia, as it was designed in the second half of the 18th century, at the same time as the Barrio da Magdalena neighbourhood and the Arsenals.

We now come to the [Praza da Constitución](#) **3** (Constitution Square), which is presided over by an imposing blue building that was designed at the end of the 18th century to house the Prison, the Courts, and the Town Hall, although it later became a Secondary School and, in the 1940s, it was

turned into the headquarters of the Military Government. Today, after multiple renovations, the building houses Afundación, a cultural organisation which is always open with large temporary exhibitions, conferences, or film seasons.

From here we enter the so-called “chocolate bar” of the Barrio da Magdalena neighbourhood. We move along [rúa de Terra](#) **4** and reach the [Praza de Armas](#) **5** (Parade Square), one of the two squares in the district. The Palacio Municipal (Municipal Palace) stands here, a building in the neoclassical style present throughout the city, which has housed the Town Council since 1953.

We continue our stroll along [rúa Real](#) **6**, the main commercial promenade in Ferrol, where we are welcomed by a small statue at ground level, known as the Capuchoncito (Little Capirote). The statue depicts a child dressed in the dress of one of Spain’s Easter Week procession brotherhoods and is a



tribute to the interesting and well-known festivities which are celebrated during these dates in the city, which were declared of International Tourist Interest and usually attract numerous visitors.

At no. 109 [rúa Real](#), past the aforementioned [CAPUCHONCITO](#), by sculptor José Rubio Gascón, is the [Pastelería Gascón](#) patisserie. It just so happens that the sculptor is also the pastry chef and uncle of Elena Rubio, the current manager of the confectionery, where sweets have been made following the old recipes of their forefathers for four generations now. The pastry shop always attracts Ferrolanos and tourists to its shop window, full of all kinds of delicacies, including the unmissable chocolate bars, alluding to the shape of the neighbourhood, and the Castiñeira cake which is made with





a base of puff pastry and layers of sponge cake and chestnut cream.

A little bit further on, at no. 125, we find [Bazar Acevedo](#), a family-run business founded in the boom of the shipyards in the 40s, which has been selling furniture, decorations, and gifts for decades. The shop is located in the Casa Brañas (Brañas House) building, designed by the modernist architect Rodolfo Ucha, who added the typical wooden glass-enclosed balconies decorated with grills to the façade.

At no. 53 we come across [Café Derby](#). Opened in 1933, it has a curious horseshoe-shaped bar and its decoration is linked to the

**ABOVE** El Derby  
**FACING** Gallery facades

world of horse-riding, including an old mural of horse racing.

Heading up [rúa do Carme](#) <sup>7</sup> and then on to [rúa Galiano](#) <sup>8</sup>, at no. 55 we find [Gil Senra](#) a traditional lingerie and swimwear shop; the shelves, full of high-quality products, have dressed the women of Ferrol for more than 75 years. It still preserves its original 60s shop windows with curved glass. Following on to no. 61, we come to the [Jenaro Joyeros](#) jeweller, which has had its own workshop since 1969. The interior has recently been refurbished with a design that brings to mind the mechanisms of watches and a layout that entices us to look around its collection of exquisite pieces.

On our way back to the Praza de Armas, we turn onto [rúa Dolores](#) <sup>9</sup> and stop at no. 2, at [La Central Librera](#), one of the bookstores with the longest history in the city as it has been a family business since 1950 and is the perfect place to look for a book with information and photos of Ferrol to take back as a souvenir.

Rúa Dolores is full of shops and bars and restaurants and is an ideal place to stroll among beautiful camellias, always in bloom in winter, and enjoy the glass-enclosed galería balconies which adorn the façades of buildings. The use of this architectural feature was developed in Galicia, especially in the 19th century, as a way to cover the façades,

where previously there was simply a balcony, with a structure of wood and glass. The purpose is to be able to use the space every day of the year as well as heat the building thanks to its thermal qualities. Furthermore, these galerías also livened up the social life of many women, who in those days took care of the house and children and often sat there to sew or do some other task. This allowed them to watch the comings and goings on the street as they worked; this is why they were also called quitapesares or distractions.

In Ferrol, the most typical structure of the façades placed two galerías on the first floor with a balcony in the middle and, on the second, a continuous galería, although each building would later have its own arrangements.

Our walk leads us to the intersection with [rúa Coruña](#) <sup>10</sup>, which we climb until we come to [rúa María](#) <sup>11</sup>. There, at no. 135, just in front of the birthplace of Francisco Franco, there is a traditional grocery store which has managed to evolve and adapt to new times. When it opened in 1946, it was known as [Casa Benigno](#), although later, the more ironic of Ferrol's inhabitants began to call it El Pardo, the name of its famous "neighbour's" official residence. It has been known as Mundo (World) for quite some time now. Three generations of the same family have worked here selling high-quality food products and offering the best Galician produce,



fresh, canned, or in bulk. It's impossible to leave empty-handed.

On the same street, at no. 86, the [Joyería-Rejojería Ferrer](#) jeweller-watchmaker has been committed to Galician craftwork since 1959 with a collection of jewellery in jet. Continuing our stroll to no. 183, we come to [Metrópolis Cómics](#), which has been a leading name in Spanish comics, board games, role-playing games, cards, figurines, and every type of comic book-related product.

A short distance further up, at no. 132 [rúa Sol](#), we find the now hundred-year old [Lalopuerto funeral home](#), which not only offers funerary services but also all kinds of religious images of saints and Virgin Marys, crosses, candles, prints... The star product is the image of the Virgen de Chamorro (Virgin of Chamorro), also known as Virxe do Nordés (Virgin of the Northeast), who is venerated at a shrine on the outskirts of the city, where





Ferrolanos go on a pilgrimage on Easter Monday to worship to their patron saint.

Returning to our tour on **rúa Dolores 9**, we come to some modernist buildings designed by architect Rodolfo Ucha, such as the former *Gran Hotel Suizo*, which has been converted into private homes. Opposite we have the former *Fonda Suiza* (Swiss Hostel), which now houses the beautiful three-star Hotel Suizo, and *Casa Pereira* (Pereira House), at no. 64, whose façade displays a breathtaking variety of original modernist creativity.

The **Praza de Amboage 13** (Amboage Square) lies at the end of rúa Dolores. It was



formerly known as Praza de Dolores (Square of Sorrows) due to the neoclassical church located there. Today, it is dedicated to the Marqués de Amboage (Marquis de Amboage), whose statue looks over the square. The Marqués lived in the tumultuous Ferrol of the 19th century, so he decided to emigrate to Cuba and on his return he created a foun-

**ABOVE** Caryatid

**BELOW** Praza de Amboage

**FACING** Farmacia Almodóvar







dition to free the young people of the city from the levies or compulsory recruitment. His good deeds earned him the papal title of Marqués and also the appreciation of the Ferrolanos who dedicated the square to him and built a statue of him there shortly after his death in 1892. The square retains the original 18th century layout and the plants and atmosphere make it one of the most beautiful in the city.

We will find people enjoying the terraces all year round. In the surrounding area you can see a real catalogue of traditional houses as well as other modernist, eclectic, and even rationalist works by Rodolfo Ucha. This multitiered architect gives us a good demonstration of his creative talents in the 1926 *Capela da Mercé* (chapel of Mercy). On

**ABOVE** Bla Bla Café

**BELOW** Detail of Concatedral de San Julián

**FACING** Building of La Pescadería

the corner with rúa Arce is the newly-opened gourmet sandwich shop *La Premieré*, which has a large terrace where we can enjoy their exotic flavours and original cocktails.

Elsewhere in the square, at no. 203 rúa Real, we can find the *Farmacía Almodóvar* pharmacy, which was founded in 1830. The façade, which uses wood and mirrors, hints at a spectacular interior, which its various owners have done their best to preserve it as it was in the 19th century. Most impressive of all is a mahogany piece of furniture which was made specifically for this shop, in 1890, to house a collection of Parisian porcelain Collins jars. They keep, among other things, a delivery box, which was rented with all the necessary instruments for the many homebirths, and the old type of cabinet used in apothecaries to securely







store the most valuable poisons and substances.

Another building designed by Rodolfo Ucha in the 20s is the old BANCO CORUÑA (Coruña bank, no. 193 rúa Real), which displays the coat of arms of the city of A Coruña on its façade. This building is eclectic in style and has some modernist touches. Today, it houses the original *Bla Café*, where you can enjoy pincho snacks or a wonderful coffee in an interior which still preserves the enormous clock from the old bank.

From here we make our way carefully down **rúa Méndez Núñez** <sup>14</sup>, known by the people of Ferrol as “Rómpete el alma” (roughly, Soulbreaker) street due to its steep slope. Next, we head to **rúa Igrexa** <sup>15</sup> to view another gem from the same architect: the PESCADERÍA. This 1923 work houses a fish and seafood market. It is well worth going inside to see the great quality and variety of



products which are sold in the morning from Monday to Saturday.

Next to it we can see the modern building that houses the MEAT, FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET, whose stalls stock the finest local produce and other goods from further afield for those who like to try new flavours.

If we continue walking in the same direction, we reach the CONCATEDRAL DE SAN JULIÁN (co-cathedral of Saint Julian), built in neo-classicist style in 1772 by engineer Julián Sánchez Bort, a construction manager at the Arsenal. It replaced an earlier church which had been demolished by the works of the Navy. In 1959, it was promoted to the rank of co-cathedral, as Ferrol shares the



**BELOW** El Rápido sign

**ABOVE** Stollen

**FACING** Emilio Castro in his grocery store





bishopric with Mondoñedo. The festivities for the patron saint of the city, San Julián, are on 7 January, which is also el Día de del Arroz Con Leche (Rice Pudding Day), a much-appreciated dessert which is handed out for free on this date.

Returning to the Magdalena neighbourhood along **rúa Sánchez Barcaiztegui** <sup>16</sup>, we come to the crossing with **rúa Magdalena** <sup>17</sup>,



where, to the right, we can see one of the most traditional establishments in the city.

At no. 137 is *El Rápido*, a grocery store founded in 1922 by Emilio Castro and which today is run by his son, known as Don Emilio, who has led the business for more than 60 years. Part of the living history of the city, he is always willing to have a chat about the trials and tribulations of the family business. The premises, which were already a shop in 1850, are located in an 18th century building, inside of which we can find such items as family photos or an old safe from 1895, which served as a bank when people needed to leave their savings in a safe place. Nowadays, it offers high quality products

**ABOVE** Perspective of the Rúa Real  
**BELOW** Modernist building  
**FACING** Casa Romero

and fine wines. This former grocery shop has become quite the gourmet store.

No. 140 is home to the oldest perfumery in Ferrol, *Fémína*, which was founded in the 1920s. Although it moved a few years ago, it retains the customers and products of yesteryear, as well as the latest perfumes and items not found in large chain stores, such as badger hair shaving brushes.

The *Ibérica* pharmacy is located at no. 123 and like *Fémína* it was founded by people from Leon who settled in Ferrol in the 1940s. It is still run by their descendants who have kept the same decoration and simplicity as in the past. On its shelves, we can find traditional products as well as products from other times which are no longer found in such shops, such as esparto grass scrubbers, reed brooms, La Maja soaps or La Bella Aurora creams. Stepping into this shop is like stepping back in time and shouldn't be missed.

Music can also be found on this street at *Marcos Obradoiro de Gaitas* (no. 184), where we can learn the secrets of the bagpipes. Marcos García, who runs the store, inherited his love for traditional Galician music from his family and learned his trade from the renowned Ferrol luthier Antón Varela.

Rúa Magdalena also has a number of decoration and furniture shops. These include *Muebles Acevedo Decoración* (no. 169), which



is on the ground floor of *Casa Magdalena* (Magdalena House), an eclectic building which boasts wonderful grille decoration combined with lavishly painted pointed arches. Further along, at no. 178, on the corner with rúa Sánchez Barcaiztegui, is the *Enrique Vázquez Art Gallery* and at no. 218 we find the *Azul Moreno* shop-workshop, which is committed to using creative recycling to give a new lease of life to used furniture.

At the end of this block, we make our last stop at the wonderful modernist *Casa Romero* building, which we mentioned at the start of our visit. There we find Stollen, a traditional cafeteria-patisserie which serves products from the *Panadería Valenciana* bakery with a good coffee. There is no better way to finish our walk than by relaxing and enjoying the decoration and wonderful goods of the cafe here, which offers excellent confectionery and, according to some, the best empananda pasty in Ferrol.



JUST NEXT TO THE ALAMEDA, WHERE WE STARTED OUR TOUR, THERE ARE TWO MUSEUMS, WHICH ARE THE PERFECT PLACES TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FERROL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NAVY AND THE SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY.

## **Museo Naval de Ferrol**

The MUSEO NAVAL DE FERROL (Ferrol Naval Museum), open every day in the morning in the 18th century building that was formerly the San Campio prison, presents an incredible collection of objects, models, paintings, and personal equipment that gives us an insight into the history of the Spanish Navy and sailing in general.

## **Museo de la Construcción Naval**

The EXPONAV Foundation, MUSEO DE LA CONSTRUCCIÓN NAVAL (Museum of Naval Construction), can be visited every day of the week from 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., except

Mondays. It is located in the Arsenal's old smithies and, after a major restoration, opened its doors in 2008 to show us how boats used to be built in the past and how they are made today. It possesses an extraordinary exhibition of objects, tools, and different pieces, as well as models and interactive artefacts which allow us to learn many interesting things about the world of the sea by using our senses and experimenting.



**BELOW** Naval model  
**FACING** Gate of Arsenal



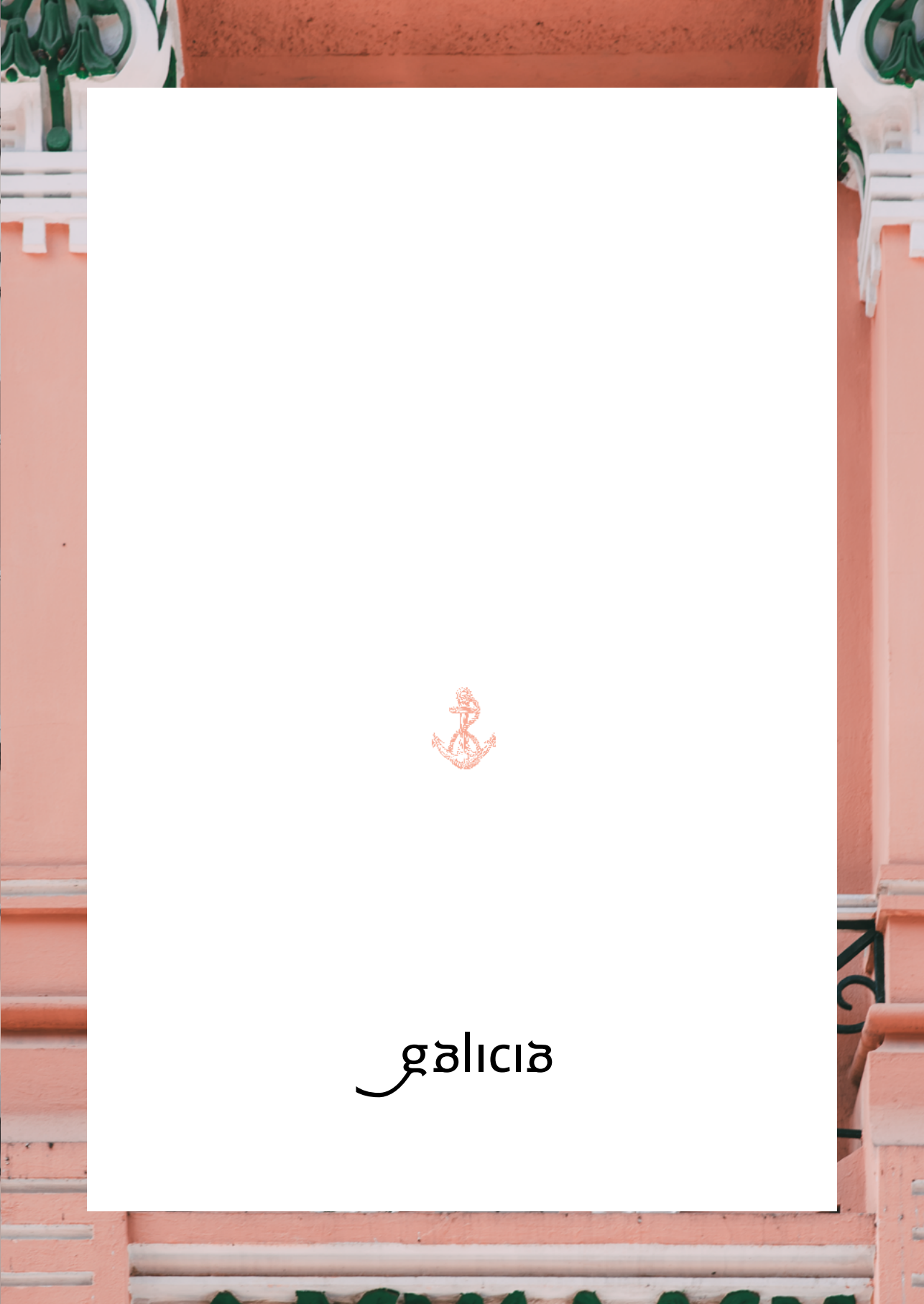




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