Arouca Geopark
Serra da Freita and Arouca

Arouca is a mountainous region of 328 km² renowned for its outstanding natural and cultural heritage, declared, in its entirety, a UNESCO Global Geopark. It is also a biodiversity hotspot, with 47% of its total area protected under the Natura 2000 Network.
ITINERARY

09.00  **Departure from Aveiro city centre to Serra da Freita** (approx. 1h drive).
The enchanted mountain of Freita is the core of the Geopark, featuring 17 of its 41 geosites. Enjoy the stunning scenery on the way up to its peak, at a height of 1100m.

10.15  **Frecha da Mizarela viewpoint**
The 70-metre waterfall of Mizarela on the river Caima, the highest in mainland Portugal, reveals the contact between the granite massif and the pre-Cambric schist. On a clear day, the panoramic view reaches as far as Aveiro and the Atlantic sea.

10.35  **Guided visit of Pedras Parideiras (stone-delivering rocks)**
On the way to the tiny rural settlement of Castanheira, where the main outcrop of stone-delivering rocks is located, you’re likely to come across some docile cattle of the local Arouquesa breed roaming around freely. Learn about Arouca’s most iconic geological phenomenon and the local legends about it. A 3D documentary will be on show at the Interpretation Centre, where a coffee break will be offered.

12.15  **Departure to Espinheiro**
Lunch will be served at Casa no Campo, the ideal place to taste some of the region’s finest food and wine produce. Tuck into a hearty lunch of Arouquesa steak, smoked meats and fresh home-grown veggies.

Shortly before lunch, a sample of the region’s folk music will be presented by the superb choir Senhoras de Rô. They will be performing a few Cantas and Cramóis – exquisite two and three-part traditional chants linked to rural life and sung exclusively by women.

14.45  **Departure to the centre of Arouca**

15.00  **Mosteiro de Arouca** (Arouca Monastery) and organ concert
Founded in the 10th century, the monastery of Arouca was donated by Portugal’s second king to his daughter Mafalda, who turned it into one of the wealthiest in the country. The imposing architecture visible today results from major 18th century refurbishment works. The pipe organ, built in 1739-1741 by one of the most representative artisans in Portuguese baroque organ building, has been restored in 2009 by Gerhard Grenzing. Enjoy its unique timbre and incredible audio effects in a mini-concert by the Master organist Nicolas Roger, while sitting at the magnificently decorated choir stalls. Guided by Nicolas, you will have the chance of taking a peek at the organ’s inner mechanism.

16.00  **Tasting of Arouca monastery delectable sweets**
To finalise the trip, indulge in a feast of sweet treats at the monastery’s stunning kitchen, still prepared according to their original recipes: castanhas doces, morcelas doces and charutos de amêndoa.

17.00  Return to Aveiro.

18.00  Expected arrival to Aveiro.

**PRICE PER PERSON: €95 (VAT INCLUDED)**

**GROUP SIZE** - up to 50 participants

**INCLUDED** - private coach, all admissions, coffee break, Arouca Geopark guiding, lunch with wine, pipe organ concert, taste of the Arouca Monastery sweet treats and personal accident insurance.

**Tour Leader:** Eduarda Paz I Managing Director
Biollogist (U. of Coimbra); MA in Conservation - Historic Gardens and Landscapes (U. of York)