

Barcelos – Ponte de Lima

The third stage of the Portuguese Way from Porto takes us from Barcelos to Ponte de Lima. It is one of the longest days, almost 35km that will run between vineyards and in which we will have some unevenness.

The reward is extraordinary: rest in Ponte de Lima, the “oldest city in Portugal”, as its slogan says. The Roman bridge and the surroundings of the Lima river will invite us to rest after a long day. One of its jewels is its gastronomy. The other: their broths. Not for nothing, Ponte de Lima is the capital of the famous green wine. And to finish completing the day, in Ponte de Lima a new legend awaits us, in this case related to its Roman past.

We **leave Barcelos** from the Matriz church and then take Avenida da Liberdade and say goodbye to the rooster of Barcelos before taking Dr. Manuel Pais street. After crossing the Circular de Barcelos bridge and passing a roundabout, we will come out onto a road that will take us to the church of Vila Boas.

After crossing the train track we will head to Portela de Tamel, located 10 km from Barcelos. On the way we will pass the chapel of Sao Sebastião, that of Santa Cruz and the church of Tamel Sao Pedro Fins. In Portela de Tamel we will find a small chapel and the Pilgrims' hostel.

The next destination will be **Balugães**, a route that runs between asphalt and dirt tracks and in which the church of Aborim and the Tábuas bridge, from the 12th century, stand out. In the parish of Balugães we will have made about half of the route.

Our next milestone on the Camino will be **Vitorino dos Piães**, about 7 km away. It is worth stopping to admire another Romanesque construction on the Route: the church of Sao Martinho. From Vitorino dos Piães we start the final stretch of the third stage. About 12 kilometers that will take us directly to Ponte de Lima.

About 3km before reaching its historic center, we can rest next to the beautiful chapel of Nosa Senhora das Neves. Upon reaching **Ponte de Lima** we can choose between staying in one of the many accommodations that the city offers or crossing its great Roman bridge and staying in the beautiful municipal hostel. It has 60 seats and is open throughout the year. The price is about 5 euros.

What to see and do in Ponte de Lima? In addition to enjoying its gastronomy and the famous green wine, Ponte de Lima offers many attractions after a long day on the Camino. Of course, you cannot stop crossing its famous bridge, built in the 5th century. Of this original bridge, only 5 arches remain today. In the fourteenth century it was restored, preserving its 380 meters in length until today.

The beautiful old town has some essentials such as the main church, the Torre da Cadeia Velha (old

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prison) or the popular sculpture 'Vaca das cordas'. A particularly relaxing and even spiritual place is Avenida dos Plátanos, a pedestrian promenade protected by centuries-old plane trees and at the end of which we find the church of Nossa Senhora de Guia.

On the other side of the bridge, we have the Santo Antonio da Torre Velha church and the Capela do Anjo da Guarda, where the beautiful Parque do Arnado opens. And, of course, the monument to the pilgrim who wishes everyone who arrives Bom Caminho!

Although if there is something that characterizes Ponte de Lima, it is the statues of the Roman general Decimo Juno Bruto and his troop separated by the Lima river. And here comes the legend that recalls the Roman past of this city.

Legend of the River Lethes or River of Oblivion. Legend has it that the Romans did not dare to cross it because they confused its name, the Lethes river, with the Lethes, the river of Hades' oblivion and the fear of losing memory, made military campaigns difficult. Until the Roman general Decimo Juno Bruto, who led the conquest in Galicia and northern Portugal, decided to break the myth.

He crossed it and once on the other shore he called each of his soldiers by name, who, astonished, did not hesitate to follow him. The Festa do Esquecimento (Festival of Forgetfulness) continues to be held every August 20, battles between Romans and Celts, market, troop parade and recreation of Bruto's troops crossing the bridge.

El consejo del cartero

Teléfonos de interés

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