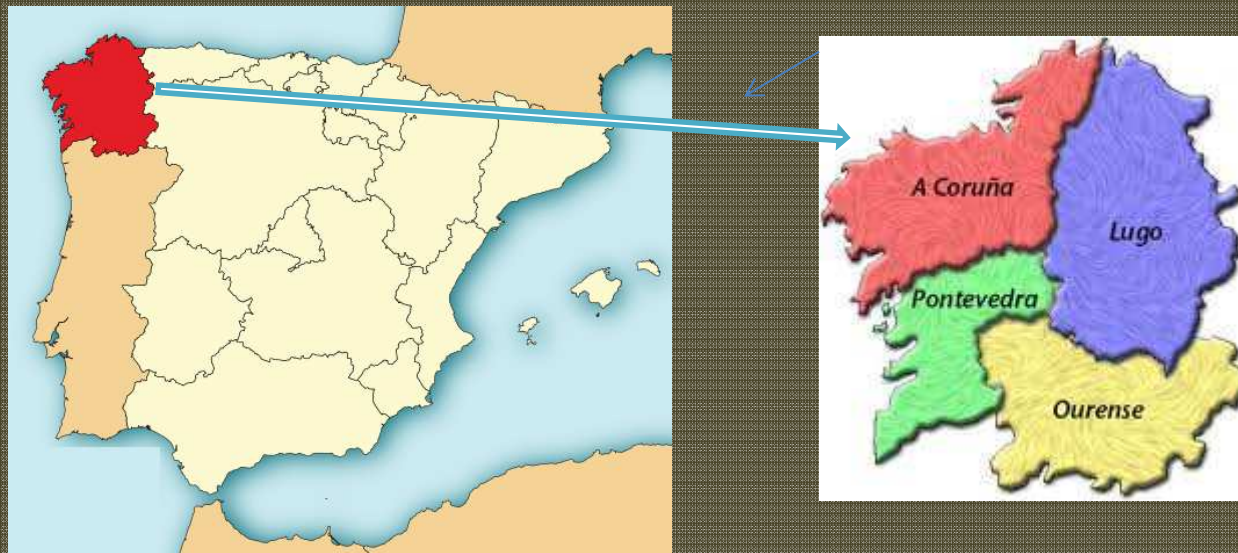




**You say: Galicia is small**  
**I say: Galicia is an universe**  
**Vicente Risco (1884-1963)**  
**a Galician writer**



**Galicia or Galiza** , is an autonomous community in the northwest of Spain, with the official status of a *nationality*. It comprises the provinces of A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense and Pontevedra.



**Total Area** 29,574.4 km<sup>2</sup> • **Area rank** 7th (5.8% of Spain)  
**Population** (2012) • **Total** 2,778,913 • **Rank** 5th (6% of Spain)  
**Density** 94/km<sup>2</sup>  
**Capital:** Santiago de Compostela

The name **Galicia** derives from the Latin toponym Callaecia, later *Gallaecia*, related to the name of an ancient Celtic tribe that resided north of the Douro river, the Gallaeci or Callaeci in Latin, or *Kallaikói* in Greek. These *Callaeci* were the first tribe in the area to help the Lusitanians against the invading Romans. The Romans then applied their name to all the other tribes in the north west who spoke the same language and lived the same life.

The name evolved during the Middle Ages from *Gallaecia*, sometimes written *Galletia*, to *Gallicia*. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the written emergence of the Galician language, *Galiza* became the most usual written form of the name of the country, being replaced during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries by the current form, *Galicia*, which coincides with the Castilian Spanish name.



A **palloza** house in eastern Galicia, an evolved form of the *Iron Age* local houses.



Partial view of the Romanesque interior of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.



Roman Brigde (Ourense).



The interior of Galicia is a hilly landscape, composed of relatively low mountain ranges, usually below 1,000 m high, without sharp peaks, rising to 2,000 m in the eastern mountains. There are many rivers, most (though not all) running down relatively gentle slopes in narrow river valleys, though at times their courses become far more rugged, as in the canyons of the Sil river, Galicia's second most important river after the Miño.



Topographically, a remarkable feature of Galicia is the presence of many firth-like inlets along the coast, estuaries that were drowned with rising sea levels after the ice age. These are called **rías** and are divided into the smaller *Rías Altas* ("Upper Rías"), and the larger *Rías Baixas* ("Lower Rías").

The **Ría de Arousa** (Pontevedra) has the largest surface area of any of Galicia's **rías**, or indeed of any in Spain.





**Galicia** is poetically known as the "*country of the thousand rivers*" ("o país dos mil ríos"). The largest and most important of these rivers is the **Miño**, known as *O Pai Miño* (Father Minho), 307.5 km long and discharging 419 m<sup>3</sup> per second, with its affluent the **Sil**, which has created a spectacular canyon. Most of the rivers in the inland are tributaries of this fluvial system, which drains some 17027 km<sup>2</sup>. Other rivers run directly into the Atlantic Ocean or the Cantabrian Sea, most of them having short courses. Only the Navia, Ulla, Tambre, and Limia have courses longer than 100 km.



Galicia has more than 2,800 plant species. Endemic plants are represented by 31 taxons. A few oak forests (known locally as *fragas*) remain, particularly in the north-central part of the province of Lugo and the north of the province of A Coruña (Fragas do Eume).







Galicia has 262 inventoried species of vertebrates,  
including 12 species of freshwater fish, 15  
amphibians, 24 reptiles, 152 birds and 59 mammals.





The animals most often thought of as being "typical" of Galicia are the livestock raised there. The **Galician Pony** is native to the region, as is the **Galician Blond cow** and the domestic fowl known as the **galiña de Mos**. The latter is an endangered species, although it is showing signs of a comeback since 2001. Galicia's woodlands and mountains are home to rabbits, hares, wild boars and roe deer, all of which are popular with hunters. Several important bird migration routes pass through Galicia, and some of the community's relatively few environmentally protected areas are Special Protection Areas (such as on the Ría de Ribadeo) for these birds.



In comparison to the other regions of Spain, **the major economic benefit of Galicia is its fishing Industry**. Galicia is a land of economic contrast. While the western coast, with its major population centers and its fishing and manufacturing industries, is prosperous and increasing in population, the rural hinterland — the provinces of Ourense and Lugo — are economically dependent on traditional agriculture, based on small landholdings called minifundios. **However, the rise of tourism, sustainable forestry and organic and traditional agriculture are bringing other possibilities** to the Galician economy without compromising the preservation of the natural resources and the local culture.





**Traditionally, Galicia depended mainly on agriculture and fishing.**

Reflecting that history, the Community Fisheries Control Agency, which coordinates fishing controls in European Union waters is based in Vigo.

Nonetheless, **today the tertiary sector of the economy (the service sector) is the largest**, with 582,000 workers out of a regional total of 1,072,000 (as in 2002).



**The secondary sector (manufacturing) includes shipbuilding in Vigo and Ferrol, textiles and granite work in A Coruña.** A Coruña also manufactures automobiles, but not nearly on the scale of the automobile manufacturing in Vigo. **The Centro de Vigo de PSA Peugeot Citroën**, founded in 1958, makes about 450,000 vehicles annually (455,430 in 2006 a Citroën C4 Picasso made in 2007 was their nine-millionth vehicle.





Arteixo, an industrial municipality in the A Coruña metropolitan area, is the headquarters of **Inditex**, world's largest textile company. Of their eight brands, **Zara** is the best-known; indeed, it is the best-known Spanish brand of any sort on an international basis. In 2007, Inditex had 9,435 million euros in sales for a net profit of 1,250 million euros.



Galicia has partial self-governance, in the form of a devolved government, established on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1978 and reinforced by the Galician Statute of Autonomy, ratified on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1981. There are three branches of government: the executive branch, the **Xunta de Galicia**, consisting of the President and the other independently elected 'ministers'; the legislative branch consisting of the **Galician Parliament**; and the judicial branch consisting of the High Court of Galicia and lower courts.



**Parliament of Galicia**



**Pazo de Raxoi  
(City Hall)**





Roman Wall (Lugo)



Hercules lighthouse  
(A Coruña)



Monastery of Oseira  
(Ourense)



Raised Granary- *Hórreo*  
(Lira)



Cathedral (Santiago)



Old Town  
(Pontevedra)





The most important  
area for tourists



The Rodas beach in the Cíes Islands



Saint Tecla mountain and Miño river mouth