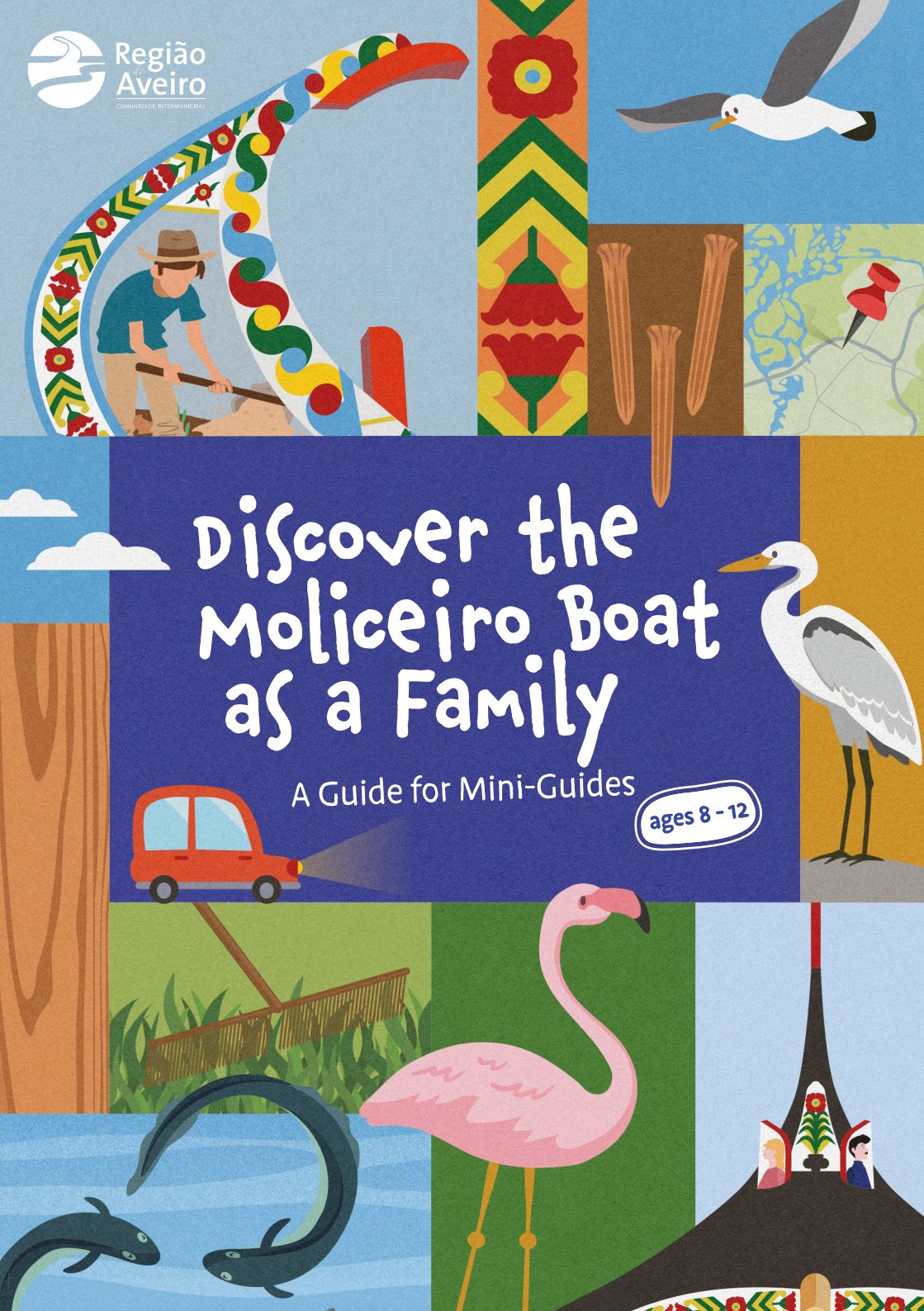




Região
de Aveiro
COMUNIDADE INTERMUNICIPAL



Discover the Moliceiro Boat as a Family

A Guide for Mini-Guides

ages 8 - 12

A MESSAGE FOR GROWN-UPS:

This guide was designed to place children at the heart of the discovery experience in the Aveiro Region, through the unique heritage of the Moliceiro boat.

Throughout its pages, the child takes on the role of "Mini Guide" for their family — leading visits, exploring fun facts, and taking part in activities that encourage learning and deeper connection with the region.

Adults are encouraged to support active participation, letting the child ask questions, take notes, and decide what to explore next. The goal is simple: to learn together, strengthen bonds, and create meaningful family memories.

This guide was specially created for children aged 8 to 12, with reading level and content complexity adapted accordingly. Younger children can also enjoy it fully, with the support and guidance of an adult during the reading and activities.

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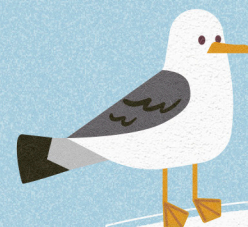
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This Guide belongs to:

Hello Mini Guide!

If you're reading this, it means you've been given a very special mission: to be your family's Mini Tourist Guide on an adventure through the Aveiro Region to discover the amazing Moliceiro Boat!

Inside this guide, you'll find lots of secrets just waiting to be uncovered. But watch out... you're the one leading the way!

The Moliceiro Boat is like a magical thread that connects all the places you're about to explore. Through it, we'll dive into old stories, ancient skills, and the watery paths of the Ria. It's a living treasure, and we'll uncover its wonders together — step by step — in different spots across the Aveiro Region.

Go at your own pace and have fun!

GPS, take me to the Aveiro Region!

Imagine a place where land and water play together, like best friends having fun. That's what the Aveiro Region is like! Here, canals run through towns and fields, the Ria de Aveiro is full of life, and the Moliceiro Boat is a long, colorful boat that has glided through these waters for a very long time.

The Aveiro Region has 11 municipalities: Aveiro, Águeda, Albergaria-a-Velha, Anadia, Estarreja, Ílhavo, Murtosa, Oliveira do Bairro, Ovar, Sever do Vouga, and Vagos.

But there are six special places with a deep connection to the Moliceiro Boat: **Murtosa, Ílhavo, Vagos, Estarreja, Aveiro, and Ovar**.

In these towns, you can visit old piers, shipyards where the moliceiros are built, museums full of amazing stories, and trails where nature is all around you.

This is where tradition is still alive.

Master boatbuilders still shape moliceiros by hand. The painted panels tell old-time tales. And the sails still dance in the wind.

- Piers and shipyards – where moliceiros are born
- Museums and centers – full of Ria secrets
- Trails and nature reserves – with cool plants and animals
- Beaches and villages – where the sea, land, and Ria all come together

Are you ready to begin?

Tip:

Mark the places you visit on the map legend! You don't have to follow the order – explore your own way!



Map of the Aveiro Region



Por onde vamos andar:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Monte Branco Shipyard-Museum
MURTOSA | 7. Ria Aberta Boat Tour
MURTOSA | 13. Béstida Pier
MURTOSA |
| 2. Pardilhó Shipyards
ESTARREJA | 8. BioRia Nature Trails
ESTARREJA | 14. Regatta of "Mercado Tradicional"
MURTOSA |
| 3. Monte Branco Beach
MURTOSA | 9. São Jacinto Dunes Reserve
AVEIRO | 15. "Grande Regata dos Moliceiros"
MURTOSA |
| 4. Rossio Pier
AVEIRO | 10. Folssas Novas Pier
VAGOS | 16. "Festa do Emigrante" Regatta
MURTOSA |
| 5. Eel Stew – to try in:
ESTARREJA, MURTOSA, ÍLHAVO OU AVEIRO | 11. Bico Pier
MURTOSA | 17. "São Paio da Torreira" Regatta
MURTOSA |
| 6. Ílhavo Maritime Museum
ÍLHAVO | 12. Quintas do Norte Stilt Pier
MURTOSA | |
- Highway — National Road

What was the Moliceiro Boat used for?

A long time ago, farmers in the Aveiro Region used something called *molicho* (sea plants from the Ria) to help their crops grow. To collect the *molicho*, they used wooden tools like a giant rake called an “**ancinho**”, which they dragged along the bottom of the Ria.

The *moliceiros* (the people who did this job) pulled the *molicho* into the boat using the big rake. It was hard work and took lots of strength and patience!

But there was a big problem... The old boats were too tall, and the Ria was too shallow, it made the job really tricky.

So, the master boatbuilders of the Aveiro Region, that were true experts at building boats, had a clever idea: to create a **brand-new boat designed especially for this job!**

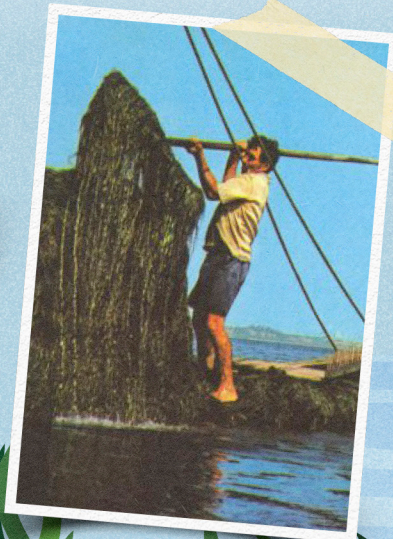
Take Note:

What is “*molicho*”?

It's a bunch of underwater plants, including seaweed, that grow at the bottom of lagoons and coastal waterways like the Ria.



ANCINHO



How is a Moliceiro Boat born?

The Moliceiro Boat was specially created to sail in the Ria de Aveiro and collect *molicho*.

Master boatbuilders built the boats by hand, using traditional tools.

They would cut many wooden planks to the right size and build the boat like a giant puzzle, fitting each piece together and holding it all in place with wooden pegs called “**cavilhas**”.

Today, people don't collect *molicho* anymore but there are still a few masters who build *moliceiros* the old-fashioned way, in their shipyards.

Let's find out how?

DID YOU KNOW...



The Moliceiro Boat is about 15 meters long.

It has a flat bottom so it can glide smoothly over the shallow waters of the Ria de Aveiro.

And it has low sides to make it easier to scoop up the *molicho*!



Let's visit the places where moliceiros are made:

1 Monte Branco Shipyard-Museum

MURTOSA

At the Museum, you can see old tools and mini models of moliceiros. Right next door, in the shipyard, you'll find **Master José Rito** working with traditional tools, shaping wood just like people did many years ago. Every boat takes time, care, and skill to build — it's like a piece of history being made!

Don't forget to look for **Master José Oliveira**, who's often at the shipyard or near the Ria. He's the one who brings color to the boats! This master painter decorates the moliceiros with funny phrases and scenes from everyday life.

2 Pardilhó Shipyards

ESTARREJA

The shipyards in the village of Pardilhó are famous for their wise and skilled hands — the master boatbuilders here still create Moliceiro Boats using just wood, simple tools, and lots of know-how.

Everything is done the old way: they use a special stick called a "**pau-de-pontos**" (measuring stick) to measure each part of the boat. Then they cut, shape, and join the pieces together with "**cavilhas**" (wooden pegs). This amazing knowledge has been passed down through generations!

Cavilhas:
Wooden pegs are like wooden nails, but hand-carved!

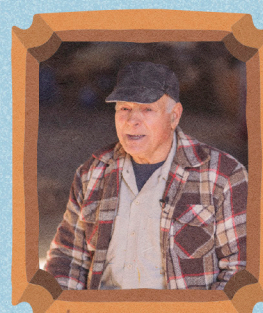
Pau-de pontos:
It's a long stick with all the boat's measurements marked on it.

Who Builds the boats? Meet the "mestres"!

The master boatbuilders, "mestres", know wood better than anyone! Some of them work in their own shipyards, while others build boats in places you can actually visit, like the Monte Branco Shipyard-Museum.

Today, there are only five master boatbuilders still working and just one "mestre pintor" (master painter)! Together, they keep the art of the Moliceiro Boats alive, passing down a tradition that sails through time!

The "mestres" I met on my journey:



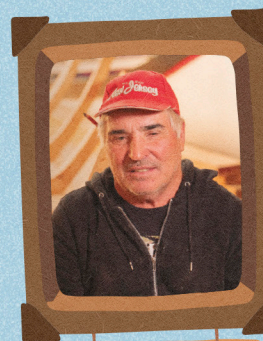
Mestre
António Esteves



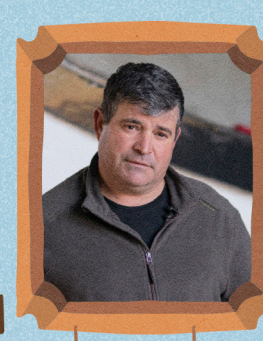
Mestre
Felisberto Amador



Mestre
Arménio Almeida



Mestre
José Rito



Mestre
Marco Silva



Mestre Pintor
José Oliveira

Vamos ver o barco Moliceiro de perto:

3 Monte Branco Beach TORREIRA - MURTOSA

This beach is where one of the most exciting moments happens: the “**bota-abaixo**”. That’s when a brand-new Moliceiro Boat touches the waters of the Ria for the very first time!

Before the launch, it’s tradition to “ask permission” from the Ria, in a moment full of meaning and respect.

If you’d like to see a bota-abaixo, visit the Murtosa Town Hall website to check the dates.



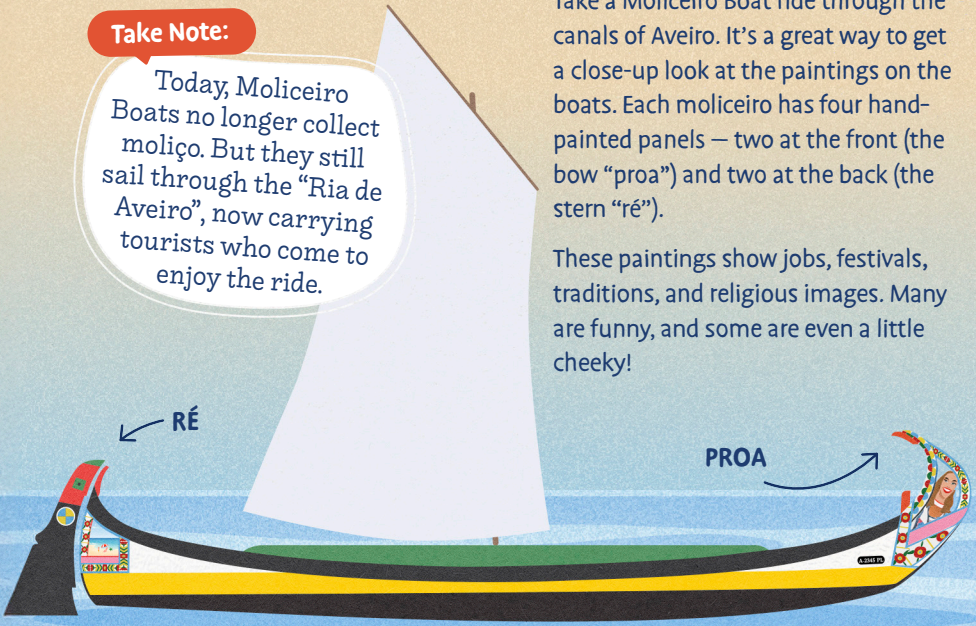
4 Moliceiro Boat Ride ROSSIO PIER - AVEIRO

Take a Moliceiro Boat ride through the canals of Aveiro. It’s a great way to get a close-up look at the paintings on the boats. Each moliceiro has four hand-painted panels — two at the front (the bow “proa”) and two at the back (the stern “ré”).

These paintings show jobs, festivals, traditions, and religious images. Many are funny, and some are even a little cheeky!

Take Note:

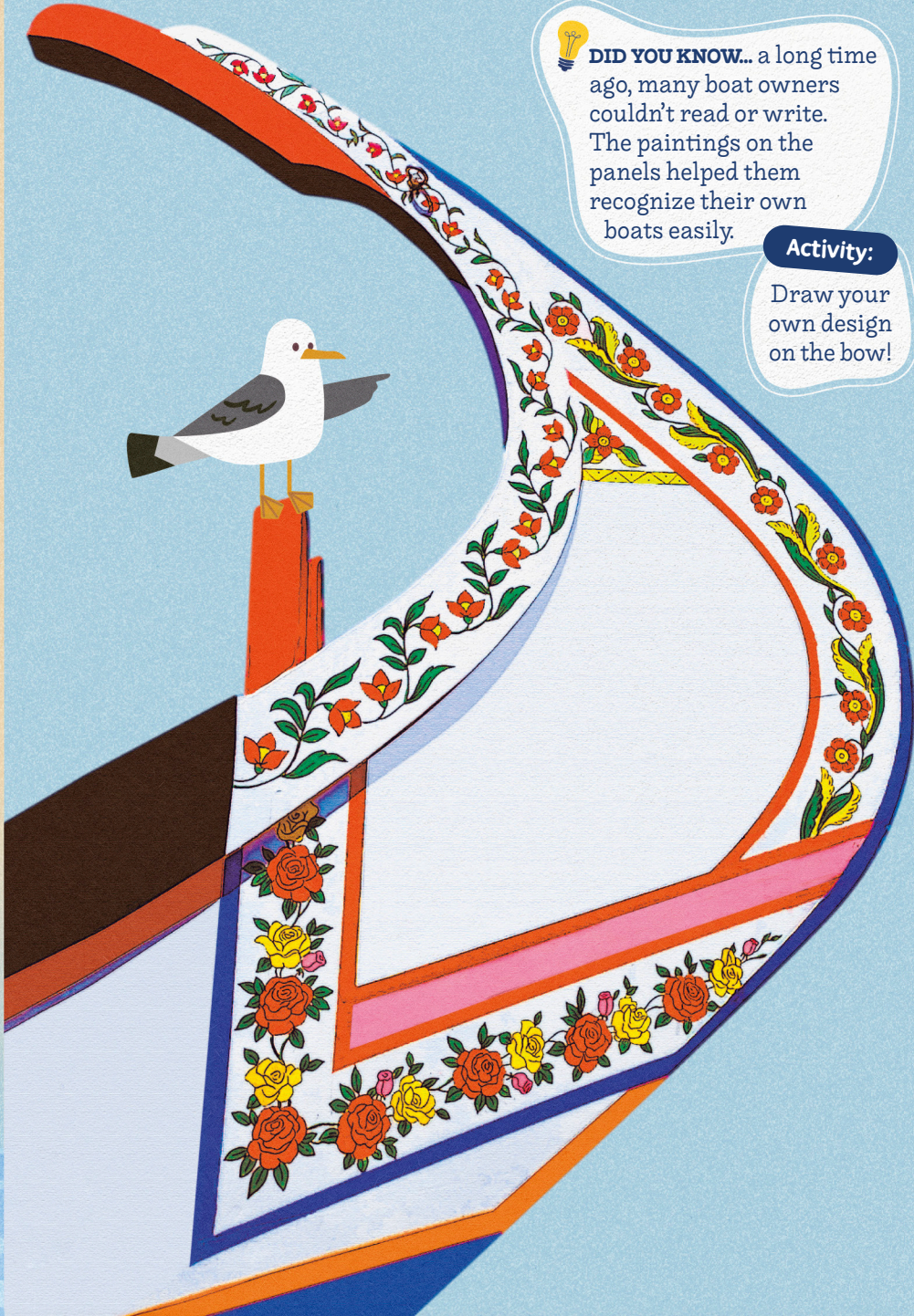
Today, Moliceiro Boats no longer collect moliço. But they still sail through the “Ria de Aveiro”, now carrying tourists who come to enjoy the ride.



DID YOU KNOW... a long time ago, many boat owners couldn’t read or write. The paintings on the panels helped them recognize their own boats easily.

Activity:

Draw your own design on the bow!



The Master's signature:

On the rudder of a Moliceiro Boat, there's a small detail that not everyone notices: **the insignia!**

It's a personal mark left by the master boatbuilder who built the boat. Like a signature, it stays on the boat forever.

Each master has their own insignia. It's usually a simple drawing made with geometric shapes and primary colors like red, blue, or yellow.

Next time you see a Moliceiro Boat, take a look at the rudder. Can you spot the insignia?

INSIGNIA



My insignia:

Activity:

What would your insignia look like?

Here's what to do:

1. Draw some simple geometric shapes like circles, triangles, and squares.
2. You can use a ruler and compass to help with your design.
3. Use bold, bright colors!

Remember:

An insignia is like a signature. It doesn't have to be complicated, it just has to be yours!



Activity:

Read the clues carefully. Each one is about a Moliceiro master boatbuilder.

Then, look at the insignias and match each one to the correct letter.

Mestre António Esteves

People call me "Pardaleiro", and I started working at a shipyard in Pardilhó when I was very young.

My insignia is a star with green and red sides.

Mestre Felisberto Amador

I started working in boatbuilding when I was just 14 years old, even though no one in my family did that kind of work.

My insignia has curved red and blue shapes. It kind of looks like a tennis ball!

Mestre Arménio Almeida

People know me as "Mestre Traça". It was my uncle who taught me everything I know. I started very young. I was only 11 years old!

My insignia looks like a flower, with blue, green, yellow, and red petals.

Mestre José Rito

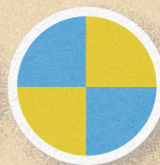
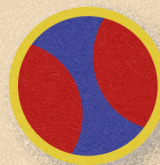
I got my passion for boats from my father, and ever since I was little, I've been surrounded by them. I remember always being by the Ria!

My insignia has curved shapes in green and yellow, with red in the center.

Mestre Marco Silva

I'm the youngest of the masters, and I work in Torreira. Since I was little, I remember always having my feet in the water!

My insignia is simple: it's blue and yellow, divided into four equal parts.



What was life like on board?

The people who collected moliço — “moliceiros” — spent many days in a row on the boat, without going back home. They slept at the bow, wrapped in blankets, and woke up very early to work, sometimes even before the sunrise.

They spent long hours pulling moliço from the water with the “ancinho”. And when they were hungry, they didn’t leave the boat either! They cooked and ate on the boat. It was their home, kitchen, and shelter all in one.

Today, no one lives on a Moliceiro Boat anymore. But remembering what life was like helps us understand just how important these boats were for the people of Ria de Aveiro.



DID YOU KNOW...
the small space where the moliceiros used to sleep is called the “bow castle” (castelo da proa).

Take Note:

The Moliceiro Boat was not only a place of work or a way to earn a living. It was also a second home.



5

Eel Stew

MURTOSA, ÍLHAVO, AVEIRO OU ESTARREJA

The eel was an easy fish to catch in the Ria de Aveiro. That’s why fishermen often cooked eel stew right on board the moliceiro.

This dish was born out of the hard life on the boat, and it later became one of the most traditional meals of the region.

Today, you can taste it in many restaurants along the Ria, especially in **Murtosa, Ílhavo, and Aveiro.**



Quiz:

- What did the moliceiros use to collect the moliço?
 - ☐ a. fishing net
 - ☐ b. wooden rake
 - ☐ c. iron shovel
- Where did the moliceiros sleep on the boat?
 - ☐ a. on a bed
 - ☐ b. in the bow
 - ☐ c. in a wooden bunk
- Which fish is typical of the Ria de Aveiro?
 - ☐ a. eel
 - ☐ b. codfish
 - ☐ c. tuna

6

Ílhavo Maritime Museum

ÍLHAVO

In this museum, you’ll find the “**Ria Room**”, where you can discover how the Ria de Aveiro was, for many years, an important part of family life.

In this room, you’ll learn about the knowledge and traditions connected to the Ria. Look at the boats and old tools, and imagine what life was like back then.

But there’s even more to explore!

The museum has an aquarium full of live codfish, a boat you can visit inside, secrets of the big fishing voyages, and sea stories hidden in every corner.



Roll up your pants, let's step into the Ria!

The Ria de Aveiro is not a river nor a sea — it's a **lagoon**. That means it's a place where saltwater from the sea mixes with freshwater from the rivers, creating an environment full of life. On its banks grow plants like reeds, bulrushes, and samphire. At the bottom, there are seaweeds and water plants that form the moliço. The lagoon is also home to many birds such as seagulls, herons, and flamingos, and to animals like otters, bats, fish, and amphibians.

Explore the places suggested and watch nature up close!

7 Boat Ride in the Open Ria

BICO PIER - MURTOSA

Here, the ride is not through the city canals but through the quiet and natural areas of the Ria de Aveiro. On board a Moliceiro Boat, you'll sail along canals surrounded by small islands covered in plants.

During this ride, you can really feel the special connection between the boat and nature.



8 BioRia – Ribeiras de Pardilhó

ESTARREJA

This walking trail goes through the village of Pardilhó, where you can find some shipyards. Here, freshwater flows into the land through small channels called “esteiros”.

Along the way, you can spot salt marshes, which are wetland areas home to many birds, like herons and flamingos.

+ INFO:

Distance: About 7,7 km - straight path

Duration: 2h00

Difficulty: Easy

Start: Ribeira do Mourão - Avanca

End: Ribeira das Teixugueiras - Pardilhó



9 São Jacinto Dunes Nature Reserve — Green Discovery Trail

AVEIRO

In this landscape between the sea and the Ria, you'll find dunes, salt marshes, forests, and lagoons where nature is protected and many birds and small animals make their home.

The Interpretation Center of the São Jacinto Dunes Nature Reserve organizes guided walks along the Green Discovery Trail, where you can learn about the plants and animals that live here

At the Center, you can also see a special exhibition of miniature Moliceiro Boats.

+ INFO:

Distance: 3,3 km - circular path

Duration: 1h30 / 2h00

Difficulty: Easy

Start: Interpretation Centre



Atividade:

As you walk through these 3 places, try to spot these birds.

Put a ✓ next to the ones you see!



Flamingo



Sanderling



Little Egret



Western Marsh Harrier



White Stork



Mallard



Lesser Black-backed Gull



Pernilongo

Land ahead! Let's head to the pier!

The pier was the meeting place for moliceiro boatmen and farmers.

When farmers needed moliço for their fields, they went to the pier and made a deal with the moliceiro, just like placing an order! They would agree on the amount, and then pay with money or sometimes with vegetables from their gardens.

This way, the moliceiro already knew how much moliço to collect from the Ria. When the boat was full, he would return to the pier to unload it. Then, the moliço was taken from the pier to the fields in carts pulled by oxen, tractors didn't exist back then!



DID YOU KNOW...
farmers used to order the number of moliço boats they needed!

And each boat could carry up to 5 tonnes of moliço. That's as heavy as 5 chubby cows!

10 Folssas Novas Pier

VAGOS

This was one of the busiest piers used by moliceiro boatmen in the Ria de Aveiro. Today, it's the starting point of a wooden walkway with views over the River Boco, where you can spot birds and plants.

It's also where the Moliceiro Festival takes place. Don't miss it!



Tip:

VISIT: Festival do Moliceiro

WHEN?

Every July

WHERE?

Folssas Novas Pier

The festival fills the Ria de Aveiro with joy, music and tradition. This celebration has taken place every year since 1984, keeping the history of moliço and the Moliceiro Boats alive.

It all begins with a colourful parade of Moliceiro Boats sailing along the **Boco River** to the pier. Then, a traditional auction of moliço and junco (reeds) is recreated, just like it used to happen many years ago, here, in the Folssas Novas Pier!

11 Bico Pier

MURTOSA

Cais do Bico was one of the busiest spots in the Ria, where moliço, salt and even building materials were unloaded. Here, you'll find the Moliceiro Monument — don't forget to take a photo!

13 Béstida Pier

MURTOSA

Before the Varela Bridge was built, this was also the place where people crossed by boat to reach Torreira.

12 Quintas do Norte Stilt Pier

MURTOSA

This is one of the few piers in the region still built on wooden legs! They're called stilts, and they help the pier stand above the water.



Let the celebrations begin!

After discovering all the secrets of the Ria, from its water paths to its boats, stories, birds and plants, it's time to celebrate everything you've learned with a big party: a regatta!

Every year, the Moliceiro boats sail once more across the Ria de Aveiro, their colourful panels shining and sails catching the wind. The regattas are full of fun, excitement and tradition — a time when the Ria comes to life!

It's a very old custom... and now it's your turn to join in!

Mark these regattas on your calendar, and tick ✓ the ones you've been to!

May
REGATTA OF "MERCADO TRADICIONAL"
The regatta season begins!
WHERE? Bico Pier, Murtosa
WHEN? Last Sunday of May

July
"GRANDE REGATA DOS MOLICEIROS"
A colourful parade full of tradition!
WHERE? Monte Branco Beach in Torreira, Murtosa, all the way to Cais do Sal in Aveiro
QUANDO? Early July

Agosto
REGATTA OF "FESTA DO EMIGRANTE"
Boats, music and lots of fun!
WHERE? Bico Pier, Murtosa
WHEN? During the Festa do Emigrante

September
REGATTA OF "SÃO PAIO DA TORREIRA"
One of the liveliest regattas of all!
WHERE Monte Branco Beach in Torreira, Murtosa
WHEN? Early September

There's more to discover in the Aveiro Region:

Fábrica Centro Ciência Viva

AVEIRO

Touch, experiment and have fun with science! A space full of interactive activities where you can discover how the world works.

National Railway Museum

ÁGUEDA

Climb aboard old trains, blow the whistle like a real train driver, and imagine great journeys across the country.

Rota dos Moinhos (Mill Route)

ALBERGARIA-A-VELHA

Walk along rivers and discover old mills that once used the power of water to grind grain.

Bairrada Wine Museum

ANADIA

Find out how sparkling wine is made and explore old tools and objects from the vineyards, with fun facts for the whole family.

Egas Moniz House Museum

ESTARREJA

Visit the country house where this famous doctor and writer, the first Portuguese Nobel Prize winner, was born and raised. See old objects, books, photographs, a big garden, and even a watermill.

Vista Alegre Museum

Ílhavo

Learn how the famous porcelain is made: see the kilns, the moulds, the hand-painted designs, and a collection of antique ceramics.

COMUR – Municipal Museum

MURTOSA

Learn how eel preserves were made. From the arrival of the fish at the factory to the final packaging. A modern museum with videos, objects and stories of the people who lived in Murtosa.

Radiolândia (Radio Museum)

OLIVEIRA DO BAIRRO

Did you know there's a museum just for radios? See vintage radios, hear sounds from the past, and learn how the radios your great-grandparents used actually worked!

Jogo do Azulejo (Tile Game)

OVAR

This game invites you to look closely at colourful house fronts in Ovar. Spot patterns and learn fun facts about each "azulejo". Find out more at the Ovar Tourist Office.

Ecopista do Vouga (Eco Track)

SEVER DO VOUGA

Cycle or walk along an old railway line, now turned into a green path — pass through tunnels, cross bridges and enjoy nature all around you.

Museu do Brincar (Toy Museum)

VAGOS

Play with toys from the past, try out traditional games and step into a world full of imagination!



My favourite memories from exploring Ria de Aveiro...

