

# NATURAL WONDERS OF PORTUGAL

**Pedras Parideiras** (birthing stones) are a rare geological phenomenon, a type of stones that sprout from a mother rock, a nodular block of granitic origin measuring 1000m x 600m, hence the name Parideiras. Nodules 1cm to 12cm in diameter with discoid and biconvex shapes are composed of the same mineralogical elements as granite, the outer layer is composed of biotite and the inner layer has a quartz and potassium feldspar core. These nodules, when descaling from the nuclei of the mother rock by thermoclast / cryoclast, leave an external layer in low relief in the nuclei of the mother rock and spread around it.

Pedras Parideiras symbolize fertility in the ancestral tradition of the region; this tradition is still present in local populations. Sleeping with a calving stone under the pillow is believed to increase fertility.

In Portugal, Pedras Parideiras are located in Serra da Freita (Arouca). They are a rare phenomenon on Planet Earth, which is the reason why visitors to these places are asked not to collect stones for personal use.



# LINKS

<http://arouageopark.pt/en/know/geodiversity/geosites/birthing-stones/>

<http://arouageopark.pt/en/explore/what-visit/museums-and-interpretive-units/casa-das-pedras-parideiras-interpretative-center/>

<http://arouageopark.pt/en/know/geodiversity/>

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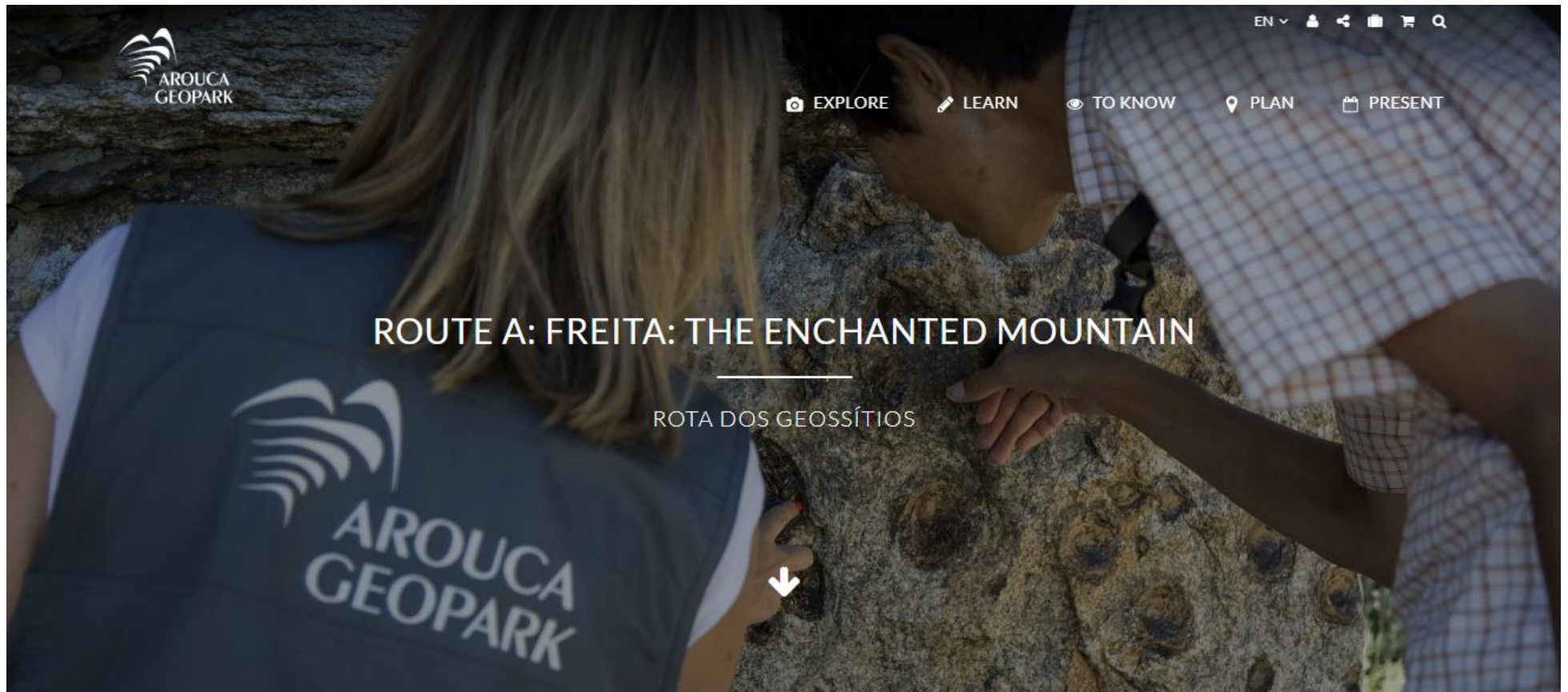


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**Arouca Geopark** is a unique geosite in the world. There's a unique phenomenon going on there: Pedras Parideiras (birthing stones). Geologically designated as "nodular granite of Castanheira", the outcrop of Pedras Parideiras extends throughout an area of 1000 meters by 600 meters. The granite presents a medium grain, with two micas and a rare amount of biotite nodules, with a discoid and biconvex shape, markedly aligned. By the action of the erosion, the nodules are released and accumulated in the soil, leaving in the granite a cavity whose walls are covered in a biotite layer. This is why the inhabitants of the Castanheira village call this "a rock that delivers stone", commonly known as "Pedras Parideiras" (birthing stones). These nodules present dimensions that vary between 1 to 12 centimeters diameter and, although they are externally composed by biotite only, the nucleus is quartz-feldspathic. They have a very flat shape, and the body is granitic, with a well determined orientation. As they are more resistant to the weathering agents than the fitting rock, they stand out more easily from the "mother rock". The most recent dates point to K-Ar ages (obtained in muscovites and biotites of the nodules) between 320 and 310 million years old.



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<http://aroucageopark.pt/en/know/geodiversity/geosites-route/route-freita-enchanted-mountain/>

<http://aroucageopark.pt/en/know/customs-and-traditions/>

<http://aroucageopark.pt/en/know/Archaeology/>