

Serra da Estrela

Serra Da Estrela- Mountain of the Stars

Serra da Estrela (mountain range of the star) is the highest mountain range in Portugal and includes mainland Portugal's highest peak, which has a natural altitude of 1993 m. However, in 1816 - 1826 the Portuguese king Jovo V ordered the construction of a 7 m tall tower so that the peak could reach 2000 m. The location of this tower is known as "Torre" ("Tower", literally translated).

The Torre

The mountain range is about 100 km long and is 30 km at its widest point. It is formed from a huge granite ridge that once formed the southern frontier of the country. Due to its bizarrely shaped crags and gorges, mountain streams and lakes, beautiful forests and magnificent views, the area ranks among Portugal's outstanding scenic attractions.

The Mondego river which is the biggest river of Portugal entirely set in Portuguese territory, rises in the Serra da Estrela. Viriathus, the famous Lusitanian leader and Portuguese national hero, is said to have been born in the town of Loriga in the Serra da Estrela.

The mountain range is now part of the Serra da Estrela Natural Park and offers plentiful skiing opportunities.

The dog of the Serra da Estrela is a mountain dog that takes its name from this region. The origin of the Cão da Serra da Estrela, is not totally know. Like the other Mollosser breeds the Serra has its main origin in the old Mollossers of Central Asia.

In the time of the invasion of the Visigoths it was introduced in the Iberian Peninsula many different large dogs. From this point the further evolution of the Serra is unknown, but it is possible that a group of the introduced dogs found a home in the Estrela Mountain, where the sheep owners needed a strong, large dog to protect the sheeps from thieves and wolfs.