



“Granite masses weathered by the wind, quartzites twisted by the forces of the earth, valleys embedded between, terraced hillsides, plateaus stretching as far as the eye can see, crystal clear waters that flow from the heart of the mountains, snow, wolves, eagles soaring high in the skies, meadows, fields and fallow land, maronesa cattle, wild goats, mills, cottages, schist houses with slate roofs. Men and women who together have moulded the landscape, gleaming their livelihoods from the earth, moment by moment making this Park...”



Alvão
Nature
Park



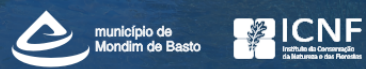
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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Alvão Nature Park is located in the North of Portugal. The Park is within the mountain ranges of Alvão and Marão, but also includes part of the intermediate and undefined zone between these mountains. The Park is included in “Rede Natura”.

The park’s total area is 7.220 hectares, the surface of which being principally occupied by the top of the hydrographic basin of the River Ólo, a tributary of the River Tâmega.

This nature park lies mainly on the western slopes of the mountains which act as a “barrier of condensation” to the masses of humid air which come from the Atlantic Ocean.

Alvão Nature Park is therefore in a transitional zone between the humid coastal region and the increasingly drier interior. The transition is affected still more by the altitudinal component.

Geomorphologically, the higher area forms an extensive granite basin, the source of the River Ólo and some of its tributaries. The Ólo then winds through a lower area of schist in the Ermelo zone. Between the two, there is a quartzite barrier. The hardness of this rock is probably the reason for the abrupt change between the two areas, causing a “step” and resulting in the spectacular waterfalls of FISGAS DE ERMELO.

In the 8 Kilometres, measured in a straight line, between the Lamas de Ólo village -1000metres - in the uplands, and Ermelo village - 450metres - in the lowlands, there is a drop of 550metres. The highest point in the park at Cravelas is 1330 metres above sea level, the lowest, at Volta da Lousa, is 260m.

The Alvão Nature Park bases its agricultural activity on extensive breeding of “Maronesa” cattle and wild goats “Caprina Bravia”, both local breeds, associated with the cultivation of hay in the meadows, rye and maize.



POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1. AREA OF ERMELO, municipality of Mondim de Basto:**
 - waterfalls of Fisgas de Ermelo;
 - village of Ermelo, rich in traditional rural architecture;
 - the approach to the village of Barreiro, affording a vast panoramic view westwards, over the “Senhora da Graça;”
 - the village of Barreiro itself;
 - the River Ólo, containing trout in its crystal-clear waters and, at certain sections, dense river vegetation.

- 2. LAMAS DE ÔLO AND ARNAL AREA, municipality of Vila Real**
 - the village of Lamas de Ólo, with some of its ancient thatch-roofed houses, and its roughly constructed mill, overlooking the village;
 - the dams area of Alvão, which has a view of the summits of Alvão and Marão;
 - The granite mass of Muas/Arnal, with its bleak and mountainous beauty;
 - the Agarez/Arnal road, with wide vistas over the city of Vila Real, Marão mountain range and high plateau, extending to the east;
 - the mill beside the waterfall of Galegos da Serra; Arnal stream (Agarez/ Galegos da Serra).

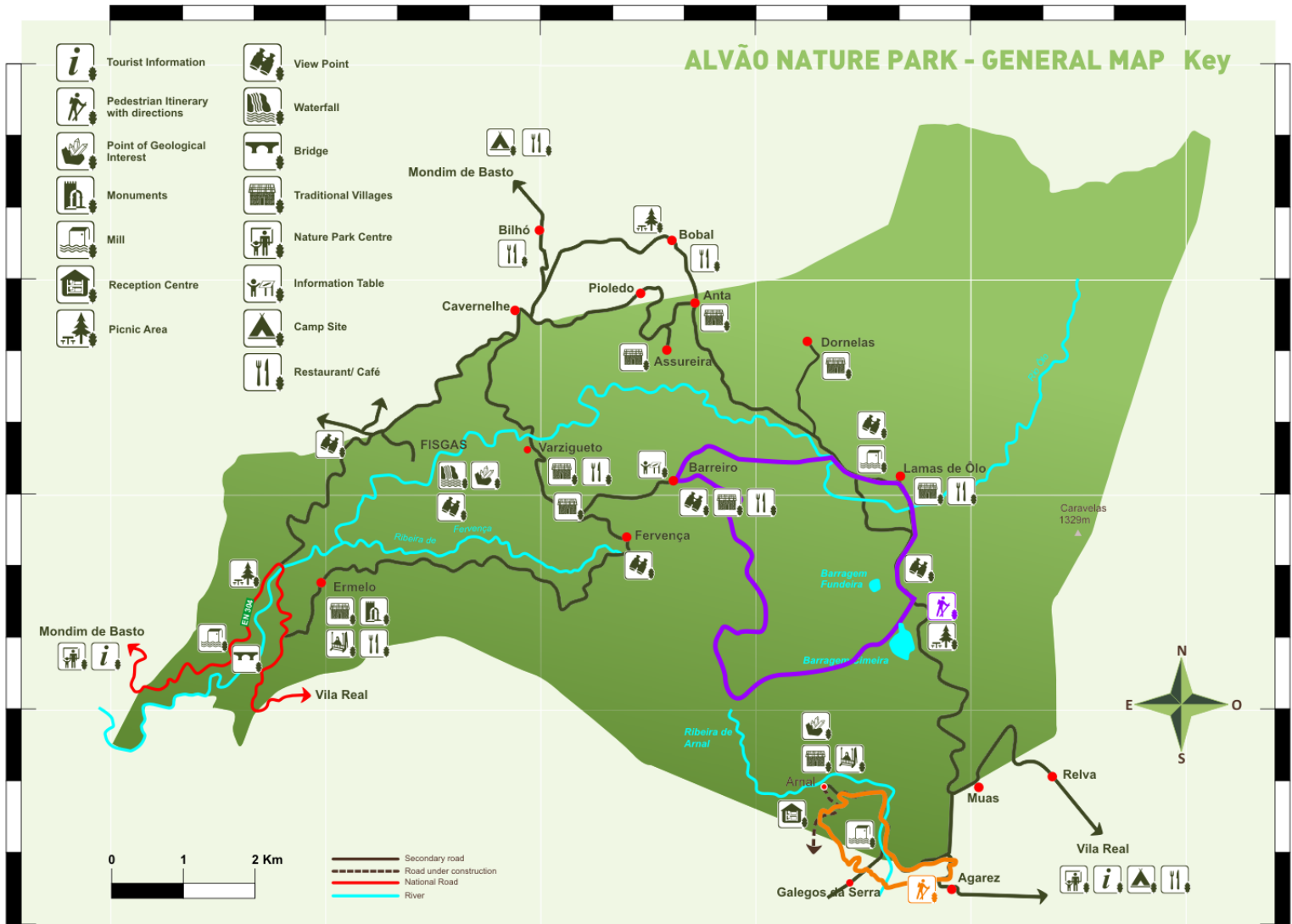
RECOMMENDED ITINERARIES

1. ERMELO zone: ERMELO, the valley of the Fervença stream (with a possible detour to the village of Barreiro), Varzigueto, the Fisgas de Ermelo waterfalls, the forest- ranger’s house in FOJO, the bridge over the River Ólo (with a nearby medieval bridge). Back to ERMELO.

2. LAMAS DE Ôlo zone: Muas (with a detour by farm track to the AGAREZ/ARNAL road), the Alvão Reservoir, Lamas de Ólo and Dornelas.



ALVÃO NATURE PARK - GENERAL MAP Key



Footpath: Dams – Barreiro – Lamas de Olo

Type of route: Pedestrian, circular

Approximate length: 13,300 Km

Approximate duration: 4:30 Hours

Point of departure/arrival: At North of Cimeira Dam at the meeting point of the road without tarmac with the municipal road 312-1.

Type of floor: Paths standing position, carters and sections of paved road.

Level of difficulty: Medium

Placement: Dams, scrub areas, rural villages (Barreiro and Lamas de Olo), fields, meadows, oak and pine forests. Barreiro (located between the elevations of 950 meters and 975 meters) has about 52 residents (2001 census). Lamas de Olo (located between the elevations of 1000 meters and 1050 meters) has about 154 residents (2001 censuses)

Main access: At the exit north of Vila real passing through Borbela, relva or towards Mondim – Vila Real Serra do Alvão, passing through lamas de Olo.

Infrastructures: picnic area and car parking (prox. Dam Cimeira); Cafés/grocery store and telephone (Barreiro, Varzigueto, Lamas de Olo); change of meal service in these villages, as well as in Ermelo and Bobal (advance booking advised)

Coordinates: 41°21'26.00"N | 7° 47'43.32"W

Hikes Agarez / Arnal / Agarez

Type of Route: Pedestrian, circular

Approximate length: 6,50 Km

Approximate duration: 3 hours

Pont of departure /Arrival: Municipal Road No. 1214 between Agarez / Arnal

Alternative Route: Connection between Galegos da Serra and road Agarez / Arnal

Type of floor: Paths standing position, carters and sections of paved road

Level of difficulty: High

Placement: Landscape of stark contrasts between green fields and rocky slopes. Extensive views over the town of Vila Real and surrounding regions. (Altitudes between 700m and 1000m).

Main access: At the exit north of Vila Real, passing through Borbela and shift Agarez, or exit south of Vila Real and passing through Lordelo and Agarez. (It Begins in the upper part of this village on the road to Galegos). Presents an alternative that allows to shorten the route, in Galegos da Serra can take the road back.

Infrastructures: Picnic area, before the shift Galegos da Serra, near the waterfall in the mill Galegos; Coffee and phone (Agarez and Galegos da Serra); By appointment, ability to stay at the Welcome Center (Reception Centre of Arnal).

Coordinates: 41°19'21.25"N | 7° 47'32.19"W

