Casa da Ínsua – Hotel de Charme

Roteiro Nossa Senhora de Lourdes / Casa do Guarda Mata [Our Lady of Lourdes /"Casa do Guarda Mata" (the Ranger's house) Tour]

On the banks of the river Coja, within the natural park is the cave of Our Lady of Lourdes, where the image of Our Lady stands. On the hill, there is also a small chapel, built by Manuel de Albuquerque.

Our Lady of Lourdes Cave

This cave houses a century-old religious devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes. The cult of the Virgin of Lourdes began on the 11th of February 1858, after the Virgin appeared to a 14-year-old girl named Bernadette Soubirous in the French village of Lourdes, on the banks of the river Gave.

In the cave there is an image of Our Lady, which evokes that moment, and an inscription in the rock of the cave where it can be read:

"Come and let the people be with you. 18th February 1858"

In another inscription we read:

"Anyone who visits this image and prays the Lord's Prayer and a Hail Mary will be granted 40 days of indulgences. Illustrious José Dias Corrêa de Carvalho. The 2nd of December 1906".

Chapel of the Immaculate Conception

Small oratory chapel built by Manuel de Albuquerque, in 1909, on the Cave of Our Lady of Lourdes, by promise of his mother.

The altar is crowned by a blue tile panel with the image of Our Lady with the young Bernadette praying at her feet, signed by J. Cândido da Silva, painter and F. Carvalhinho, Porto.

On it you can also see the Albuquerque's brand and the inscription "SPES, FIDES, CHARITAS".

Here, besides admiring the striking front panel dedicated to Our Lady, you can read the side inscription which explains the reasons for this construction:

"In memory of...

Our Lady of Lourdes / thanksgiving / for the recovery / of/ his mother / victim of serious accident / the 16th of June 1907 / in Paris…

Builds and dedicates /this Chapel / Manuel de Albuquerque / 1909"

Ancient Hydroelectric Power Plant

Near the cave and the chapel, nested in a beautiful natural setting, stands the dam of the ancient hydroelectric power station with a granite channel of about 1600 meters. At the end of the channel, near *Senhora da Ribeira*, are the facilities of the ancient hydroelectric power station, one of the first in the country.

How to get there?

Leaving the hotel, follow towards the national road and then turn left, at the exit towards Sátão (N329). On the way, you will pass through the double *Portão da Moita or da Mata* [Forest Gate], the work of the architect Nicolla Bigaglia. Further on, to your left, you will see the sign "Sr.ª de Lurdes".

If you take this road, a few meters ahead you will find the *Casa do Guarda Mata* [The Ranger's House]

Casa do Guarda Mata [The Ranger's House] Lourdes is another of Nicola Bigaglia's architecture works, located on the road to Our Lady of Lourdes, designed during the time he was in the service of the Albuquerque family in the *Casa da Ínsua*. In the house, in the *Corredor da Memória* (Memory Lane) you can see a photo of this building taken immediately after its construction, at the beginning of the 20th century.

Going down this road - which after leaving the main road becomes a dirt road - you will see several fountains until you reach the river and the park where the Cave of Our Lady of Lourdes is located.

However, if you wish to take a paved road to get to the Cave of Our Lady of Lourdes, we recommend an alternative: For that purpose, instead of turning at the sign "Sr.ª de Lurdes", continue along the N329 for about 150 meters, and at kilometre 48 turn left. Then follow the following signs: *Qt.ª Regadias / St.ª Eufémia / Moinhos Tradicionais*. Approximately 600 meters ahead, and before crossing the bridge over the Coja River, on your left you will see a dirt road with stones at the entrance. From there you must go on foot and after about 50 meters, you will find the river and the main square of Our Lady of Lourdes.

For those who prefer to walk, a third alternative is to follow the beautiful path that leaves the town of Ínsua and crosses the valley until Our Lady of Lourdes Park.