

Although the occupation of the Portuguese capital was relatively straightforward, local insurrections did break out and in suppressing them the French used harsh methods which were met with widespread rejection from the population.

On 6 June 1808, news of the rebellion arrived from Spain, Porto threw off the French oppression with the help of the Spanish soldiers stationed there. It was the signal for the whole of the north of the country to follow suit at the exact time that a British expeditionary force under the command of the then unknown Arthur Wellesley, the future Lord Wellington, was landing.



French horsemen with captured Portuguese flags.

General Junot's reaction was to concentrate his dispersed forces to face the new threat, but his soldiers were defeated, first at Roliça and then later at Vimeiro. With no possibility of reinforcements and no contact with the other troops in the Iberian Peninsula, Junot decided to surrender and signed the controversial Convention of Cintra, by which the French were evacuated on British ships and returned to France.

British landing in Portugal.

Napoctep

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Napoleonic routes between Spain and Portugal

The objective of the Napoctep Project is the creation of a series of tourist routes associated with the presence of Napoleonic troops in Castilla y León and Central Portugal. The routes elaborated are the following:

Route 1st Invasión of Portugal.



Route 2nd Invasión of Portugal.



Route 3rd Invasión of Portugal.



Wellington Route.



Route of Siege and Great Battles.



Route of Napoleon and the Englishman's Run.



Guerrilleros Julián Sánchez el Charro and el Empecinado Route.



Route 1st Invasion of Portugal

from Salamanca to Porto

Jean-Andoche Junot, Duke of Abrantes.

Frenchmen and Spaniards invading Portugal together. This is the unlikely but true start to the Peninsular War, although the tables would be turned in the following months.

In October 1807, the Portuguese Government was in disagreement with Napoleon's plans and his Continental Blockade, by which all continental ports were to be closed to all trade with Great Britain. The Corsican ogre signed a treaty with Spain to occupy Portugal and sent twenty-five thousand soldiers which were joined by contingents of Spanish troops.



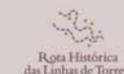
Scottish bagpiper at the Battle of Vimeiro.



Portuguese horseman.

Lisbon was quickly occupied, but not before the Royal Family fled to Brazil. Meanwhile, events in Spain were gathering pace and, after the Second of May Uprising, uprisings took place that spread to the neighbouring country. The Portuguese resistance regrouped around Porto and waited for the assistance promised by London.

French troops invading Portugal.



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The *First Invasion of Portugal Trail* starts in Salamanca and follows the route taken by the occupying soldiers in 1807. It turns south in Guarda, after entering Portugal, before re-joining the road west and reaching Abrantes, Santarem, and Vimeiro, the finishing point of Wellesley's campaign that defeated Junot.



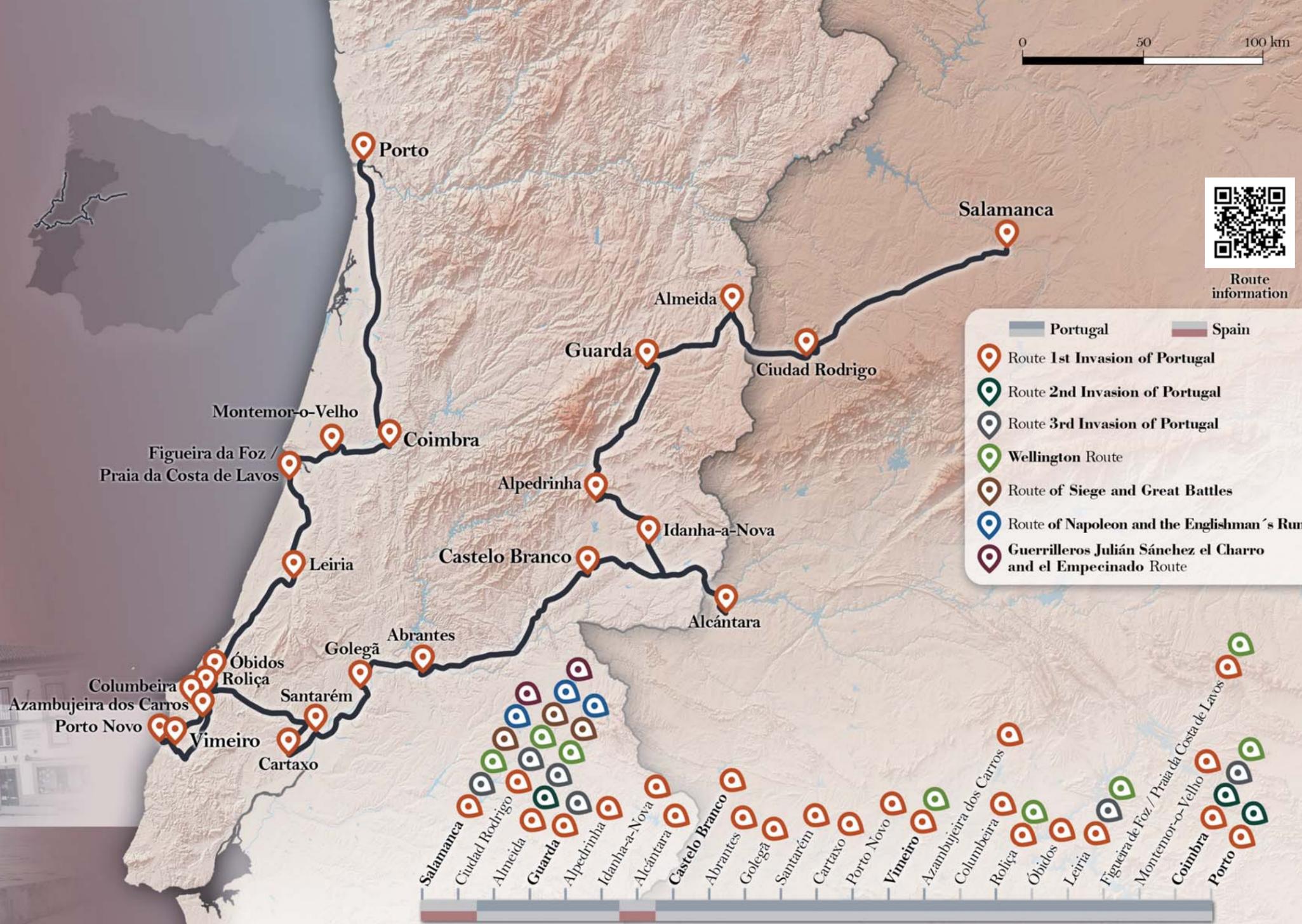
Castle of Leiria.



Castle of Abrantes.

From there, our route heads north to explore the path taken by the English and Portuguese to the famous battlefield. We pass through Roliça and Óbidos, where the British fought the French for the first time in the Iberian Peninsula, then Coimbra and Figueira da Foz, where they landed, before reaching Porto, the epicentre of the uprising that would liberate the country.

Guarda cathedral.



The itinerary will take in exhibitions that explain what the Napoleonic Wars in the Iberian Peninsula were like, such as the permanent “Wellington versus Napoleon” exhibition in Ciudad Rodrigo, the Military Museum in Almeida, and the Battle of Vimeiro Interpretation Centre, the endpoint of the First Invasion of Portugal.



Alcántara Bridge.



Castle of Óbidos.