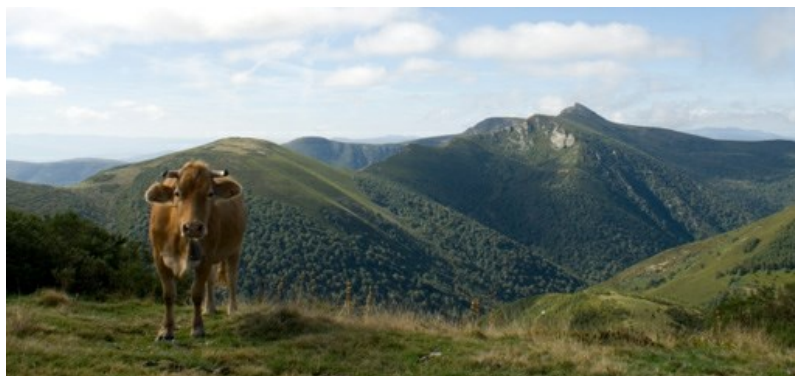


The Galician language



Galician is the language spoken in Galicia in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula. It is a co-official language within the Spanish state together with Catalan, Basque and Spanish. Nowadays it is considered a Romance language with Celtic and Germanic elements. It is spoken by the great majority of the Galician population (around three million people) and by millions of emigrants in Europe and America.

Studying Galician is useful

Galician and Portuguese were born as the same language in the same kingdom. Galician and Portuguese are varieties of a single Latin-derived language which was spoken in the territories of the medieval Kingdom of Galicia.

Historically, the Galician-Portuguese language originated in that kingdom. After the County of Portugal became an independent kingdom the language that had originated in the Kingdom of Galicia spread to the south west of the Iberian Peninsula and after that, with the subsequent colonization to other continents, it also became the language of the so-called Lusophone countries (Portuguese-speaking countries)

Therefore...

- With Galician you can communicate with Portuguese speakers all over the world, that is, with 240 million people in 4 continents
- With Galician you can know about the origins of the Portuguese-speaking countries around the world

Studying Galician is interesting

Galicia is one of the Celtic nations.

Santiago de Compostela, the capital of Galicia, was one of the most important religious and cultural places in medieval Europe together with Rome and Jerusalem. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, the Way of St. James, has been a very important destination throughout the centuries, from the 9TH century until today.

Galicia was also the first Kingdom of Europe.

John of Gaunt, the first Duke of Lancaster, was also the King of Galicia.

In the Middle Ages Galician shared the cultural status with Latin. It was the language of culture and prestige as it was the language of the Kings.

Over the centuries Galician was preserved thanks to the courage of the Galician people who even during difficult historical periods - such as the so-called Dark Centuries where Galician was not any more the language of official uses or during Franco's dictatorship where all the languages spoken in the Peninsula except Spanish were forbidden - were able to maintain it as a spoken language. Galicia has a beautiful landscape and an amazing coastline.

Studying Galician is fun

- In Galicia we preserve millions of ancient festas and festivals and traditional food.
- One of the most popular Celtic Festivals in the world, the Festival of Ortigueira, takes place in Galicia.
- You can learn about a different culture and a peculiar way of living.

You can find out more about us on **Facebook (Galego Birmingham)** (<http://www.facebook.com/galego.birmingham>) and on **Galbascat (Galician, Basque and Catalan Studies' blog)** (<http://galbascat.blogspot.co.uk/>).