

BOMPORTO

HOTELS

MOKE[®]

Sweet & Salty



The Lumiares ^(LIS)

The Vintage ^(LIS)

The Rebello ^(OPO)

FROM THE RIVERBANK TO THE ATLANTIC

This drive starts on the Douro and ends wherever the ocean takes you.

You'll pass through one of Gaia's oldest fishing villages, skirt the edge of a protected estuary, and hit a stretch of Atlantic coast that keeps going if you let it. There are beaches, a bar or two, and a tiny chapel that's been standing on a rock since the 17th century.

ESTIMATED TIME: 3 to 5 hours (depending on how long you linger)

DISTANCE: Approx. 25–30 km

STARTING POINT: The Rebello

Head west along the Gaia riverfront, keeping the Douro on your right. The D. Luís I Bridge and Porto's skyline will be behind you, so steal one last look in the mirror. The road hugs the water through Afurada, passing under the Ponte da Arrábida, and the city gradually gives way to something quieter.

→ STOP 1 – Afurada

Park when you reach the village. Everything here is best on foot.

Afurada has the feel of a place that hasn't been in any particular hurry to modernise. The fishermen here gained fame above all for their sardines and lampreys, and the village still carries that legacy in its narrow streets, tiled houses, and quayside restaurants.

Wander the streets, look out for the rainbow washing lines strung between houses, and if you're hungry already, this is one of the better places to eat fresh fish anywhere near Porto.

WORTH A LOOK: The Heritage Interpretive Centre (free entry) is packed with exhibits donated by locals, including traditional wooden fishing boats, hand-painted sailors' lunchboxes, compasses and radio sets from the 1950s, original photographs and sea shells. It's small, free, and genuinely good.



→  *STOP 2 – Reserva Natural Local do Estuário do Douro*

A short drive from Afurada brings you to the Douro Estuary Nature Reserve: 62 hectares of protected land at the mouth of the Douro, encompassing dune restinga, estuarine wetlands and coastal marshes, with two bird observation hides accessible by walkway.

Park and walk. From flocks of cormorants and herons to white egrets and kingfishers, the reserve is a reliable place to spot birds year-round. Over 120 species of wading birds have been recorded here. You don't need to be a birdwatcher to appreciate it, it's just a genuinely peaceful stretch of nature between the city and the sea.

DID YOU KNOW? The reserve was created in July 2018 and covers around 62 hectares. It serves as a resting, feeding and shelter point for many migratory bird species. Birds moving between Northern Europe and Africa stop here on their way south, which means the species you spot depend entirely on the time of year.

→  *STOP 3 – Praia de Lavadores*

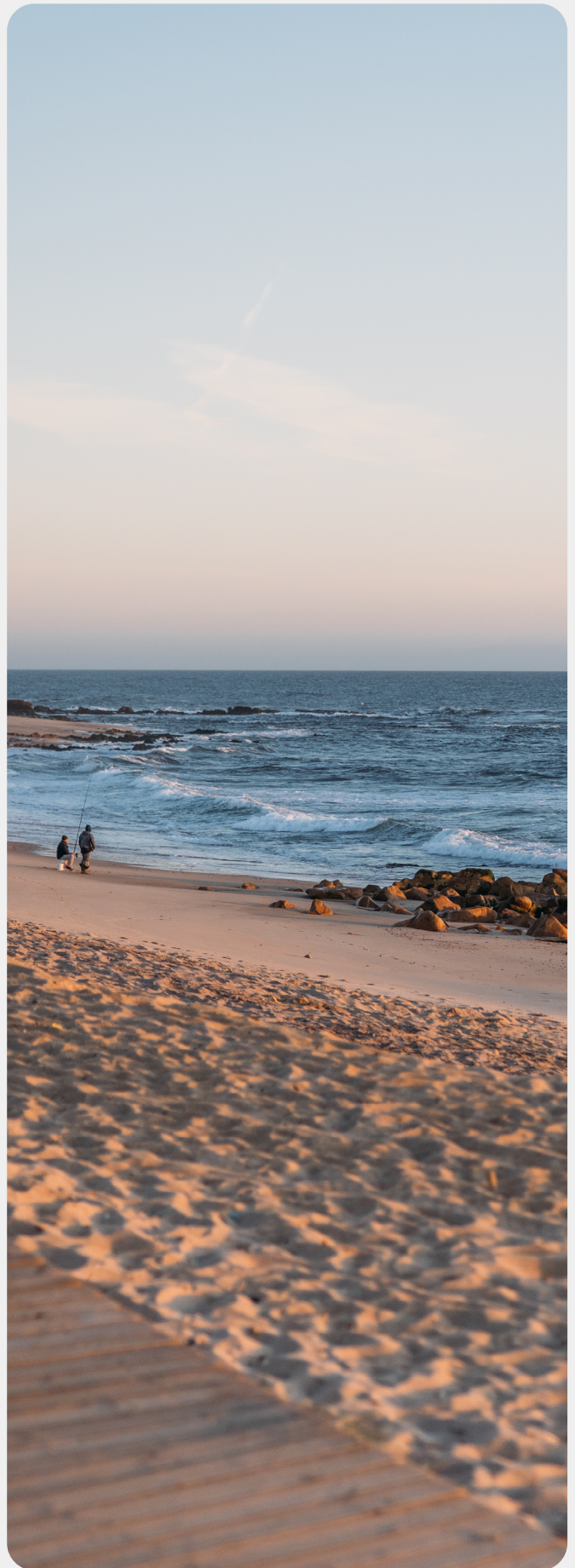
First sand, first stop! From the reserve, drive south towards Lavadores Beach. This is where the coast begins in earnest, wide, sandy, and backed by dunes. A good first stretch of legs before the rest of the beaches unfold.

Not far ahead, you'll find Praia das Pedras Amarelas, the beach with the yellow rocks. The name says it: yellow stones, clear water, and a bit more shelter from the wind than some of the beaches further south.

→  *STOP 4 – Praia de Salgueiros*

Pull up at Salgueiros and decide if you're having lunch here or pushing on.

If you're stopping: Brasão Salgueiros (Av. da Beira-Mar 2020) is a well-regarded spot right by the water, known for its francesinha, octopus rice and truffle croquettes, with outdoor seating that faces the Atlantic. High-quality food and a well-curated space, beautifully located just by the sea.



→ 📍 *STOP 5 – Pick your beach...
and your bar*

The coast keeps opening up here, so drive along, park where it calls to you, and settle in for a drink with a view.

At Praia da Madalena, **DAIQUIRI LOUNGE** Bar is a relaxed beachfront spot, good for sundowners or an afternoon drink right on the sand.

Slightly further along, in Praia de Valadares, **ZEPHYR PLAYA** has a bit more atmosphere if you want music and a fuller beach bar experience.

There's no wrong choice.

→ 📍 *STOP 6 – Senhora da Pedra,
Miramar*

End the coastal stretch here, at one of the most quietly extraordinary spots on the Gaia coast.

A small hexagonal chapel sits on top of a rock right on the Atlantic shoreline, with a view out to sea and along the white sandy beach stretching in front of it. The church dates to 1686, but the rock itself has been a place of worship for more than two millennia.

On the chapel's rear, a horseshoe-shaped indent appears in the rock, with explanations ranging from the Virgin Mary's donkey to King D. Sebastião's horse on a foggy morning.

The chapel has survived close to 350 years on the rough Atlantic front, often with huge crashing waves around it, with little or no sign of damage. It's free to enter, takes about 15 minutes, and is worth every one of them, especially at sunset.



→  *SPOT 7 – Ribeira do Espírito Santo Boardwalk (optional)*

If there's energy left and the light is still good, the boardwalk starts right here at Senhor da Pedra.

The Corredor Verde da Ribeira do Espírito Santo is a 2.5 km linear trail (5 km return) that connects the gardens of the Santa Maria Adelaide Chapel in Arcozelo to the Senhor da Pedra chapel at Miramar Beach. It follows the banks of a small creek through a green corridor. Along the way it's common to come across horses, sheep and other animals.

Old stone houses and a mill appear along the route.

The trail ends at Santa Maria Adelaide, a beloved local chapel in the village of Arcozelo, dedicated to a 19th-century mystic from the area who is one of the most venerated popular saints in northern Portugal. The surrounding park is a good place to sit quietly before heading back.

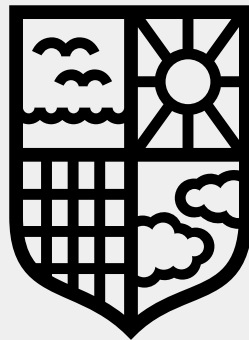
→ *RETURN*

Drive back north along the coast road the way you came, or loop inland through the villages of Gaia for a different perspective on the drive home.



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