

Serra da Estrela (Star Mountains)

"Serra da Estrela (Star Mountains) is the highest mountain range in Portugal and includes mainland Portugal's highest peak (Pico mountain in the Portuguese Azores islands is higher), which has a natural altitude of 1993 m (around 6541 feet). However, in 1816 - 1826 the Portuguese king João 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 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, was born in the town of Loriga in the Serra da Estrela.

During the Roman Empire, Serra da Estrela was known as Herminius Mons (Mountains of Hermes).

The mountain range is now part of the Serra da Estrela Natural Park and offers plentiful skiing opportunities. In Loriga was the only ski resort existing in Portugal.

The Serra da Estrela Dog (Cão da Serra da Estrela) is a breed of mountain dog that takes its name from this region."