

PEOPLE . PLACES

# PORTUGAL'S NATURE PARKS

5 x 52' (ENG, GER, FRE)

**Portugal, the narrow country in southwestern Europe is becoming increasingly popular with tourists. But it has much more to offer than 600 kilometers of coastline promising a beach vacation.**

Pristine, unspoiled landscapes, rare animals and plant species, and unique ecosystems can be found in the country's nature parks. The series explores five of the most important nature and national parks in Portugal. These are protected areas for nature, where flora and fauna can develop without any human interference. We explore the cliffs in the south of the country, the ski resort on the highest mountain in Portugal, as well as the north, the green garden of the Iberian Peninsula.



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Partners:	Radio Bremen, arte

### 1. Peneda-Gerês National Park

The Parque Nacional Peneda-Gerês is the only national park in Portugal. An area of almost 700 square kilometers, located in the extreme north of Portugal. Barren and rocky ridges in the plateaus, contrast with large forests and lush ground vegetation in deep valleys, crossed by lakes and rivers. The park is known for its oak forests, which are predominantly pedunculate and Pyrenean oaks. Among the typical animals of the park are the small Garrano ponies, a very old breed of horse and the only one in Europe that still lives in the wild.

### 2. Serra da Estrela

The highest mountain range in Portugal is the Serra da Estrela. The episode embarks on a voyage of discovery to adventurous rock formations and villages steeped in tradition. The nature park is the largest protected area on the Iberian peninsula. In the mountain range we accompany the young scientist Ana Matos, who wants to breathe new life into old traditions, and cheese maker Maria Natália Lopes. She watches over more than 350 sheep.

### 3. South West Portugal: Alentejano and Costa Vicentina

In the southwest of Portugal lies the little known Parque Natural do Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina. It encompasses a narrow coastal strip that runs along the coast to the south of Portugal. Sparsely populated, this coastal region, which was placed under protection in 1988, is considered one of the last intact ecosystems in Europe. The steep cliffs, the almost constant wind and high waves have ensured that mass tourism has not gained a foothold here. There are still near-natural forests and a diverse bird life.

### 4. Madeira

Madeira - Portugal's autonomous island in the Atlantic Ocean, is closer to the African coast than to the mother country Portugal, from which it is separated by about 900 kilometers. The island's name comes from Portuguese sailors who claimed the uninhabited isle for themselves in 1419. Madeira means wood and that was available in abundance. Almost the entire surface was covered by dense forest. Since 1982, two-thirds of the landscape has been protected.

### 5. Ria Formosa

The "Parque Natural da Ria Formosa" is one of the largest lagoon conservation areas in Europe. Bordered by five natural islands. A mosaic of sandbanks, brackish and freshwater lagoons and salt marshes. In 2010, the "Ria Formosa" was chosen as one of the seven natural wonders of Portugal. It is a unique ecosystem: in the winter months, more than 20,000 birds gather here. In addition, the nature park has one of the largest seahorse populations internationally. More than half of all fish species in the Atlantic are said to spawn in the lagoon.