



Mondoñedo



a walk of
history and life

Mondoñedo



MONDOÑEDO, IN THE WORDS OF ILLUSTRIOUS LOCAL WRITER ÁLVARO CUNQUEIRO, IS "RICH IN BREAD, WATER, AND LATIN". THE TOWN HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE AS A CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT AND CULTURE IN NORTHERN GALICIA SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES.

AS AN EPISCOPAL SEE, IT IS THE CHURCH THAT SETS THE TONE FOR LIFE IN THE TOWN TO THE SOUND OF ITS BELLS, AS WE CAN CLEARLY SEE THROUGHOUT OUR TOUR IN BOTH THE STREET NAMES AND THE MANY EPISCOPAL BLAZONS ADORNING THE FAÇADES OF THE STATELY BUILDINGS. NOSTALGIA FOR THIS BYGONE POWER IS PALPABLE PRESENCE EVERYWHERE WE GO.

Essentials

A Santuario dos Remedios



B Hospital de San Paulo e San Lázaro



C Praza do Concello



D Cathedral and the Cantón



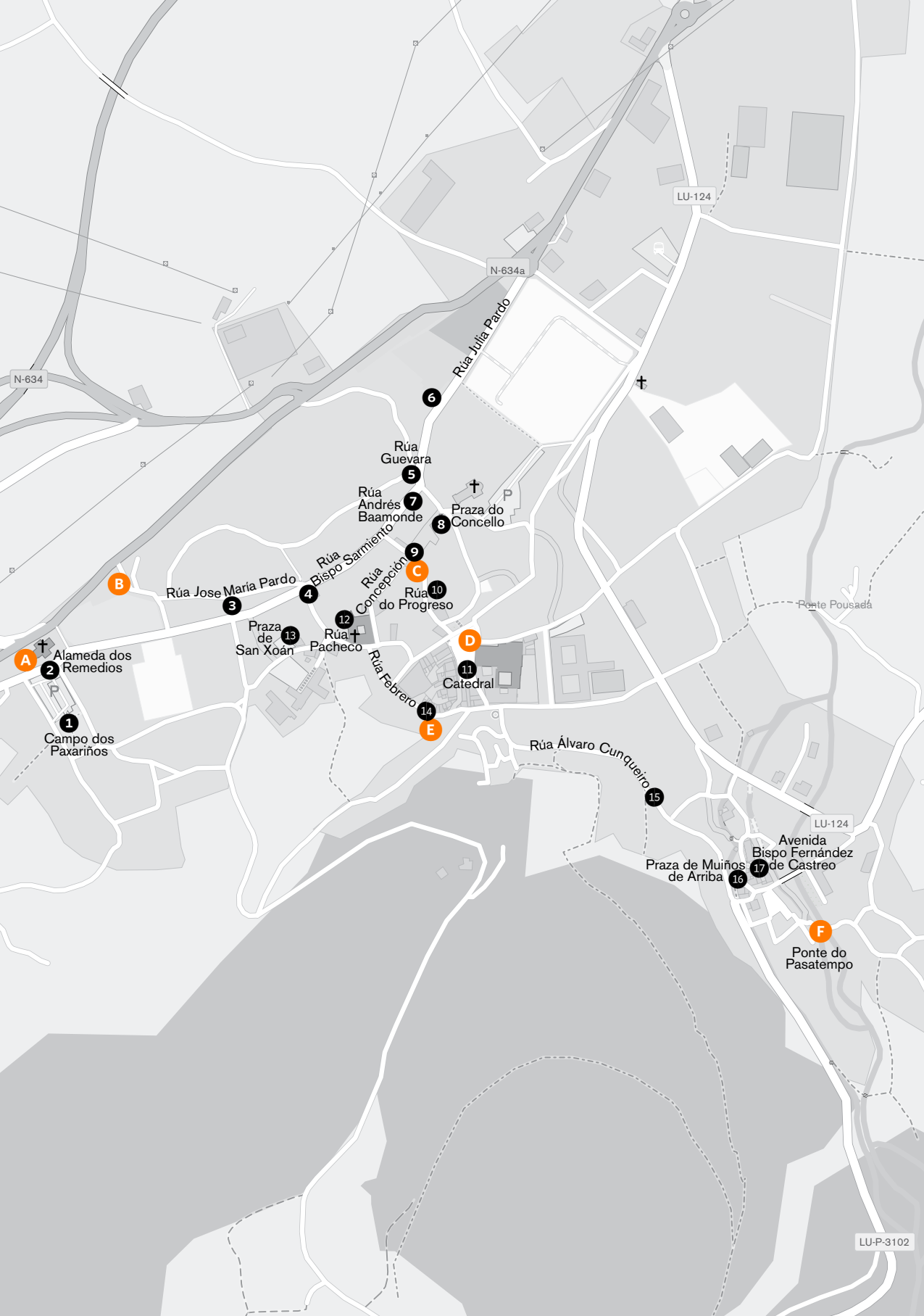
E Fonte Vella



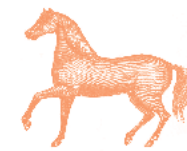
F Muíños neighborhood and Ponte do Pasatempo



The route



- 1 Campo dos Paxariños
- 2 Alameda dos Remedios
- 3 Rúa José María Pardo
- 4 Rúa Bispo Sarmiento
- 5 Rúa Guevara
- 6 Rúa Julia Pardo
- 7 Rúa Andrés Baamonde
- 8 Praza do Concello
- 9 Rúa Concepción
- 10 Rúa do Progreso
- 11 Catedral
- 12 Rúa Pacheco
- 13 Praza de San Xoán
- 14 Rúa Febrero
- 15 Rúa Álvaro Cunqueiro
- 16 Praza de Muíños de Arriba
- 17 Avda Bispo Fernández de Castro



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Our tour begins in the **Campo dos Paxariños** ¹ (Little Birds Field) square, close to the **Alameda dos Remedios** ² (Remedies Boulevard) park, which is a good starting point that is easily accessible from the N-634 road and A8 highway. It also has car parking and a bus stop.

The As San Lucas horse fair takes place here. This is one of the oldest in the Iberian Peninsula, as it has been celebrated on the 17th, 18th (the day of San Lucas/Saint Luke), 19th, and 20th October every year all the way back to 1156 after a royal privilege granted by King Alfonso VII. A visit to the town on those dates is a worthwhile experience as you will definitely get the chance to soak up and enjoy the local character and identity of

Mondoñedo, which was one of the ancient provinces of Galicia until 1833.

The area also boasts a rich history and a lot of activities, an interesting collection of monuments, and the SANTUARIO DOS REMEDIOS (Remedies Shrine), an 18th century Baroque church built on the orders of bishop Sarmiento on the site where an important centre of worship to the Virgin Mary existed two centuries prior.

PREVIOUS PAGES Dor, praza do Concello
FACING Cunqueiro looking at the cathedral.
BELOW Santuario de los Remedios.





In the countryside around this ancient shrine, in 1569 the alderman Luis de Luaces had the brilliant idea of celebrating the Day of the Tree, which made Mondoñedo the first place in Spain to do so. On the fourth day of February, every resident had to plant three trees or face a fine: this was the start of the alameda park, a space which has been used ever since for strolls, socialising, and the showcasing of Mondoñedo society.

At the other end of the Alameda, the HOSPITAL DE SAN PAULO E SAN LÁZARO (Saint Paul and Saint Lazarus Hospital) was built, a Baroque building which upheld the ancient tradition of giving lodgings to pilgrims, lepers, the poor, and the old. Its façade contains one of the most spectacular displays of Baroque Galician heraldry, including the coats of arms of its founder bishop Sarmiento and the city of Mondoñedo. Nowadays it still provides treatment as a care centre.

At no. 23 on the adjacent **rúa José María Pardo** ③ (José María Pardo street) is the Casa Bracamonte (Bracamonte House), a hotel located in a 150 year old building that retains the 19th century taste and style of days gone by.



ABOVE Hospital de San Paulo e San Lázaro
BELOW Hospital de San Paulo e San Lázaro heraldry

On **rúa Bispo Sarmiento** ④ we come to a series of establishments that tells us of a longstanding tradition in Mondoñedo of baking both bread and pastries. At no. 35 is the Pastelería Val de Brea patisserie, where they sell the famous Tarta de Mondoñedo cake and pieces of fine chocolate in the shape of the cathedral or figures referencing passages in the literary works of Álvaro Cunqueiro.

These sites traditionally baked bread, the humble, fragrant, long-lasting staple of the peasant diet yet they also made delights for the rich and powerful in the sweets that the master pastry chefs cooked up.

Tarta de Mondoñedo cake is made with puff pastry, sponge soaked in wine and syrup, *cabello de angel* pumpkin preserve, and crunchy almendrado biscuits, and is decorated with colourful candied red, green, and orange fruit. It is the Baroque made cake. The tradition of it in Mondoñedo goes as far back as the presence of the clergy and art.



Elsewhere on this street, we come across several plaques mentioning Carlos Folgueira, O Rei das Tartas (the King of Cakes), an honoured citizen of Mondoñedo and master pastry chef, who was easily identified by his bushy moustache and chef's hat. One plaque marks the home he was born in, another the shop he ran, and a final one the museum.

A little further on, in **rúa Guevara** ⑤, the smell of baking and freshly-baked bread reveals we're close to the Panadería Rubal bakery and guides us to it at no. 12. This shop is much-loved throughout the whole county and is also known for its handmade empanada pasties, madeleines, and pastries. Many hold it to be one of the best bakeries in Spain, so it is no surprise to see part of its daily output shipped to the neighbouring region of

ABOVE Celsa, widow of Carlos Folgueira
BELOW Pazo de Santomé



Asturias. They have recently brought out a kit for making bread at home, which includes a mix of flours, the starter the bakery has used since 1965, salt, spring water, and the bakery's own recipe.

Continuing along rúa Guevara, we reach **rúa Julia Pardo 6**, where we find the old **Pazo de Santomé** (Santomé Manor House), an 18th century mansion which retains the family coats of arms on its façade and features intricate metalwork on its balconies. Nowadays, various municipal offices are located

there, alongside the Centro Español de Documentación Espeleológica (Spanish Centre of Caving Documentation), which includes an exhibition space and a library containing over 3,000 specialist books. We should remember that the Cova do Rei Cintolo cave, the biggest in Galicia, is in Mondoñedo.

A short distance away, we move on to the **Cemiterio Vello** (Old Cemetery), the town's old cemetery, which is another wonderful opportunity to remember Álvaro Cunqueiro, who is buried here. This graveyard has become a green space for remembrance, where we can see good examples of funerary art and visit the tombs of other important



men in Galician culture, such as Pascual Veiga, who composed the Galician anthem and the famous Alborada Galega song, poet Leiras Pulpeiro, who called Mondoñedo *cunquiña deleitosa* (delicious cup), and several clergymen and priests who contributed to the cultural development of the city. This stop is bound to make an impression as the old cemetery has become a place to go for walks and come into contact with culture, to be alone with one's thoughts, and to look out over the valley.

On the opposite hillside, you can make out the old convent of San Martiño de Vilaourente, Vilaoriente, or Vilalourente depending on the different spellings, which is traditionally known by the name of Os Picos (The Peaks) due to the shape of the habit the first group of priests to take up residence there, the Third Order of Saint Francis, wore.



As we retrace our steps back to the King of Cakes, on the corner with **rúa Andrés Baamonde 7** we can see an interesting rationalist building, which stands out amongst the traditional architecture and is home to **A Bodeguiña**, a tapas bar where we can sample cheese and cured meat products from the local area.

Continuing along this street, we reach the **Praza do Concello 8** (Council Square), where there is a striking, robust building with a large chimney, which is the central office of **MONDOÑEDO TOWN COUNCIL** and is an example of mid-18th century architecture. The mansion and its fine granite masonry used to lean on the old wall that surrounded



FACING, ABOVE Old cemetery
FACING, BELOW Praza do Concello
ABOVE Iglesia de Santiago
BELOW La Alianza



the town and was part of a complex that included the Capilla das Angustias (Chapel of Sorrows), which the gate in this area was named after. Every Thursday morning a market is held in the square, with a wide selection of products, although textiles are the most abundant. As evening falls, the terraces of the wine bars and bars start to fill up. [O Petisco](#), [O Porriño](#), and [O Palique](#) are good places to sample the local cuisine.

Elsewhere on the square, we can stop in at [Tus Cosas](#), where there are photo exhibitions on the history of the town. Likewise, they also have a wide range of gift items, including the series titled “A cup of life”, featuring aphorisms or proverbs stamped on mugs designed and stamped by artisan Ricardo Fernández.

On the corner of the Casa do Concello (Town Hall building), the steeple of the [IGLESIA DE SANTIAGO](#) (church of Santiago)

rises above the other buildings. The church is also known as Igrexa Nova (New Church) and has been the site of the town parish since 1901. The church was built in a neo-Gothic style by Nemesio Cobreros.

We head back the way we came to go down [rúa do Progreso](#) ¹⁰, which was traditionally one of the main shopping streets in the town and is home to small shops which have catered to people in the area’s basic needs for a very long time indeed. Some of them are traditional, such as the [Comercial Fermo](#) jeweller-watchmaker, which has been open for more than fifty years; others are in refurbished premises, such as the [Casa Regina](#) general store, which still retains the art deco poster advertising Fabrics, Tiles, Dishes, and Glassware and where we can now find craft

ABOVE Farmacia Lombardero pharmacy
BELOW San Roque in the Old Consistory
FACING Arriving at Praza da Catedral
NEXT PAGES Mondoñedo cake







items, local products, and furnishings. If we also need to get a gift for young children, then we can find a wide range of educational and vintage toys and even kits to build automata at [Flores Buxo](#).

Elsewhere on this street, the [Farmacia Lombardero](#) pharmacy has a classic thermometer outside the shop. Inside we can go back to the timeless setting of the traditional apothecaries of old Europe in the wooden furniture and the classic containers for



storing the products that would go into the magistral formulas dictated by the pharmacopoeia. It has been run by the same family since the 1920s, although the business dates back to before then.

Another shop with a long history is the [Confitería La Alianza](#) confectionery, opened in 1892, which became famous for popularising the Tarta de Mondoñedo cake in the 1950s. The secret to their success and longevity is that they very carefully select their ingredients to make sure they are all of the highest quality.

If we move on a little bit further, we can start to make out the **Cantón area and the**

ABOVE Statue of Álvaro Cunqueiro

BELOW Urban life in the Cantón

FACING, ABOVE Celebrating As San Lucas

FACING, BELOW Cathedral square

cathedral ¹¹. The [ANTIGUO CONSISTORIO](#) (Old Town Council) stands on the corner. This building from the second half of the 16th century features a wrought iron balcony and an alcove housing the image of San Roque (Saint Roch), which was put there after a vow made by the Town Council to the saint offering protection from the plague and other epidemics. The building is now home to the Municipal Library and the Tourist Information Centre.

Just in front there is a statue paying tribute to the great [ÁLVARO CUNQUEIRO](#), the storyteller, poet, journalist, and food critic, who was born in the town. Mondoñedo was for



Cunqueiro what Macondo was for García Márquez, which is why the statue of the writer takes pride of place in his vantage point on a bench looking out serenely at the Bosque de Silva forest, which was a source of inspiration for his works and a setting for a number of them.

In the area known in the 70s and 80s as “el rincón de los vagos” (idle corner), we can see [Calenda](#) in a 16th century building. Craftwork and the high quality of the decorations





are the hallmark of this small concept store. Just in front, in a mansion on the square, we find [Bodegón A Catedral](#), a typical restaurant serving homemade food that was the winner of the X Concurso de Tapas Cidade de Mondoñedo (10th City of Mondoñedo Tapas Competition) in 2016.

We now head down to the arcade area known as [EL CANTÓN](#), which is nowadays where the hum of people chatting about the latest goings on in Mondoñedo can be most loudly heard. At no. 13 is [ÁLVARO CUNQUEIRO HOUSE MUSEUM](#). The writer, who was one of the finest Galician writers of the 20th century, wrote some of his main works here. The ground floor contains the tourist information centre, an exhibition on the career of the author, and the [Taberna de Galiana](#).

Next to it, [Hortas de Galicia](#) offers the best produce from the Mondoñedo area, with a strong focus on traditional farming and a

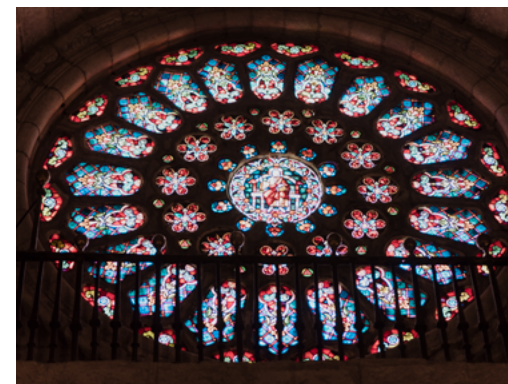


selection of products such as wine, liqueurs, and honey, which are all from Galicia.

Elsewhere in the arcade, fans of outdoor pursuits can get everything they need at [Xis-trail Mountain](#), a shop specialising in sports clothing where pilgrims, mountaineers, and cavers can get kitted out or replace their gear.

All the cafes in the area offer us the chance to meet a wide range of people, from priests to different shopkeepers to people working in other jobs in the city, which is the main city in the Judicial District.

The [CATHEDRAL](#), which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2015 as a



ABOVE Convento de las Concepcionistas
BELOW Catedral rose window
FACING Cathedral wall paintings



unique part of the Caminos del Norte pilgrim routes, is a robust, austere, and unexpected building. Its Medieval, Romanesque, and Gothic character is immediately identifiable. The Medieval towers were altered in the 18th century and the result is the Baroque work we can see today, standing at a height of 35 metres.

In the northern tower, one of the most well-known bells in the county, Paula, rings out. The cathedral is full of surprises for visitors. The most beautiful of them is the 5 metre in diameter rose window that dominates the façade and bathes the inside of the cathedral in a stream of colourful light that gives it a supernatural feeling that compels visitors to enter into recollection. The tympanum of

ABOVE Fonte Vella

BELOW Monument to Leiras Pulpeiro at Praza de San Xoán

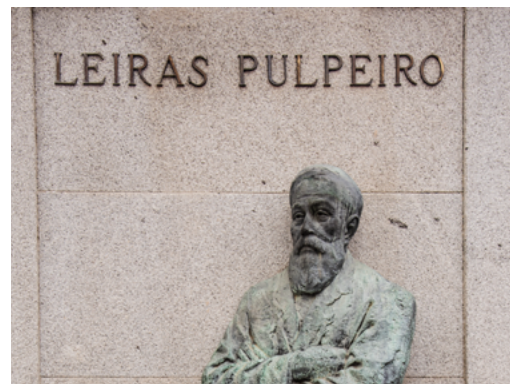
FACING, ABOVE Seminario de Santa Catalina

FACING, BELOW Capilla de San Roque

the door features some 16th century frescoes depicting the Assumption of Mary, which the cathedral is dedicated to.

Inside there are striking 16th century Gothic murals on the central nave. Especially impressive is the Late Medieval mural depicting the MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS, when King Herod ordered the execution of all male children in Bethlehem in an attempt to ensure the death of Jesus, who many regarded as the Saviour. It shows some soldiers armed with swords attempting to cut children's throats to the desperation and grief of their mothers who are trying to stop it.

The many chapels include the Capilla del Santísimo (chapel of the Most Holy), formerly the chapel of Mary Magdalene, which retains a beautiful Gothic image of the VIRGEN INGLESA (English Virgin Mary), which, according to legend, was brought over by English sailor John Dutton from London cathedral during the English Reformation



in the 16th century. The statue bears the symbol of the prestigious and exclusive Order of the Garter, whose members currently include Queen Elizabeth II and the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton.

Before leaving the cathedral, we should pay a visit to the MUSEUM OF RELIGIOUS ART, a gem of a museum, especially the Gothic Rooms in the upper section in the attic, which have that name as they are located under the roof with the flying buttresses of the building visible. The odd collection of bishops' shoes is also interesting. Audio guides covering the whole cathedral are available when visiting.



After leaving the cathedral, we follow **rúas Pacheco** ¹² and **Leiras Pulpeiro** to the CONVENTO DE LAS CONCEPCIONISTAS (convent of the Conceptionists), a Baroque building from 1716, although the institution was established in Mondoñedo a century earlier by María Pardo de Andrade. The door displays an image of the Immaculate Conception and three coats of arms linked to the heraldry of the Franciscan Order.





Almost directly in front, a plaque commemorates [VICTORIANO LÓPEZ GARCÍA](#), who won an Honorary Goya Award for his contribution to cinema in 1990. He was the founder and director of what would become the Official Film School in Madrid. Renowned directors such as Borau, Berlanga, Bardem, and Saura studied there. He got his passion for film from his family, as his grandfather was the owner of the town's cinema.

In the Praza de San Xoán (Saint John's Square) we find a monument to local poet [LEIRAS PULPEIRO](#) and in the higher area beyond the town walls, as was the custom in mendicant orders, lies the [CONVENTO DE ALCÁNTARA](#) (convent of Alcántara). The Iglesia de San Pedro de Alcántara (church of Saint Peter of Alcántara) is nowadays the site of the Alcántara Cultural Centre and the Camino del Norte Interpretation Centre, which includes interactive exhibitions. The old 18th century buildings of the convent are now the Albergue de Peregrinos (Pilgrim's Hostel) and the only place still used for religious purposes is the Capilla de la Venerable Orden Tercera (chapel of the Third Order of Saint Francis).

The Camino del Norte pilgrim route makes its way along the whole coastline of the Cantabrian Sea and passes through Mondoñedo in Galicia, which is the reason we find so many scallop shells and yellow arrows in the town.

We return to rúa Leiras Pulpeiro, head down [rúa Febrero](#) ¹⁴ come to the [FONTE VELLA](#) (Old Fountain), which was built in 1548 as the inscription states. The coats of arms of bishop Diego de Soto and King Carlos I are carved on it and the fountain was used as a source of water for the small settlement that stood here at the time. Water gushes from it, so it is understandable that Alvaro Cunqueiro had water as one of the three points of reference he used to make sense of his city and his own world, since the house he was born in is located on the other side of it.

The [SEMINARIO DE SANTA CATALINA](#) (Santa Catalina Seminary) stands behind the Cathedral. The centre encompasses more than the training to be a priest and was a cornerstone of culture and place of learning for a good number of intellectuals in Galicia until just a few decades ago. These include figures such as the director of the Royal Spanish Academy Darío Villanueva, Monsignor Rouco Varela, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, ex-president of the Council of Galician Culture Ramón Villares, and many others. It was one of the first three seminaries founded in Spain and had to be extended in the 19th century to accommodate the growing number of students. Nowadays, the building is still used for educational purposes and also offers accommodation.

Continuing our tour along [rúa Álvaro Cunqueiro](#) ¹⁵, we come to the [NEIGHBOURHOOD OF BARRIO DOS MUIÑOS](#), where the 18th

century [CAPILLA DE SAN ROQUE](#) (chapel of Saint Roch) is located. Although we may at first feel like we are leaving the town, this area full of artisan workshops beyond the town walls has stood alongside the seat of power inside the town walls since the Middle Ages.

The clergy need bread, bread needs flour, and flour needs mills to be ground. The water required by the mills is generously supplied by the small River Valiñadares, a tributary of the River Masma, which in its two channels and main course gave this area a truly distinctive local feel. The neighbourhood is split into two parts, known as Arriba and Abajo (Upstream and Downstream), depending on the flow of the water. In the [Praza de Muíños de Arriba](#) ¹⁶ (Upstream Mills Square), we can stop for a break at the [A Taberna do Valeco](#), a welcoming restaurant offering traditional dishes and good wine served with a generous savoury tapa dish on the side, which is even included with coffees.

The walkways and bridges in this neighbourhood are its main defining features. The most iconic is the [PONTE DO PASATEMPO](#) (Pastime Bridge), which takes its name from a legend linked to it that took place during the reign of the Catholic Kings. The story goes that clergy from the Cathedral waylaid the retinue of noblewoman Isabel de Castro, wife of marshal Pedro Pardo de



Cela, at the bridge so that they would not arrive in time to save her husband, who had been sentenced to death, with the pardon granted by Queen Isabel. Meanwhile, the head of the marshal rolled off the gallows in the Cathedral square, bounced three times on the hard stone, and exclaimed: "I believe... I believe... I believe!"

The Barrio de Os Muíños neighbourhood is now a centre for artisans, who open up their workshops in an effort to provide an insight into what they do. [Raimundo Rubal](#) is a leading name in Mondoñedo in forging and iron sculptures. In the shop next to his workshop, on Bos Aires avenue, we can view some of his works, which include religious imagery.

At no. 57 rúa Muíños de Arriba, the [Esquina Atlántica Alfarería](#) pottery workshop gives us the chance to learn this trade. Next to the new bridge on [avenida Bispo Fernández de Castro](#) ¹⁷ (Bishop Fernández de Castro avenue), we come to the [Punteiradas de](#)

ABOVE Celebrating As San Lucas

FACING Capilla de Santiago

P. PAGES Ponte do Pasatempo and Dos Muíños neighborhood



Viladepedra workshop of stonemason Fernando Vilariño in an old one-room school, where pieces made with the expertise of generations of stonemasons are on display and on sale.

Just in front, on avenida Bispo Fernández de Castro, we can visit, subject to reservation and confirmation, another unique business, Ton Arenas' Mircromina marionette and puppet theatre workshop. Colour and creativity are supplied by Estudio Estampa, at no. 7 rúa Ponte Pousada, a design and engraving workshop using textiles, paper, and other mediums.

A few steps further on, we come to the small and discreet 18th century CAPILLA DE SANTIAGO (chapel of Santiago), which is in a simple, traditional Baroque style and is not intended to be a monument, as befits the hard-working people of this area. It has an interesting small window in the centre above the door, which features a cross that is reminiscent of a Celtic triskelion.

We conclude our visit with a stroll along the banks of the canals, with the water flowing past and the mills paused in time, where we can see the individual washing

places outside every house, which were used in the past to wash clothes, and the FORTE DOS PELAMIOS (Tannery Fountain) and the constant stream of water from its four spouts. A large millstone above the fountain stands out with an inscription, which the silhouette of poet and journalist José Díaz Jácome, created by sculptor Quique Guerra, is pointing to.

The name of the fountain is a nod to the tanning that used to be carried out in this area. All that remains of that era now is a shed, which was used to dry hides, grain, clothes....

FACING Capilla de Santiago

ROUTE MAP

Nearby

Rei Cintolo Cave

Just 7.5 km from the centre of Mondoñedo, we can visit the Rei Cintolo Cave, a 6,500 m cave complex carved out by millions of years of water flowing through the large seams of limestone in the area. It boasts impressive underground chambers full of stalactite and stalagmites which, taken together, make spectacular formations that look like cathedral organs. An adventure awaits that will make our tour live long in the memory. Organise your visit through the Mondoñedo Tourist Information Centre.





galicia