

## Hotels

The beachside boltholes in which to bed down at the end of a long day's exploring.

## Drinking & dining

A rundown of established culinary institutions and those with the makings of future classics.

## Fashion

Galicia's sartorial scene is shaking up the retail market by perfecting production techniques and sunny styles.

## Made in Galicia

Creativity is in no short supply in this northwestern corner of Spain. We round up its finest artisanal offerings.

# Galicia



Galicia in northwestern Spain is home to expansive forests, charming cities and spectacular coastlines. It's here, along Galicia's *rías* (outcrops and estuaries that extend into the ocean) and western coastal towns, that Europe sees its final sunset of the day over the Atlantic. Wine made from native albariño, godello and ribeiro grapes pairs well with the region's renowned maritime bounty of clams, scallops and freshly-netted octopus.

Monocle takes a journey from the region's capital, Santiago de Compostela, to the thermal baths of Ourense inland, while touching base in the fashion hub of A Coruña on the northern coast and meeting creatives in the southwest city of Vigo. Galicia's Roman and Celtic roots, generous hospitality and native language of Galego mean that visitors will get the best of Spain while sampling something totally unique.

#### Special thanks

Celeste Chipperfield  
Nuria Carballo  
Sagra Maceira de Rosen  
Tona Martínez



#### Galicia in numbers

**Inhabitants**  
2.7 million

**Spain's fish exports**  
40 per cent

**Number of provinces**  
Four (A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense and Pontevedra)

**Length of coastline**  
1,659km

**Surface area of Spain**  
5.8 per cent

**Three biggest industries for Galicia's GDP**  
Textiles (37 per cent), automotive (14 per cent) and food (10 per cent)

#### Getting around

Many people have taken on the famous Camino de Santiago pilgrimage since the 9th century but visitors can also opt for shorter hiking trails or cycle around the region. Vigo, Galicia's largest city, has a high-speed TGV link in the pipeline from Vigo-Urzáiz (pictured) to connect it with Lisbon, while Renfe is opening up the region with a fleet of Ave Trains and frequent journeys to and from Madrid. The Ourense-Vigo line is one of Europe's most picturesque railways and takes passengers over mountains and alongside the Miño river. Perhaps Galicia's days as a well-kept secret are numbered but there has never been a better time to visit.

#### A Casa de Aldán, Aldán

A 35-minute drive from Pontevedra on Galicia's southwestern coast is A Casa de Aldán, a hotel built on the remains of a 19th-century salting factory. Designed by Vigo-based architect Alfonso Penela, the 13-key hotel is crafted from stone and cedar – the scent of which sets the tone for this serene spot. With a forested backdrop and beachside front, the guest house makes the most of the Galician landscape. Monocle recommends booking one of its Ardora Apartments, which overhang a private beach. Inside, hallways have nooks in which to read and bedrooms are lit with Santa & Cole lighting. Owner and interior designer Marisa

Barrio (pictured) designed the space and kitted it out with a range of global brands. "If I had to pick a favourite, it would be the Charles Rennie Mackintosh chair or the Kazuhide Takahama lamp," says Barrio. The hotel's adjoining O Con Restaurant has a menu that reflects the bounty of the bay. [acasadealdan.com](http://acasadealdan.com)

#### Parador de Santo Estevo Galicia, Ourense

This 10-century monastery in Galicia's Ribeira Sacra nature reserve north of Ourense features three cloisters from the baroque, gothic and renaissance periods. Yet modernity makes its presence felt within the Parador's restaurant, which serves grilled octopus, Galician veal and chestnut cake. For those wishing to venture further afield, the parador is perched where the valleys of the Sil and Miño rivers meet. Lush hiking routes give a daily dose of woodland therapy while the surrounding gorges and canyons offer the opportunity to explore on a catamaran. [paradores.es](http://paradores.es)

#### Hotel A Quinta da Auga, Santiago de Compostela

What was once a pre-industrial paper mill that furnished the local church with scriptural materials is today a Galician *pazo* (manor house) surrounded by canals. After it was abandoned in the 1960s, owner Luisa Lorenzo's father acquired the crumbling property in 2003 and created a 59-key hotel five kilometres outside Santiago de Compostela. Inside there are relics including a nine-metre carpet once rolled out for the Spanish nobility. "Writers come here to disconnect," says Lorenzo. There is also a secret produce garden, so diners can be sure that their meal is grown on Galician soil. [aquintadaauga.com](http://aquintadaauga.com)

## Hotels

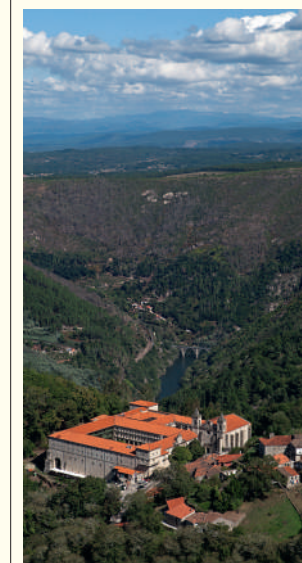
### 01 Vigo-Urzáiz



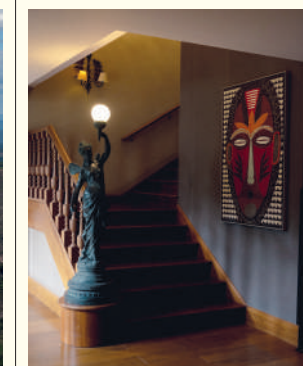
### 02 A Casa de Aldán



### 03 Parador de Santo Estevo Galicia



### 04 Hotel A Quinta da Auga



Galicia's coastal geography means that it has always been defined in relation to the lengthy stretch of Atlantic waters to the west and the choppy coastline to the north. Its culinary scene, therefore, has been shaped by Galicia's reputation as a hub of aquaculture, fishing and canning. The region's cooler climate and moist soils also make Galicia a fertile terroir for winemaking, a monastic tradition that dates back to Roman times. But octopus and mussels are the kings of the Galician table: sample the freshest catches that you can find and you can't go too far wrong.

## Abastos 2.0, Santiago de Compostela

With a host of culinary endeavours to his name, Iago Pazos is among a select group of restaurateurs at the forefront of *nova coziña galega* or "new Galician cuisine". Located within the bustling Mercado de Abastos, Pazos champions the apron-clad harvesters and humble vintners whose forebears began bringing their harvest to the quaint marketplace in 1873. Pazos prides himself on simple market fare informed by regional produce: think grilled *polbo* (octopus), *tartar de cabala* (mackerel tartare) and *berberechos al vapor* (steamed cockles). "In a few years, true Galician food will be

difficult to come by because we're stripping it of its cultural origins," says Pazos. That's why he only uses Galicia-grown ingredients, bolstering local supply chains and the legacy of his native soil. Inside, simple wooden tables evoke the humble furniture of the Galician home and the bill is tucked into the ring-pull of recycled sardine tin lids. "Cooking is as much a political act as a social one," says Pazos. "My job is to transmit the identity of the region."

[abastodospuntozero.com](http://abastodospuntozero.com)

## Waco, A Coruña

Frustrated by a lack of quality cafés, Mexican Victor Egoavil and Galician Graciela Tallon decided to introduce speciality coffee to A Coruña in 2020. Two years later, their success translated into an opportunity to serve Waco's coffee blends at the Inditex cafeteria, the company that owns Zara and is headquartered in the port city. "Speciality coffee is associated with places such as Madrid and Barcelona," says Egoavil. For him, provenance is important. "Mexicans are very aware of ingredients' origins." That's why he buys his unpasteurised milk from a farm in Laracha and is on first name terms with the owner. [waco-coffee.com](http://waco-coffee.com)

## Bar do Porto, Corrubedo

Sitting on the water's edge in the small fishing village of Corrubedo in the province of A Coruña is Bar do Porto. The neighbourhood tavern had been shuttered for three decades before reopening in 2020, when UK architect David Chipperfield put his mind to refitting the community's favourite spot in a town where he has lived since the 1990s. Bar do Porto quickly picked up where it had left off, becoming a focal point for villagers to connect over a beer. The renovation was a collaboration between Chipperfield and Galician architect Sofia Blanco Santos, ensuring the spirit of the venue stayed true to its heritage. [Rua Torreiro 4, Corrubedo](http://RuaTorreiro4.com)

## Club Marítimo de Canido, Canido

A short sail or a 20-minute drive south of Vigo is Club Marítimo de Canido, a standout example of one of Galicia's many nautical private-members' clubs. This outpost is a beautifully cared for 1960s modernist building that overlooks the Cies Islands. Monocle is welcomed in by Mafalda whose grandfather, Enrique Lorenzo Docampo, passed his membership on to. "Mostly we enjoy a good glass of wine and a great meal," says Mafalda. You'll have to do your fair share of mingling to get a membership but if you're looking to move here, then you'll want a seat at a nautical club's table. [cmcanido.es](http://cmcanido.es)

## La Carpintería, Vigo

In the industrial port city of Vigo, an old carpentry studio is now the setting for the expert joinery of Galician and Basque cuisine. Basque chefs and husband-and-wife duo Rafael Pérez and Elena Garmendia (*pictured*) set their sights on the neighbourhood of Bouzas as it allowed them greater creative freedom. The Ria de Vigo-inspired menu serves oven-baked hake, grilled squid and a take on *tiradito*, the Peruvian raw-fish staple with tuna. "Vigo has so much to offer," says Garmendia. Since La Carpintería's opening in 2014, the area has seen a wave of urban renewal. "The city's restaurant scene has grown so much," she adds. [lacarpinteriarestaurante.com](http://lacarpinteriarestaurante.com)

## Drinking & dining

### 05 Abastos 2.0



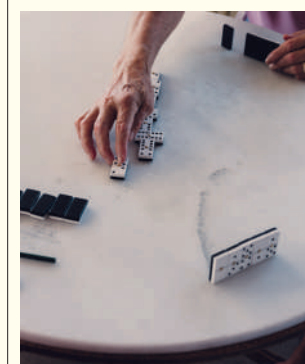
### 06 Waco



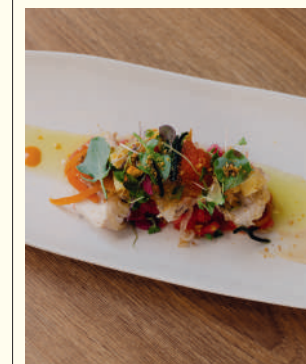
### 07 Bar do Porto



### 08 Club Marítimo de Canido



### 09 La Carpintería



## O Loxe Mareiro, Carril

It's 19.00 and an hour until dinner service but chef Iago Pazos is strolling out of O Loxe Mareiro in his trunks, walking five metres and then plunging into the Ría de Arousa. Monocle waits at an outside table overlooking the estuary, where the river Ulla meets the Atlantic. When Pazos returns, he picks a few wildflowers from the harbourside "for plating", he says. You don't have to be in Galicia long before you're told about Pazos's other ventures but Loxe is his passion project. "Everything we serve has been caught or farmed within eyesight," says Pazos, gesturing through an open window that frames the water. [loxemareiro.com](http://loxemareiro.com)

## Ana Portals Q&A

Restaurateur Portals founded Solleiros in Santiago de Compostela in 2017. The restaurant is renowned for its avant-garde takes on the region's cuisine, including dishes such as *bacalao a galega* – Galician-style salted cod.

### What characterises the culinary scene in Santiago de Compostela today?

To have a restaurant in Galicia is to have an advantage because of the variety of the produce. We have a great respect for the seasons here. Whether it's seafood, vegetables, honey or cheese, the region produces high-quality raw materials.

### What does the restaurant industry look like today?

Young restaurateurs are trying to diversify and modernise classic restaurants. The atmosphere at Solleiros is decidedly regional. We offer a varied gastronomic experience and share a small offering of the wonderful wines from Galicia.

### Where do you like to eat out?

I like to order crispy octopus with kimchi mayonnaise from Pepe do Coxo in O Freixo.

[solleiros.com](http://solleiros.com)

## Drinking & dining

10 O Loxe Mareiro



## Regional dishes

### Polbo á feira

This fresh-octopus dish is traditionally eaten at the O Carballiño festival in Ourense in August and is cooked in boiling water that's seasoned with olive oil, salt and sweet paprika.

### Pimientos de padrón

First cultivated in a Galician monastery, these vitamin-rich peppers are fried until blackened and are a stalwart of the tapas table.

### Caldo gallego

A slow-cooked broth comprising white beans, chorizo, a ham bone, turnip and kale.

### Empanada gallega

A modern iteration can contain anything from octopus, mussels or cod. Try the potato-and-paprika empanada from Bar Rianxo in Pontevedra.

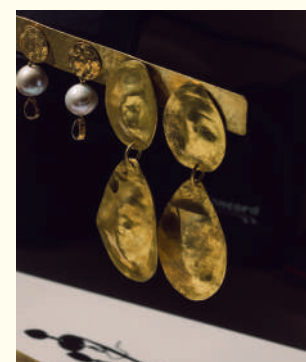
### Torta de Santiago

This almond-flavoured cake was created in the 16th century for the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Portocarrero.

Galicia's close-knit fashion crowd is concentrated in the region's style capital, A Coruña, on the northwestern coast. This former shipbuilding city is home to the headquarters of Inditex, the company behind brands such as Zara and Massimo Dutti. The port city has attracted a host of plucky entrepreneurs, designers and skilled pattern-makers for many years – and, with such an established creative infrastructure and effective distribution networks, it's easy to see why. Today, the textiles industry accounts for 37 per cent of Galicia's GDP, which demonstrates how fashion is tightly woven into A Coruña's urban fabric.

## Fashion

11 Maazi



## Maazi, A Coruña

Buyer Marian Fernández Orive (pictured) spent 25 years working at Inditex before opening her multi-brand womenswear boutique, Maazi, in 2017. The shop brings together a tasteful curation of Spanish, Italian and French brands, thanks to Fernández Orive's industry contacts. Inside the airy, whitewashed interior there are contemporary Grecian sandals from Caryatis, patent flats by Alohas and leather loafers from Barcelona-based footwear label 220V. "We dress women with a keen eye for under-the-radar brands," says Fernández Orive, whose industry expertise attracts customers from all over Spain. [maazi.es](http://maazi.es)

## Masscob, A Coruña

Masscob's name is a combination of founders Jacobo Cobián and Marga Massanet's names. Each of the brand's garments is rendered in natural materials. The label's flagship shop opened in 2023 to celebrate its 20th anniversary. [masscob.com](http://masscob.com)

### D-due, Rianxo

Charo Froján returned to Galicia with creative partner Alfredo Olmedo in 1994 to take over the skirt-making company her parents founded in the 1960s. The result is a streamlined collection of Italian and Belgian linens that hint at Galician myths. [d-due.com](http://d-due.com)

12 Masscob



Galicia has a distinctive style, a booming design industry and artisanal knowhow. From Celtic motif ceramics and expert carpentry to finely crafted leather goods, the region has you covered. It is industrious beyond its size, with companies supplying the world with homegrown timber, food and wine. Regional brands are reaping the rewards of the land and sea, from canning clams to growing vineyards. We've checked in with a rich network of creatives that has made it in Galicia, rounding up some of the best gifts to take back home.

## Casa Ria, Santiago de Compostela

Located in a former sanatorium, Casa Ria is the HQ of Pritzker Prize-winner David Chipperfield's non-profit research project, Fundación Ria, which aims to promote sustainable development and improve quality of life. Casa Ria is home to the architect's Spanish studio, as well as a research lab for urban-planners and designers, and a venue for conferences and exhibitions. Casa Ria also accommodates living quarters for residencies, while its open-kitchen serves seasonal fare in keeping with the building's environmental manifesto. [fundacionria.org](http://fundacionria.org)

## Sargadelos, Cervo

Galician ceramics specialist Sargadelos is known for its iconic blue-and-white patterns, which are inspired by Celtic motifs. The firm was established in 1806 and today encompasses a network of 250 creatives that produces almost half a million pieces of hand-decorated porcelain every year. As well as dinner sets and coffee cups, Sargadelos creates carnival masks and bespoke beer taps to pour a cold glass of Estrella Galicia in style. [sargadelos.com](http://sargadelos.com)

## Finsa, Santiago de Compostela

La Conexión is the timber-clad HQ of wood-manufacturing company Finsa. The forest lies just 100 metres beyond its north-facing windows. "It's ideal for a company that specialises in end-to-end production," says MRM Arquitectos's Mamen Escorihuela. Founded in 1931 as a small sawmill, Finsa first pioneered the use of MDF and chipboard. Today it has 17 sales offices in 12 different countries, though six of its 10 production plants are still based in Galicia. Even more impressive is the company's practice of sustainable forestry so that nothing goes to waste. [finsa.com](http://finsa.com)

## Santos, Vigo

Santos upholds the modernist belief that kitchens should be highly functional. Antonio Santos Barral established the carpentry atelier near Santiago de Compostela in 1923. By 1952 the workshop had started manufacturing simple modular kitchens comprising multiple individual components, which could be moved around to suit the needs of the user. Almost a century later, the Galicia-born brand has more than 260 showrooms across the world – but remains fiercely proud of its Atlantic roots. [santos.es](http://santos.es)

## Made in Galicia

13 Casa Ria



14 Sargadelos



15 Finsa



## Galician gifts

16

Five brands shining a light on Galician craft.

**1 Bento Billfold wallet**  
Leborei-based artisan Santiago Besteiro's Bento Billfold wallet is made from vegetable-tanned leather sewn by hand with linen thread. [santiagobesteiro.com](http://santiagobesteiro.com)

**2 Los Peperetes tinned fish**  
Jesús Lorenzo Crespo founded his canning company in 1990s Carril. Today his family continues to preserve his legacy. [peperetes.com](http://peperetes.com)

**3 Sanamaro sobre lías, DO Rías Baixas wine**  
This silky white from Pazo de San Mauro is made from albariño and loureiro grapes grown on mineral-rich soil. [marquesdevargas.com](http://marquesdevargas.com)

**4 Nordés Gin**  
Eucalyptus, lemon verbena and samphire shine in this spirit. [nordesgin.com](http://nordesgin.com)

**5 Lichen Goods shirt**  
The Indigo Hemp shirt is hand-dyed in iron water to give it its characteristic brown hue. [lichengoods.com](http://lichengoods.com)



## Meet the locals Q&A

You've hiked Santiago de Compostela's craggy coastline, sampled the freshest seafood the Atlantic has to offer and stopped by the boutiques cutting a dash in A Coruña. But it's Galicians themselves who offer the most informed insight into what it's like to live and work in the region. We sit down with an architecture firm, artist, basket-weaver and gallerist to find out what makes Galicia such an epic escape.

### 17

#### Lucas Díaz Sierra and Gustavo Díaz García

Díaz Sierra and Díaz García are the founders of A Coruña-based Díaz y Díaz Arquitectos. The duo is currently designing the government office headquarters in Santiago de Compostela.

#### How would you describe Galicia's architectural scene?

**LDS:** The architecture of Galicia has evolved significantly. Today there is a focus on addressing past errors, especially those from

the construction boom of the 1970s and 1980s.

#### Which materials and colours are typical of the region?

**GDS:** Granite façades are often coated to protect them from the saline environment. Efforts are also focused on developing colour catalogues that harmonise with the environment.

#### Which is your most notable project?

**GDG:** The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Ferrol. It reflects our affinity with the sea.

#### Which Galician architect would you look to for your own home?

**GDS:** The team at Castroferro Arquitectos is building modern homes that are deeply connected to Galician traditions. [diazydiazarquitectos.com](http://diazydiazarquitectos.com)



### 18

#### Idoia Cuesta

Cuesta is a leather artisan and contemporary basket-weaver based in Lugo, who has created designs for the likes of Loewe.

#### How would you describe your craft?

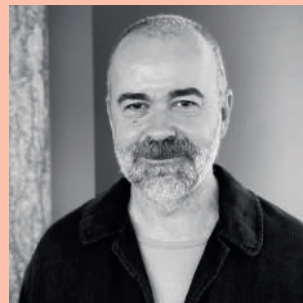
I specialise in weaving techniques with different plant materials.

#### Does Galicia provide fertile terrain for basketry materials?

Galicia is a paradise for natural fibres with its luxuriant nature and its generous rainy climate. I work with chestnut and corn leaves, vine stalks, raffia, hemp, jute and esparto grass.

#### Where do you find creative inspiration?

The Interactive Museum of the History of Lugo. [idoiacuesta.com](http://idoiacuesta.com)



### 19

#### Álvaro Negro

Negro is an artist based in Pontevedra who has exhibited his work in A Coruña, Madrid and Lisbon. He incorporates architecture and photography into his multidisciplinary oeuvre.

#### How would you describe the art scene in Galicia?

It's constantly in flux and difficult to define. Galicia maintains the capacity to think critically about the present as informed by its romanesque and baroque traditions.

#### Does Galicia have a tight-knit artistic community?

Madrid has swallowed up a large part of the Spanish scene but those of us who remain in Galicia have no complexes. Strangely, we find strength in the apparent lack of ambition.

#### Why is Galicia an exciting place to develop as an artist?

Between its coasts, mountains and island-like geography, Galicia has an ambivalent character. The urban mingles with the rural in the same way that modernity mingles with tradition. [alvaronegro.com](http://alvaronegro.com)

### 20

#### Miriam Pérez

Pérez is the curator of Vilaseco in A Coruña, a 19th-century exhibition space.

#### Which Galician artists do you admire?

Sculptor Rodríguez-Méndez, painter Álvaro Negro and poet Manuel Vilaríño.

#### How would you describe A Coruña's cultural scene?

It's diverse and dynamic. Galicia is home to one of the best orchestras in Europe: Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. We also have numerous film festivals and the María José Jove Foundation Art Centre supports the careers of artists.

#### Where do you go for your dose of Galician culture?

I love the photography exhibitions at MOP Foundation in the port of A Coruña. [vilaseco.com](http://vilaseco.com)

