

Inventoring Tourist Resources: Assessment of the Tourist Potential of Vieira do Minho

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Abstract: This research aims to give an account of the process of inventoring tourist resources of the municipality of Vieira do Minho, located in the district of Braga, in the northwest of Portugal. Specifically, the natural, gastronomic, folkloric, handicraft resources, as well as events were analysed. The justification underlying this study lies in the absence perceived in the municipality, with regard to a complete and detailed cataloguing of all tourist resources. This entailed the creation of an inventory, where it was possible to make a “radiograph” of the existing tourist resources. Thus, some research questions guide our study: (1) How attractive are the tourist resources in Vieira do Minho? (2) What singularity do these resources present? (3) How can we classify Vieira do Minho’s tourist resources according to their notoriety? The potential of a tourist destination is defined by the importance and characteristics of the tourist resources, so its identification is essential for its development process. Each tourist resource examined in this inventory was evaluated, ensuring the most truthful and authentic assessment possible, so that, in this way, some gaps in terms of conservation and preservation of these resources can be filled. This inventory is a tool to make it possible to design and outline plans to boost tourism in the municipality of Vieira do Minho. The survey of resources was based on bibliographical research and empirical research, embodied in the stocktaking of all possible resources according to the following classification: attractiveness (international, national, regional, local and null), uniqueness (good, average and common), notoriety (high, average and low), as well as the quality of accessibility. The results presented in this work allow both the visitor and the Municipality of Vieira do Minho to enjoy detailed information and knowledge of the various tourist resources available in this destination. The present study, by carrying out an inventory and classification of tourist resources in Vieira do Minho, will contribute to transforming the local tourist heritage into resources and products likely to meet the needs of the market segments that choose Vieira do Minho as a destination for their holidays.

Keywords: tourism attractions, stock-taking, Vieira do Minho, classification, Product Development

1. Introduction

The tourist attractiveness of a destination is determined by the number and quality of existing and available tourist resources. These resources are based on goods or services whose purpose is to attract and satisfy tourist needs (Crespi & Planells 2011; Rojo Gil & Martinez Leal, 2013).

The unit of analysis on which this study will focus is the municipality of Vieira do Minho, located in the Northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, in the heart of Braga district (infopédia, n.d.). The municipality of Vieira do Minho currently is made up of 21 parishes¹ and is part of NUT II (corresponding to the North of Portugal region) and NUT III concerning the Intermunicipal Community of Ave (cf. PORDATA, n.d.). Vieira do Minho is part of the southern part of the Peneda-Gerês National Park and is bordered to the north by Terras de Bouro, to the west

¹ The toponymy of the parishes of Vieira do Minho is as follows: *União de freguesias de Anissó e Soutelo, União de freguesias de Anjos e Vilarchão, União de freguesias de Caniçada e Soengas, Cantelães, União de freguesias de Cova e Ventosa, São Paio da Eira Vedra, Guilhofrei, Louredo da Ribeira, Mosteiro, Parada de Bouro, Pinheiro, Rossas, União de freguesias de Ruivães e Campos, Salamonde, Tabuaças, Vieira do Minho.* (Município de Vieira do Minho, n.d.b).

by Póvoa de Lanhoso, to the south by Fafe, to the southeast by Cabeceiras de Basto and to the east by Montalegre, a municipality that is already located in the district of Vila Real (Infopédia, n.d.).

Vieira Do Minho is certainly a municipality where tourism occupies a central place in the local economy, where tourist resources are vast and diverse, especially with regard to natural, cultural, historical and monumental resources. However, the lack of knowledge, on the part of the tourist or visitor, of some of these resources is also notorious (Costa, 2021).

The municipality of Vieira do Minho presents its landscape, heritage and gastronomy as comparative advantages (Município de Vieira do Minho, n.d. a). The present investigation intends to contribute to increase the competitiveness of this destination through a diagnostic analysis that allows it to intensify its competitive advantages (Díaz Fernández, 2015).

The present investigation seeks to answer the following research problems: (1) What is the degree of attractiveness of tourist resources in Vieira do Minho? (2) How unique are Vieira do Minho's tourist resources? (3) How can we classify the attractions of Vieira do Minho in terms of notoriety?

The absence of a detailed and complete record of the various tourist resources in the municipality of Vieira do Minho, contributes to the creation of an inventory, the analysis of which constitutes the central objective of this article. Thus, in the investigation that served as the basis for this article, a database was created, in which it is possible to assess the potential of a substantial part of the existing tourist resources in Vieira do Minho (Costa, 2021)

Despite the efforts made by the Tourism Division of the Municipality of Minho, there is still a gap in terms of cataloguing and registering all the resources present in this municipality. In fact, the inventory of tourist resources in the municipality can prove to be an important tool for tourism planning, as well as a catalogue that can meet the needs of tourists (Silva, 2017).

In this article, various tourist resources will be mentioned and highlighted, including natural resources, events, festivals, pilgrimages, gastronomy and crafts (Crespi & Plannels, 2011; López Olivares, 2014), for each of the parishes in the municipality of Vieira do Minho, so that it is possible to verify the points of interest to be enjoyed and visited.

In this way, each tourist resource mentioned throughout this inventory will be the subject of a qualitative assessment, thus undertaking a valuation of the attractions that is as truthful and authentic as possible.

The methodology used was based on an analysis of official documents issued by the municipality (Bryman, 2012), as well as on the elaboration of a questionnaire survey, with closed-ended questions (Durberry, 2018; Inskip, 1991). The bibliographic research was based on primary and secondary sources provided by the Municipality of Vieira do Minho (s.d.a), by *Turismo de Portugal* (2013), by the *Direção- Geral do Património Cultural* (2001-2016) and by the *Instituto de Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas* (2017-2023).

With regard to field work (Costa, 2021), this aimed to get in touch with the reality of the municipality, cataloguing all possible resources according to the following classification: a) attractiveness (international, national, regional, local and null); b) uniqueness (good, average and ordinary); c) notoriety (high, average and weak) and, finally, d) accessibility. The attractions studied for the elaboration of this article were natural, gastronomic, folkloric and artisanal resources. And also, festivals, events and scheduled events (Crespi & Planells, 2011; López Olivares, 2014).

Thus, this study aims to fill gaps regarding the conservation and preservation of these resources. Furthermore, this inventory constitutes a tool capable of supporting the preparation of plans to boost tourism in the municipality of Vieira do Minho.

The present article is structured as follows: the first two sections present a review of the literature related to the concepts of heritage, resource and tourism product, and also explain what a tourist inventory means and the phases that characterize its implementation. Next, the methodological path for creating a database of tourist resources in Vieira do Minho is explained. The partial results of the inventorying of the various types of resources are shown subsequently, illustrating the text with tables that systematize the process of classifying of resources. Finally, the results are framed with the tourism reality of the municipality and limitations and future axes of investigation are presented.

2. Tourist Resources

Tourism is a phenomenon that “results from the sum of natural environmental, cultural, social and economic resources” (Beni, 1990, p. 16). In this way, tourism resources are integral elements of the tourism system which, simply put, consists of consumption and production and the experiences that are generated (Cooper & Hall, 2018).

In fact, the cultural and natural heritage of the territories is likely to generate a set of comparative advantages for the destination in which it is inserted, exerting a differentiating effect compared to the competition (Crespi & Planells, 2011; Rojo Gil & Martínez Leal, 2013; Díaz Fernández, 2015).

In a destination, natural and cultural resources can be distinguished, which are generated by nature and historical events (and, therefore, “fixed”) from those that are in permanent evolution, changing over time (e.g. visual and performing arts) (WTO/CET, 2012).

However, we must distinguish tourist heritage from tourist resources. In fact, the first concept can be defined as “the potential set (known or unknown) of material or immaterial goods that are available to Man and that can be used, through a process of transformation, to satisfy tourist needs (WTO, 1998 cited by Silva, 2017, p. 199).

Therefore, the conversion of heritage into a tourist resource depends on the use of technical, economic and financial means that are likely to satisfy the needs of demand (Crespi & Planells, 2011; Rojo Gil & Martínez Leal, 2013; Silva, 2017).

There are numerous definitions of tourist resources (cf. table 1), despite that, the existence of tourist activity implies the need for a flow of people to travel to a certain place (Crespi & Planells, 2011).

Table 1: Definitions of tourist resource

Author	Definition
López Olivares (2014)	<i>Any tangible or intangible element that has the ability, by itself or in combination with others, to attract visitors to a given space; and when this visit is strictly related to tourism, leisure and recreation (p. 31).</i>
Silva (2009) cit. by Silva (2017)	<i>Every natural element, human activity or its product, capable of motivating people to travel, occupying their free time or satisfying the needs arising from their stay (p. 200).</i>
Vogel e Hernandez (cit. by Crespi & Planells, 2011)	<i>Any material element capable, by itself or in combination with others, of attracting visitors to a given location or area (p. 17).</i>
Domingues (2013)	<i>All kinds of attractions, natural or artificial, that have a strong enough appeal to encourage the movement of people with the aim of being appreciated, visited, used or simply enjoyed (p. 270).</i>
Beni (1990)	<i>They are the general reservoir, from which the specific actions of the [tourist] system can be formed, that is, they are found within the system, being the means it uses to perform its tasks (p. 29).</i>
Leno Cerro (1992)	<i>Any material element capable, by itself or in combination with others, of attracting visitors to a given location or area. In other words, the tourist resource is every element capable of generating tourist displacements (p. 50).</i>

Source: own elaboration

According to López Olivares (2014), we can distinguish different categories of tourist resources: a) Natural and landscape resource; b) Historical-monumental, technical, ethnological and artistic resources; c) artisanal and gastronomic; and d) folklore, festivals, scheduled events (events), intangible and referential resources.

The appropriate aggregation of resources that meets the motivations and expectations of tourists in an integrated way constitutes the tourist product that is composed of attractions, facilities and accessibility (Silva, 2017). The transformation of heritage into a resource and its grouping into a product can be done through: a) enhancement of monuments and heritage sites; b) routes and itineraries; c) creation of museums and interpretation centres; d) scheduled events (exhibitions, exhibitions, historical representations) and e) cultural theme parks (Crespi & Planells, 2011; Rojo Gil & Martínez Leal, 2013; UNWTO, 2012).

In this way, we can define a tourist product, in the wake of Gilbert (1990 cit. Hall & Cooper, 2018) as “an amalgam of different goods and services offered as an activity experience to the tourist” (p. 27).

3. An inventory of tourist resources

Tourism resources are decisive for the potential for tourism development of a destination, given its attractiveness (Cunha, 2008).

In this context, Leno Cerro (1992) identifies the methods of inventorying and classifying resources as a starting point so that it is possible to assess their tourist potential and support decisions tending to their use. Thus, the inventory has the function of identifying, describing and locating the tourist resource on which the tourist activity is centred, as a starting point for planning (Crespi & Planells, 2011; Rojo Gil & Martinez Leal, 2013).

The potential of a tourist destination is defined by the importance and characteristics of tourist resources. Therefore, its identification is essential for the tourism development process. This identification is carried out through an inventory of tourist resources, which consists of drawing up a catalogue of places, natural elements, objects or establishments that, due to their characteristics, alone or together, lead to the movement of visitors and make it possible to develop tourist activities (Cunha, 2008).

The dissemination of existing resources is important as it promotes potential tourist resources, leading to an increase in demand. In this context, geographic information systems are an essential tool for collecting, storing, updating, managing, analysing and presenting what exists in the territory and can be used as raw material for the tourism industry.

Inventorying for tourism is important insofar as the systematization of the listing of resources makes known what exists. If you do not know what exists, you do not visit, which will lead to a certain resource being unattractive. According to Sousa and Fernandes (2007), if the tourist has easy access to the existing information in each region from the Internet, television, kiosks or even a system installed on the cell phone, the possibility of going to the place will be bigger.

The identification of natural attractions through the inventory is used as a local planning tool, essentially for planning tourist activity (Inskeep, 1991). Thus, the stage of inventorying tourist resources facilitates the mapping and identification of resources with unknown potential.

The resources that should be included in the inventory are those that currently have some tourist demand and those that have a certain potential demand, given their uniqueness. There are also variables to take into account, namely the characteristics of the expected demand and the possibilities of tourist enjoyment of the resource (López Olivares, 2014).

The resource forms (see annex 1) are fundamental components of the inventory as they allow a systematic collection of information on each of the tourist attractions. The forms contain aspects such as geographic location, accessibility and the value of the resource (Crespi & Planells, 2011; Rojo Gil & Martinez Leal, 2013; López Olivares, 2014). García-Delgado and Felicidade-García (2014) identify five phases in the elaboration of the tourism resources inventory: 1) preparatory phase; 2) information compilation phase (through analysis and selection of information sources and field work); 3) data tabulation phase (through quantification and distribution); 4) valuation/analytical assessment of resources phase; 5) proposal planning phase. In the present work, we follow the first four steps, limiting ourselves to natural, gastronomic, folkloric, craft, festivals, events and scheduled events. Historical, monumental and artistic resources have not been analysed at present due to space constraints. The valuation/evaluation phase is conducted here through the establishment of a hierarchy of resources (Leno Cerro, 1992) taking into account the categories “attractiveness”, “uniqueness” and “notoriety”.

4. Methodology

The survey of resources was based on bibliographic research, but also on empirical research (Inskeep, 1991). The bibliographic research focused on the information available online on the websites of the Municipality of Vieira do Minho (s.d.a), the Regional Tourism Entity of Porto and North (s.d.), *Turismo de Portugal* (2013), the Direção-Geral do Património Cultural (2001-2016), in publications with tourist information on the municipality of Vieira do Minho, and also in books related to the heritage and history of Vieira do Minho. The empirical research refers to the fieldwork of verification and cataloguing of resources.

The collection of information for the preparation of the tourist resource inventory took place in three stages, in each of which a specific type of source was used.

In a first phase, the base documentation included the existing bibliographic collection on the municipality in question. From the consultation of these documents, a wide list of resources was obtained, some of them with information in some detail, where archaeological, historical and cultural resources predominated. Since the main objective of this article is to explain the methodology adopted to inventory the resources, due to space imperatives, historical, monumental and artistic resources will not be the object of analysis, but can be consulted in Costa (2021).

With this database as a starting point, we began a second phase of collecting information, which basically consisted of consulting publications of all kinds that had a direct or indirect relationship with tourism and that made some reference to the municipality of Vieira do Minho. Among these publications, it is worth mentioning a wide collection of tourist brochures by the Municipality of Vieira do Minho. Simultaneously with this task, a search was carried out on the City Hall's Internet pages, Turismo de Portugal, the Information System for Architectural Heritage, the Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests, among others.

The objective pursued with this second phase was, in addition to comparing and completing the information collected in the first, to take a first step towards selecting the resources to be included in the inventory, since it was not possible to catalogue all the resources in time.

In the third phase, field work was carried out with the aim of getting in touch with the reality of the municipality, through the cataloguing of all possible resources according to the following classification:

1. attractiveness: international, national, regional, local and zero;
2. singularity: good, average and vulgar;
3. notoriety: high, average and low;
4. accessibility.

The classification of resources was undertaken in line with the categorization proposed by López Olivares (2014):

1. natural resources or attractions;
2. historical, monumental or artistic resources (within these a division was made by parishes due to the large number of this type of resources present in the municipality of Vieira do Minho);
3. gastronomic, folklore and craft resources;
4. festivals, events and scheduled events.

Finally, a compilation of the collected data, photographs and notes was undertaken, so that the data could be processed and evaluated.

Therefore, the creation of an inventory was based on the elaboration of resource sheets, following López Olivares (2014). The forms contained the following components: (a) identification of the resource; (2) resource characteristics; (3) valuation of the resource, considering its level of attractiveness and (4) observations, where opinions or relevant data not specified in the aforementioned sections are expressed (cf. annex 1).

According to the methodology referenced in the previous section, the preparatory phase prior to the preparation of the inventory included choosing the unit of analysis and the inventory methodology that was based on the typology proposed by the Organization of American States (cit. by García-Delgado and Felicidade-García, 2014; Crespi & Planells, 2011), which is based on five categories: (1) natural resources or attractions; (2) historical, monumental or artistic resources; (3) gastronomic, folkloric and craft resources; (4) scheduled parties, events and happenings and (5) contemporary technical, scientific or artistic achievements.

Still according to the methodology proposed by (García-Delgado and Felicidade-García, 2014), in the information gathering phase, secondary sources were consulted (bibliography, internet and documents provided by the local administration). Through these sources we obtained quantitative and qualitative information. Fieldwork was the chosen way of collecting primary data (through informal interviews and direct observation). Once the analysis of these sources was finished, the attractions were qualified according to the categories contained in the tourist resources sheet.

5. Results

The natural resources or attractions present in this inventory are described in the left column of table 2. When analysing the data related to the natural resources or attractions, it can be seen that, in terms of the attractiveness of Cabreira Mountain, it ranks as international, Caniçada reservoir and Spring of the River Ave as national, while all other resources were classified as regional.

As for uniqueness, Cabreira Mountain and Spring of the River Ave stand out, with a good rating, while all the others deserved an average rating.

In the classification of resources, in terms of their notoriety, Cabreira Mountain, Spring of the River Ave and Ermal River Beach with Elevada stand out, with the rest obtaining an average rating.

With regard to accessibility, all resorts are easily accessible by car, however, there may be some difficulty for people with reduced mobility in accessing the Spring of the River Ave, the Landscape of the Swing of Serradela,

the Landscape of the Swing of Castro de Anissó, the Landscape of the panoramic swing of Cantelães, the Landscape of the panoramic swing of Antenas-Eira Vedra, the Landscape of the Swing of Pinheiro and the Landscape of the Swing of N. Sra. From Lapa, as the car is a few meters from the site and pedestrian access is irregular.

Table 2: Classification of natural resources or attractions

Resources	Classification										
	Attractiveness					Singularity			Notoriety		
	International	National	Regional	Local	Null	Good	Average	Common	High	Average	Weak
<i>Natural resources or attractions</i>											
Cabreira Mountain	X					X			X		
Venda Nova reservoir			X				X			X	
Salamonde reservoir			X				X			X	
Cançada reservoir		X					X			X	
Ermal Reservoir			X				X			X	
Spring of the River Ave		X				X			X		
Ermal River Beach			X				X		X		
River Beach of Carvalho			X				X			X	
Mexico River Beach			X				X			X	
Agra Leisure Area			X				X			X	
Poço das Traves Leisure Area			X				X			X	
Rio Longo River Beach			X				X			X	
River Beach of Campos			X				X			X	
Bôco River Beach			X				X			X	
Landscape Swing of Serradela			X				X			X	
Landscape Swing of Castro de Anissó			X				X			X	
Panoramic Landscape Swing of Cantelães			X				X			X	
Panoramic Swing Landscape of Antenas -Eira Vedra			X				X			X	
Landscape Swing of Pinheiro			X				X			X	
Landscape Swing of N. Sra. Da Lapa			X				X			X	

Source: own elaboration

The gastronomic, folk and craft resources present in this inventory can be observed in the left column of Table 3.

By analysing the classification of the gastronomic, folkloric and artisanal resources, it is possible to see that the attractiveness of the Smokehouse is international, that of the “Barquilhares” is national, that of the Barrosã Veal, of the Cabbage and Beans and of the Folk Ranches is regional and that of the others is local.

As for uniqueness, the "Barquilhares" and the Smoked Ham have a rating of Good and the others of average.

Finally, the Smokehouse's (i.e. “Fumeiro”) notoriety is high and the remaining resources are average.

Table 3: Classification of gastronomic and folklore resources

Resources	Classification										
	Attractiveness					Singularity			Notoriety		
	International	National	Regional	Local	Null	Good	Average	Common	High	Average	Weak
<i>Gastronomic, folk and craft resources</i>											
Veal Barrosã			X				X			X	
Kale with beans			X				X			X	
Honey				X			X			X	
<i>Barquilhares</i>		X				X				X	
Smokehouse (<i>fumeiro</i>)	X					X			X		
Folk Ranches			X				X			X	
Crafts in Copper (<i>caldeireiros</i>)				X			X			X	
Traditional weaving and embroidery crafts				X			X			X	

Source: own elaboration

Finally, the features of festivals, events and scheduled events present in this inventory can be verified in the left column of Table 4.

By analysing the data inherent to festivals, events and scheduled events, it can be observed that in terms of attractiveness, the WRC – Rally Portugal is classified as international, the Rally Vieira do Minho and Agro Vieira as regional and the remaining expressions as national.

The uniqueness of WRC – Rally Portugal is rated good, while the rest of the features are rated average.

Table 4: Classification of Resources: Festivals, Events and Scheduled Events

Resources	Classification										
	Attractiveness					Singularity			Notoriety		
	International	National	Regional	Local	Null	Good	Average	Common	High	Average	Weak
<i>Festivals, Events and Scheduled Events</i>											
WRC – Rally Portugal	X					X			X		
Rally Vieira do Minho			X				X			X	
Cycling Grand Prix "O JOGO"		X					X			X	
"Feira do Fumeiro"		X					X			X	
Flea market ("Feira da Ladra")		X					X			X	
Agro Vieira			X				X			X	

Source: own elaboration

6. Discussion and final considerations

The present research constitutes a summary of a broader and more exhaustive work of inventorying 124 existing resources in the municipality of Vieira do Minho (cf. Costa, 2021).

With regard to natural resources or attractions, 20 resources were classified. From this sample we highlight three. First of all, Cabreira Mountain ("Serra da Cabreira") for its attractiveness, uniqueness and notoriety. It is a place that attracts visitors of various nationalities for its landscapes, the fauna and flora that are present there.

The Caniçada reservoir, which comprises the municipalities of Vieira do Minho and Terras de Bouro, has a very significant tourist flow, however, when we look at the existing support infrastructures in the neighbouring municipality, we can conclude that they are better equipped to boost tourism. An example of this is the marina

at Terras de Bouro. The only comparative advantage (Díaz Fernández, 2015) that Vieira do Minho has over the municipality of Terras de Bouro is the accommodation offer, which is the widest and best quality.

To overcome the lack of support infrastructure, the municipality of Vieira do Minho has already designed an anchorage and marina. Access is good via tarmac roads.

Despite being a well-explored resource, there will still be elements to improve and places within the mountain that are not yet susceptible to being presented to tourists as attractions.

After the preparation of the present investigation, it was found that, in order for it to be able to generate a fully complete inventory, it would have to be expanded, since there are still many more tourist resources to be indicated and evaluated. In any case, the analysis of the municipality's cultural heritage was outside the scope of this article, due to its extension, which would require a parish-by-parish analysis. The hierarchization of resources by category also involves some dose of subjectivity (Leno Cerro, 1992). However, this inventory should be seen as a subsidy to knowledge of the tourist potential of this territory, likely to be enriched and systematized in the near future. The basic implication of the inventory of tourist resources proposed here is the possibility of creating a hierarchy of resources according to their potential to attract tourist demand. According to the methodology defined by the Organization of American States (cit. by Silva, 2017, p. 211) there are 5 differential hierarchies: (a) Level 5: international interest (resource with exceptional characteristics, capable of, by itself, originating an important flow of visitors); (b) Level 4: national interest (resource with outstanding characteristics, capable of originating an important flow of visitors by itself, or together with other local attractions); (c) Level 3: resource with some capacity of attraction, able to interest long-distance visitors, but who travel to the place for other tourist reasons; (d) Level 2: regional or local interest (attractive with interest capable of originating tourist trips, usually of proximity); (e) Level 1: resources without sufficient merit to attract tourist flows on their own, but which play a complementary role, enhancing other resources.

Thus, it will be necessary to continue this investigation, by increasing the inventory of tourist resources and resorting to deeper bibliographical research, as well as intensifying field work, with a view to cataloguing all extant resources in the municipality of Vieira do Minho for the creation of a comprehensive database that is likely to become an essential tool for municipal tourism planning. The historical, monumental or artistic resources of the various parishes will be the object of analysis in subsequent scientific productions.

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ANNEX 1: TOURIST RESOURCE FORM

Resource Photo

Name:

Description:

Ownership and classification:

Assessment:

1. Attractiveness – (International, National, Regional, Local, Null);
2. Uniqueness – (Good, Average, or Vulgar in class);
3. Notoriety – (High, Average. Weak).

Accessibility

(e. g. Very good, Good but not signposted, or difficult to park, etc.).

Comments