

Study trip to Portugal focusing on Geoparks and GEOfood

12.-16.3.2023



Introduction

The study trip was organized in collaboration between the businesses and development organizations of Lauhanvuori - Hämeen kangas UNESCO Global Geopark and Kraatterijärvi Geopark areas. The organizers were the GEOfood - Local Food and Geological Heritage (Satafood) project and the GEOfood and Kraatterijärvi GEOpark (ProAgria South Ostrobothnia) project. During the trip, we visited four Geopark areas in central and northern Portugal: **Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, UNESCO Global Estrela Geopark, Terras de Cavaleiros UNESCO Global Geopark, and Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark.**

The trip focused on exploring the successful implementation of the GEOfood brand and the experiences offered by the Geoparks from a tourism perspective. There were 16 entrepreneurs and stakeholders participating in the trip to learn and gather ideas for developing their own Geopark areas. From the Lauhanvuori - Hämeen kangas UNESCO Global Geopark area, 13 participants were present, and from the Kraatterijärvi Geopark area, 3 participants were present.

Portugal is a prosperous country on a global scale, but still one of the poorest member states of the EU. In the early 2010s, the global economic crisis had a significant impact on Portugal's economy, and it was on the brink of collapse. Portugal received international assistance, and the government implemented strict austerity measures. The austerity program proved effective, and the economy began to recover. Tourism is an important industry in Portugal, and before the COVID-19 pandemic, the country attracted up to 17 million tourists annually.

In the Geopark areas, tourism and services are built around and tailored to the Geopark concept. Geoparks have been utilized in the country's marketing, and the Portuguese are well aware of what Geoparks and GEOfood represent. The GEOfood mindset has been internalized remarkably well, and it is evident in the Geoparks. Portugal takes great pride in its own land and food production, and it is showcased to visitors with great dedication.

Be proud of your region, your production, and do not hesitate to share it! This was undoubtedly the most significant takeaway the group gained from the trip.

Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark

Naturtejo UNESCO Geopark joined to the European network and global Geoparks which operate under UNESCO in 2006. The area covers 5,067 km² and includes 7 municipalities. Pictures in the Geopark Naturtejo Facebook-page [here](#) (post from 14.3.2023).

Monsanto

Monsanto, known as the most Portuguese village in Portugal, is located in the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, in the district of Castelo Branco. The village sits on the slopes of an almost 800-meter-high mountain, and its granite rock is known as the "sacred mountain" (in the picture below). The most distinctive feature of Monsanto is that the old houses are built among enormous rounded boulders, using them as walls, while the remaining houses are made of natural stone. The village has been inhabited since the Stone Age, and the ruins of a medieval fortress can be found on the hilltop guarding the village. The village is protected by building regulations. Monsanto is a significant part of Naturtejo Geopark, showcasing its culture. Tourism and the large foreign community residing in the village are vital as there aren't a lot of permanent residents.



At the local restaurant, **Petiscos & Granitos**, a GEOfood menu was served. The key aspect of the GEOfood menu is responsibly sourced local ingredients.



Geocakes - Atelier & Shop

Geocakes is a GEOfood partner and a pastry shop where all the ingredients for their products (cakes, jams) come exclusively from nearby areas, with a connection to the local geology. The pastry shop is strategically important as a partner for the Geopark, as it is located at the "entrance hall" of the Geopark. The company's operations started in a home kitchen following the GEOfood theme, and sustainability principles are central to their activities. Ecology, organic production, and waste minimization are guiding values. The products are delicious, unique, and made with respect for traditions. Direct sales are the most profitable distribution channel for the pastry shop, but the entrepreneurs have also developed an online store and expanded their network of resellers.



Quinta Vale de alfaia

Quinta Vale de alfaia is an organic farm, cheese factory, and local food store located in the mountains. It is a GEOfood destination and also holds a partnership status with the Geopark. The organic farm is one of the oldest in the area, focusing on sheep's milk as the main production direction. The farm has around 400 sheep, and they cultivate 150 hectares of beans, rye, and some corn and olives for olive oil production. The cheese factory produces cheeses almost every day, and the organic aging process takes about 60 days. The market channels for cheese include direct sales, local food markets, and an online store. During the visit, we got to taste traditional local delicacies that respect the farm and the region's heritage.



UNESCO Global Estrela Geopark

Located in Central Portugal, **Estrela Geopark** has a surface area of 2,216 km² divided among nine municipalities, with a population of approximately 170,000 inhabitants. The Geopark's location is advantageous for tourism, as it is less than 50 km from the Spanish border and has excellent connections to major Portuguese cities. The Geopark received the UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2020. It is a sparsely populated area with an aging population, low education levels, and a traditional economic structure characterized by significant rural migration. The main employment sectors include tourism, education, public administration, textile industry, agriculture, and livestock farming.

The visitor center showcases digital information and background about the Geopark, nature, activities, and the town of Manteigas. The goal of the Geopark is to have GEOfood sales points in all nine municipalities.



In'fusão

In'fusão restaurant offered a traditional Portuguese menu, including sausages, cheeses, olives, bread, jams, honey, cabbage soup, and local wine. The restaurant has GEOfood status.



Burel Factory & Ecola Portugal

Manteigas is known for its handicraft industry. Millennia ago, due to unfavorable agricultural conditions, shepherds played a significant role to the life in the mountains. They started using wool to protect themselves from harsh mountain conditions, and thus, weaving traditions have been passed down through generations.

Burel Factory is a Portuguese brand born in Serra da Estrela that preserves industrial heritage and wool industry expertise. **Ecola Handicraft Center**, on the other hand, is the oldest wool production unit in Portugal. Burel is a 100% wool fabric of medieval origin made from a specific breed of sheep's wool, with excellent properties for clothing and interior textiles. Burel has always been associated with Serra da Estrela, the mountains, shepherds, and their paths. The authenticity of Burel is based on a series of specific processes in the manufacturing process.

Both weaving workshops produces woolen fabric and finished products. They also have retail stores for the finished products. The products are primarily sold in Portugal, although Ecola has export collaborations with Germany and Japan.



Vim do Monte - Manuel Proença

The mountain village of Videmonte has a strong cultural identity influenced by rye culture. **Vim do Monte** is a small bakery and a GEOfood partner, owned by Manuel Proença, specializing in sourdough rye bread baked according to his mother's tradition. The company operates in a small stone building of approximately 12 m², with a stone oven for 21 loaves on one side and a table for baking on the other. Proença sources the raw material from Portuguese rye producers, although some imported rye is used as well. The marketing channels for the small producer are direct sales and rural markets. Once a week, Proença sells bread to offices and at the market in the city of Guarda. The price for the bread is €2.50.



Terras de Cavaleiros UNESCO Global Geopark

Terras de Cavaleiros UNESCO Global Geopark, covering an area of 700 km², is located in Northeast Portugal. The Geopark obtained the UNESCO Global Geopark status in 2015. Macedo de Cavaleiros is a tourist city in the Trás-os-Montes region, which is part of the influence area of Porto. Geopark Terras de Cavaleiros encompasses the entire municipality. Pictures in the Geopark Naturtejo Facebook-page [here](#) and [here](#) (posts from 15.3.2023).

Casa das Eiras

Casa das Eiras is a local food store with GEOfood status in Macedo de Cavaleiros. The business was established for tourists, and the meat products are raised and processed on their own farm. The cheeses are also made on the same farm. In addition to other GEOfood products like olive oil, the store also sells products without GEOfood status. The GEOfood status is free for entrepreneurs in the Geopark. It is noteworthy that the cityscape has numerous Geopark signs and information boards.



Restaurant D. Antonia

Restaurant D. Antonia offers a typical GEOfood menu for the region (see appendix), including cheeses, sausages, olives, veal, "mashed" bread, mushrooms, and for dessert, rice pudding (according to Finnish definition).



Frutaria 93

Frutaria 93 is a vegetable and fruit store that has been operating for a few years, owned by a young couple. Frutaria 93 is an important Geopark partner, and the entrepreneurs have extensive networks with producers and farmers. The store has its own shelf for GEOfood products. Additionally, customers can order vegetable and fruit boxes of different sizes, which can be delivered directly to their doorstep. The price within the city area includes transportation. The available box sizes are €10, €15, and €20. Frutaria 93 also serves restaurants.



CABAZES
GEO FOOD
100%

Lista dos produtos
(escolha o que NÃO quer receber)

A GEOfood é uma marca internacional para a alimentação com referência tradicional em Geoparques Mundiais do UNESCO. Pretende promover a relação entre a geodiversidade dos Geoparques Mundiais da UNESCO e as comunidades locais, através do incentivo a uma alimentação local, de qualidade e sustentável.

Legumes/Leguminosas

- Abóbora:
- Alface:
- Batata:
- Batata doce:
- Cebola:
- Brócolos:
- Couve Coração:
- Couve-Flores:
- Couve-Lombarda:
- Fava:
- Cuscate:
- Chuchu:
- Feijão Verde:
- Feijão Branco:
- Feijão Branco seco:
- Feijão Preto seco:
- Feijão Catão seco:
- Couve seca:

Fruta / Frutos secos

- Clementina:
- Cereja:
- Desecho:
- Kiwi:
- Laranja:
- Limão:
- Meio-Carvalho:
- Manga:
- Figo:
- Maçã:
- Nêspera:
- Pêssego:
- Nectarina:
- Castanha:
- Amêndoa:
- Figo:
- Marmelo:

VALOR DOS CABAZES:

10€ Cabaz pequeno Semanas

15€ Cabaz médio 15 Dias

20€ Cabaz grande Mês

Recolha na loja Entrega ao domicílio

Dados para entrega:

Nome: _____

Morada: _____

Código: _____

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Olimontes - Olive Oil Press

A private olive oil mill **Olimontes** operates near the city of Macedo de Cavaleiros. The olive oil produced with GEOfood status follows quality standards, and the principles of sustainable development are transparent in both the production process and olive cultivation. Certifications and criteria required for organic production, for example, are monitored at the farm level. Around 1,000 small producers and a few larger producers cultivate olives for the olive oil press. The average quantity delivered for processing by small producers is around 2,000 kg, resulting in approximately 200 liters of olive oil. By-products from the process, such as excess mass and seeds, are utilized as pellets for burning. Olive harvesting takes place in autumn, and the processing continues from autumn to spring. Quality work is the focus during spring and summer. Different olive varieties exist, and the sweetness level varies largely depending on the cultivation conditions.



Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark

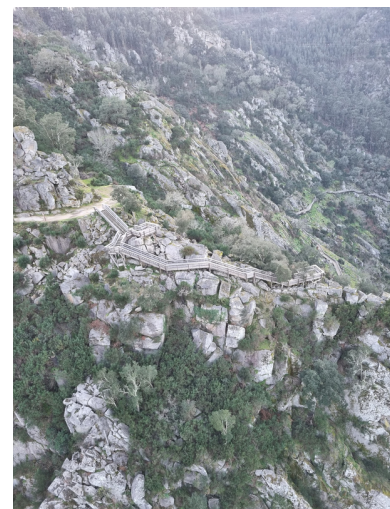
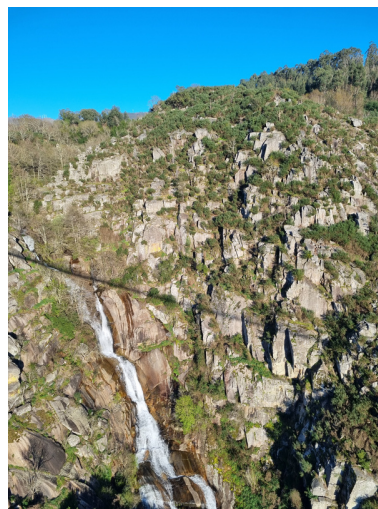
Arouca Geopark, recognized by UNESCO in 2015, boasts a heritage of 41 geologically interesting sites. Arouca is often referred to as an open-air geological museum, covering an area of 328 km². The Geopark is surrounded by the Freita, Montemuro, and Arada mountains, and it is intersected by several rivers, providing excellent conditions for various activities. It is the smallest Geopark in Portugal.

As a culinary curiosity, the local beef breed Carne Arouquesa, raised in Northern Portugal, can be mentioned. This high-quality meat is renowned for its exceptional flavor and texture.



Arouca 516

On the **Arouca 516** bridge, there are the Geopark's two most popular attractions: the suspension bridge and the wooden stairs and walkways below it (Paiva Walkways). Additionally, the impressive 160-meter waterfall cascading near the bridge is a stunning sight. True to its name, Arouca 516 is 516 meters long and was the world's longest suspension bridge until 2022 when similar bridges were constructed in the Czech Republic (721 m) and Andorra (600 m). However, Arouca 516 remains the highest bridge, with the lowest point at 175 m. The bridge was constructed between 2018 and 2020 by the municipality of Arouca, costing around 2 million euros. The opening ceremony took place in May 2021. The bridge is entirely Portuguese-made, from design and architecture to construction materials, all sourced locally. Mountaineers helped assemble the bridge. The bridge's capacity is designed for 1,800 people, though approximately 70 people at a time is the general rule. The price for crossing the bridge is €12 per person for tourists, and it needs to be booked in advance online. Tourism has already generated €10 million in revenue.



A Fábrica dos Doces

A Fábrica dos Doces is a bakery and pastry shop that produces traditional Portuguese sweets and pastries. During the visit, pastries called "nun's pipa" were baked, with the recipe originating from a famous local monastery. While the business is not explicitly a GEOfood enterprise, it uses ingredients from GEOfood producers, especially fruits.



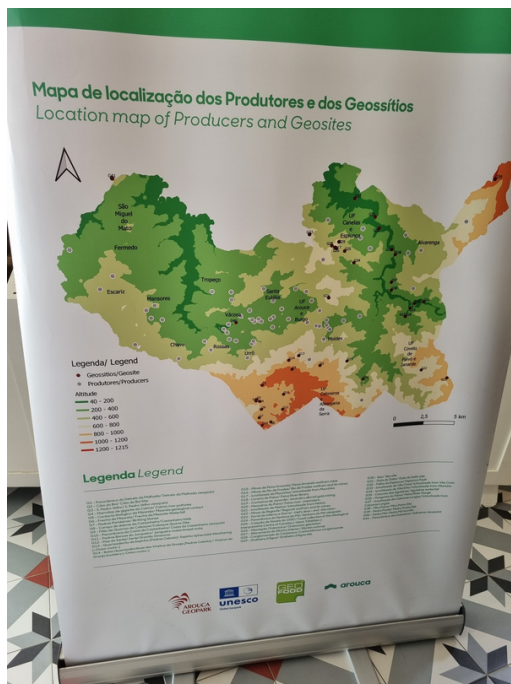
Arouca

Mayor Margarida Belém of Arouca held a brief reception at the town hall. The mayor emphasized that the Geopark and tourism are strategically important regional assets. She highlighted the significance of collaboration and shared determination in the development of the Geopark. The Geopark has the political and economic support of the city. The Geopark is considered "a collective matter for the entire city" and is well-known among the local population. Arouca is a large municipality, covering 227 km², with approximately 22,000 inhabitants. Arouca is part of the influence area of Porto and has gained recognition as an important year-round tourist destination. The Geopark and the city have produced abundant printed and digital marketing materials. The challenge for the city, as well as the Geopark, in terms of vitality, lies in attracting and retaining population and avoiding mass tourism.



Arouca Agrícola

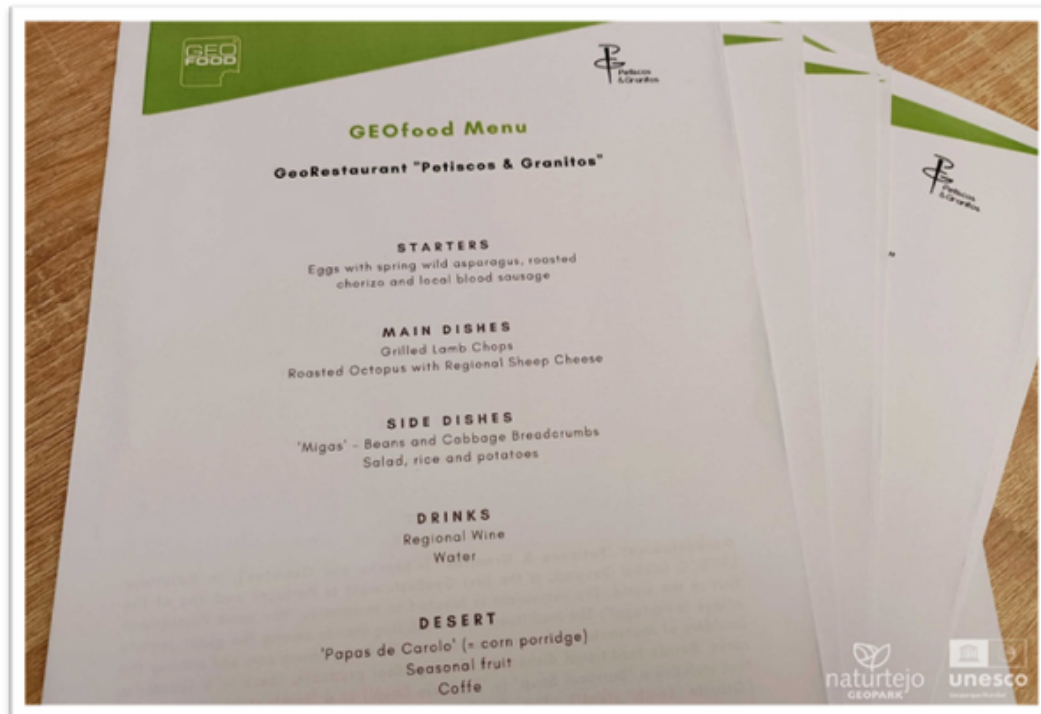
Arouca Agrícola is not only a local food store but also a Geopark center. Arouca Agrícola comprises a network of about 60 local food producers in the Arouca Geopark area. The network produces vegetables, fruits, and cereal products. The store displays a map featuring all the producers from the Arouca Geopark area. The merchants are guided by three key principles: providing full support to local farmers, including maintaining a pickup service, engaging in distribution sales, particularly to schools, and promoting communication about GEOfood and the Geopark.



APPENDIX

GEOfood-menus

Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark



GeoRestaurant "Petiscos & Granitos" (= 'Snacks and Granites'), in Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, is the first GeoRestaurant in Portugal and one of the first in the world. The restaurant is located in Monsanto, "the most Portuguese village in Portugal". The traditional stone building stands among the giant granite boulders of Monsanto, with a natural cave, where costumers can eat among the rocks. Beside traditional dishes, privileging local products, there is a GeoMenu that includes a "Barrocal Soup" (= 'Boulders Soup') or a "Lamb steak 'à Granitos" ('Granite Lamb steak'). The GeoRestaurant proposes a whole geotourism experience, with an amazing balcony that is a viewpoint over the main geomorphologic areas of Naturtejo Geopark.

APPENDIX

GEOfood-menus

Terras de Cavaleiros UNESCO Global Geopark



Entradas
Alheira, azedo frito na frigideira, azeitonas temperadas, tábua regional (queijos, presunto e salpicão)

Appetizers:
Alheira(typical smoked sausage made with bread and meat) , Fried “Azedo” (Smoked sausage) in the pan, seasoned olives, regional “board” (cheese, smoked ham and “salpicão” (smoked sausage)

Pratos
Naco de vitela na brasa com migas transmontanas e repolgas salteadas

Main Dish
Piece of veal roasted on coal with “Transmontano Migas” (mashed bread) and sautéed mushrooms.

Sobremesas
Creme de arroz com maça caramelizada

Desserts
Rice cream with caramelized apple

Bebidas
Água, vinho tinto Quinta do Lombo e sumos

Drinks
Water, red wine “Quinta do Lombo” and juices

Café
Coffee





APPENDIX

GEOfood-menus

Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark



Vale de Alfaia is a family-run agricultural company located in Naturtejo Geopark, in the bottom of Gardunha Mountain with a privileged view over the granite mountain. The agriculture practices used to produce cheese, olive oil and local varieties of beans, boost sustainability, preserving the soil, the environment and biodiversity and also guarantee animal welfare.

The farm, with 150 hectares, is located in 310 million years granites, very close to the transition with schist terrains. Gardunha has several geosites and it is the highest point of the Geopark, reaching 1227 m high with clear influence in the climate around.

Vale de Alfaia has a traditional cheese workshop where fresh and cured sheep's cheese is produced with wise and passionate hands. The animals are raised freely by the farm and milked daily at dawn.

The quality of the environment and the soil is one of the main concerns of this family that sows local varieties of cowpeas ('cara verde', 'cara preta' and 'bago de arroz'), which work as green manures due to their ability to fix nitrogen in the soil, avoiding the use of nitrogen fertilizers. These local varieties are also adapted to the orogenic and climatic conditions and grow in dryland farming environments that do not need to use extra water. These cowpeas are important not only for their high nutritional value in food but also because as dry beans, they are easily stored for long time and distributed without the need for refrigeration. The farm also produces organic olive oil from centenary olive groves.

Vale de Alfaia was one the first companies in the region, converting their farm into organic production, in early 2000's. They sell their products in several shops in the region and in Lisbon, but they prioritize local markets and fairs, where they have direct contact with the consumer, and where they can explain why there is no fresh cheese in summer, why they do not water their beans, or the best recipes to do with their olive oil.