

Maribel's Douro notes

The spectacular viewpoints (miradouros)

The **Miradouro de São Leonardo de Galafura**, a 28 minute, 15-kilometer drive northeast from Régua, is both the highest viewpoint in the entire valley and the highest in Portugal. On a clear day one can see for 30 kilometers. At the viewpoint there is parking, a small (locked) chapel and some stone picnic tables, nothing more except for truly exceptional, jaw dropping views. (There is a restaurant São Leonardo on the highway below but you may not find it open.) It's said that poets have come here to be inspired.

The **Miradouro de Casal de Loivos**, just a 10-minute drive directly north from Pinhão, is the most accessible belvedere of the three. And the BBC proclaimed it "the best view in the world". You'll find it in the small village of Casal de Loivos.

After taking photographs at the platform you can tour the olive mill museum, **D'Origem**, while there. From the Miradouro, walk towards the village, past a café on your right and at the junction you'll see the entrance. Price includes 3 wine tastings as well as olive oil and honey. It's open from 10-12 and 2-5 or until 6:30 during the harvest season. If you don't wish to drive, you can take a taxi from the Pinhão rail station for about €10 each way.

The **Miradouro de São Salvador do Mundo**, off the EN222-3, a 10-minute drive from São João da Pesqueira, makes for a longer and much more challenging journey due to the narrowness of the road but one is rewarded with spectacular views looking down at the Valeria dam. Take the N222 east from Pinhão to get there, then follow direction Carrazeda / Ferradosa)

The **Miradouro de Frei-Estêvão**—If you don't wish to venture as far south as São João da Pesqueira or if you have limited time, this handy and quite spectacular viewpoint and picnic area is found on the N2 road going south towards Ervedosa do Douro (north side of the road). It makes for an easy stop on the return from Ervedosa village to Pinhão after a delightful lunch at Ervedosa's Toca da Raposa.