

Regional Profile

Geographic Location

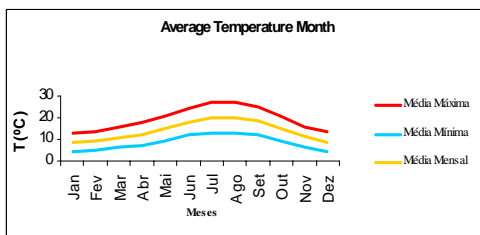
The town of Guimarães is in the District of Braga, and belongs to the region of the Ave Valley (Nut III), whose borders to the north and north-east are Póvoa de Lanhoso and Braga, respectively, To the south east lies Santo Tirso, to the south and south east lie Lousada, Felgueiras and Vizela, and the river bordering the town of Fafe and to the west is Famalicão. There are various roads that link the town, such as the EE.NN. (101, 105, 106 e 206), as well as the extended IC5/A7 and A11 and soon the IP9.

Morphologically Guimarães is, in a generic way, surrounded by the Mountains of Outeiro and Penedice, Sameiro and Falperra, to the north by Senhora do Monte and to the south east by Santa Marinha and Santa Catarina (Penha). To the south runs the River Vizela through the valley; from north east to south east, dividing the town. The River Ave, with its extensive valley and one of its tributaries, the River Selho also runs to the south.

This location influences the **climate of the region**, which is characterized by cold and rainy winters and hot, humid summers, with quite large temperature ranges, due to being close to the coast and its position in a valley surrounded by mountains.

CLIMATE DETAILS:

TEMPERATURE



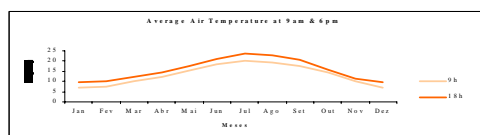
Average Annual Temperature – 14°C

Average Temperature during coldest month – 8°C (January)

Average Temperature during hottest month – 20,2°C (July)

Average minimum temperature – 4,5°C (January)

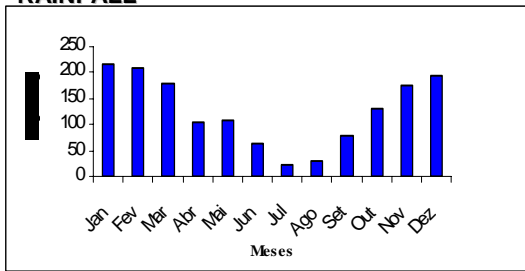
Average maximum Temperature – 27,2°C (July)



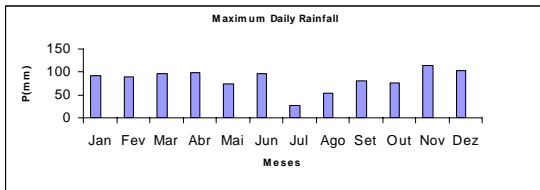
Average Temperature 9am – 13,3 °C

Average Temperature 6pm – 15,8°C

RAINFALL

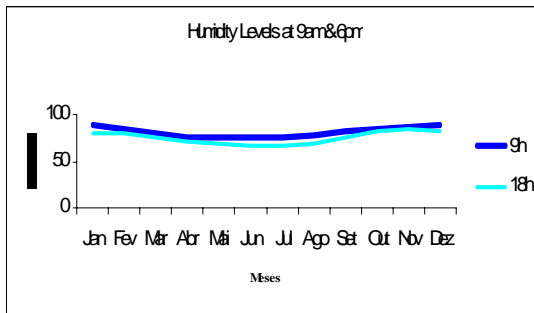


Average Annual Rainfall – 1514,8 mm
 Month with least Rainfall (July)- (20,9 mm)
 Month with most Rainfall (January) - (217,1 mm)



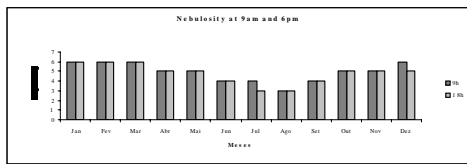
Average Rainfall (daily maximum) – 114 mm
 (November)

HUMIDITY



Annual Average at 9am – 81%
Annual average at 6pm – 75%

NEBULOSITY



Most nebulosity at 9am– December
Most nebulosity – Jan, Feb, Mar, Dec
Least nebulosity – Jun, Jul, Aug

Regarding **hidrography**, the hydrological basin of the Ave, with an area of 1,390 Km², has its border to the north, with the Cávado basin, to the east by the Douro basin and to the south, the basins of Leça and the Douro.

The River Ave's font is on the Cabreira mountain, in Vieira do Minho, at an altitude of 1200m, and flows for 94km, in a westerly direction, to the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean next to the town of Vila do Conde. The hydrographic scenario in the Ave Valley is constituted of a dense network of permanent waterways, that is, the rivers flow all year, which makes for an enormous superficial water resource.

The River Ave is the converging axis of a number of waterways, which, in conjunction with the orography of the area, makes the Ave Valley particularly singular in its characteristics.

The largest rivers in the Ave Valley are the Rivers Vizela and Selho. It is also to be mentioned that the density of existent waterways of the Ave are associated with the gentle slopes and drainage, which is sometimes difficult due to the long periods of flooding during winter.

The **geology** of Guimarães is essentially granite rocks, with small outcrops of schistous rocks in the north east and south east of the region. Along the Rivers Ave, Vizela and Selho, there are superficial depositis of gravel beds as well as thick clay.

Characteristics of the Forests in Guimarães:

The forests in the area hold two important positions: **production and ecology**.

According to Monteiro Alves, Guimarães has two phyto-climatic zones of large forest area: the Sub-mountainous sub-Atlantic region and the Atlantic Basin region.

The sub-mountainous sub-Atlantic region is a zone of a variety of forest types, where you can find the wild pine tree, (*Pinus Pinaster*), the *Pseudotsuga* (*Pseudotsuga Menziesii*), the chestnut, (*Castanea Sativa*) and the national oak, (*Quercus Robur*).

The other ecological zone, the Atlantic Basin, is considered the best place for the national oak and where the wild pine tree, the eucalyptus and the radiata pine also grow.

The forested areas are almost exclusively on high ground, uniformly distributed throughout the area. The most common type of forest is that of wild pine and eucalyptus trees, with some small areas distinguished by being mainly national oak forests. On the banks of rivers, you can find elm, alder, willow and poplar which play an important ecological role and characterize this part of the countryside.

There are some areas where there is only uncultivated area. This is the result of erosion and the natural degradation of the soil.

II – DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The town area of Guimarães is about **243 Km²**, and is made up of **68 parishes** which are divided into nine small towns: Brito, Lordelo, Moreira de Cónegos, Pevidém, Ponte, Ronfe, Taipas, Serzedelo and S. Torcato. The **resident population is 159,576** (INE – Census 2001).

The strong demographic dynamism of the town can be shown by the high **population density of 658,54 Hab/km²** and by a **growth percentage 1991/2001 of 10,8%**.

There has been a decrease of population in some parishes, mostly in the north and north east, due to the rural characteristics of the parishes and the lack of industry.

With regard to the age of the resident population, (2001), there was a large group between the ages of 25 and 64 in all Guimarães' zone and there is a growth in the number of people over 65. In spite of the tendency of an ageing population, of over 65s, **the age index of the area is 52.2%** which shows that the town of Guimarães is a young place.

II – ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Production in the area is shown by 53.8% of the population being active. The highest percentage of those employed in the **secondary** sector, at 64.8%. 1.5% are employed in the **primary** sector and 33.7% in the **tertiary sector**.

The manpower available is young and there is a high participation rate among women, who have a low level of formal education, on the whole. The unemployment rate (2001 census) is of 5.3%, but has since increased.

Agrarian structure – many people own their own plot of land and informal, part-time agricultural activity is a pastime, for subsistence or as a complementary activity to industry. It is still an important part of the region's economy, and even its "modus – vivendi". Within this section, the wine-making process can be mentioned as it passes the frontiers of the region. There has been a reduction of the population who work exclusively in the primary sector, but this does not necessarily signify a decrease in its influence on the economy. Although it takes second place in relation to the area's industry, it is relevant in the area of multi-activity. It is a factor of development on a social-economic level of the region, and is a factor against the cyclic crises in the jobs market.

Industry – factories have been in Guimarães for many years, with tanning, cutlery and most importantly textiles being the main examples. The manpower required was intensive and the factories were spread out. Factories were initially built by rivers, which were the source of energy, were supported by a vast national and municipal network, and which were a fundamental factor permitting products to be drained, either towards the coast (Oporto) or to the interior, (Spain). Recently, there has been a rise in shoe and plastic factories.

The current situation is almost mono-industrial, and spread out. It requires manpower and there have recently been some incentives to allow the building of factories in other easily-accessible areas so that flexibility be maintained between the business, the house, and the field, as long as no pollution is caused.

Tertiary Sector – the tertiary sector has increased in the last ten years, which is not strange if you consider the influence of the University of Minho in Guimarães and the **elevation of the Historical Centre of Guimarães to the status of World Heritage Site**. However, the secondary sector is prevalent due to the proximity of Braga and Oporto, which have a strong presence in this field, and also for being at a distance from the industrial installations.