12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS
TORRES VEDRAS - PORTUGAL
20TH-24TH SEPTEMBER 2027

GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK
GEOPARQUE OESTE
unesco Geoparque Mundial

2027 PRE CONFERENCE FIELD TRIP

ESTRELA UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

SEPTEMBER 18–19, 2027



Saturday, 18TH

7:30 am Departure from Torres Vedras
11:00 am Penhas da Saúde (Covilhã)
12:00 pm Piornos Viewpoint
1:00 pm Lunch at Varanda da Estrela Restaurant
2:30 pm Covão da Ametade
3:00 pm Hiking trail in the Zêzere Glacial Valley: Covão da Ametade – Caldas de Manteigas thermal spring (Distance: 9 km | Difficulty level: moderate)
6:00 pm Manteigas Thermal Baths
8:00 pm Dinner and an overnight stay at Hotel INATEL Manteigas



Sunday, 19TH

9:00 am Departure Hotel INATEL Manteigas
9:30 am Hiking trail along the Faias Route (Distance: 5.4 km | Difficulty level: easy to moderate)
1:00 pm Lunch at Duval Restaurant
2:30 pm Visit to a "burel" factory
4:30 pm Departure to Torres Vedras
7:00 pm Arrival to Torres Vedras

SERVICES INCLUDED:

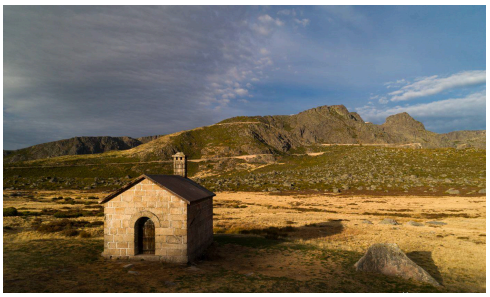
- Bus transportation
- Accommodation with breakfast
- 2 lunches
- 1 dinner
- Admission to interpretive centres and museums
- Local guides
- Insurance

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PLACES TO VISIT

PIORNOS VIEWPOINT



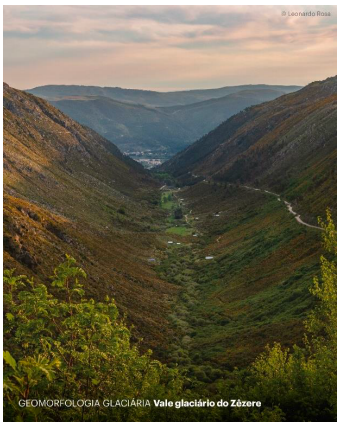
Situated on the side of a granite tor, this viewpoint – located at an altitude of 1,630 meters – offers a perfect vantage point to observe the traces left by the last glaciation on the landscape of the Estrela Geopark. In particular, it provides a view over the Nave de Santo António, a flattened surface lying between the plateaus of Torre and Penhas da Saúde, which serves as a broad mountain pass between the valleys of the Zêzere (to the north) and the Alforfa (to the south).

COVÃO DA AMETADE



This is the largest glacial hollows in the Estrela range, formed by the glacier erosive action, during the last ice age – a period that began 100,000 years ago and ended approximately 14,000 years ago. At that time, a massive ice body descended from the mountain's higher elevations, flowing the Zêzere Glacial Valley. As the glacier slid, it plucked away chunks of rock, carving out a large hollow ("cova"). Its name, "Covão da Metade", stems either from its position between two other hollows – "Covão Cimeiro" and "Covão da Albergaria" – or from the fact that the Zêzere River runs through it, dividing it in two, or "in half" ("à metade").

ZÊZERE GLACIAL VALLEY



The Zêzere Glacial Valley is one of the finest examples of the power of glaciers in sculpting the landscape. It features a U-shaped profile, carved by a massive tongue of ice – which, at its peak, reached a thickness of 340 meters – fed by the ice field of the "Planalto da Torre" and by glaciers flowing from the hanging valleys of "Candeeira and Covões", extending as far as the present-day town of Manteigas. Today, this valley is traversed by the Zêzere River, the second-longest river located entirely within Portugal.

HIKING TRAIL ALONG THE ROTA DAS FAIAS



This route, one of the most visited within the Manteigas Hiking Trail Network ("Trilhos Verdes"), owes its name to a dense forest of beech trees – a species planted by the Manteigas Forestry Services in the early 20th century. The natural landscape is dominated by the Zêzere Glacial Valley, the Torre, the "Cântaro Magro", the "Cântaro Gordo", and the "Penhas Douradas". From the hill of São Lourenço, one

can enjoy a panoramic view of the mountain ranges stretching all the way to Spain, as well as a view over the town of Manteigas. Along this trail, it is possible to experience rural and pastoral life firsthand. Also of note are the Chapel of São Lourenço and a small grove of monumental oak trees – a site of worship with pagan roots, linked to the veneration of trees and the Sun.

BUREL FACTORY/ECOLÃ



Burel Factory was discovered by João Tomás and Isabel Costa in 2010. Recognizing the heritage and legacy inherent to the region, they decided to prevent the disappearance of *burel* – a highly traditional fabric from the Serra da Estrela mountains – by restoring the Lanifícios Império mill, the most significant wool factory in the area, originally established in 1947. The site evolved beyond a mere factory, becoming a design and production hub for *burel* – the most traditional wool fabric in the local textile industry – which is now applied in highly innovative ways across sectors such as fashion, interior decor, and thermal and acoustic insulation.

Ecolã, founded in 1925, is a more traditional mill that also utilizes wool as its primary raw material. The facility oversees the entire wool cycle: from shearing and selecting the highest-quality fleece to spinning – using either manual or electric spinning wheels—and finally weaving. This process results in a finished product rooted in ecological and sustainable principles. By employing traditional methods, the mill preserves a cultural heritage while integrating it with contemporary design.

RESTAURANTS

VARANDA DA ESTRELA



DUVAL



PLACES TO STAY

HOTAL INATEL MANTEIGAS

