LIME KILN

The construction of these lime kilns dates back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, a time of hunger in which farmers discovered that quicklime could improve their crop yields.

Physical structure

The kilns consist of a cylindrical hearth with a dome and an opening at the top through which to load the stone. There is another opening at the bottom, called ‘agoa’, for firewood and below this, a third opening, called ‘auskoa’, for air intake and ash. Some had a small roof or ‘legorra’ at the entrance.

They were built near limestone rocks, the raw material they needed, and on sloping ground, in order to have easy access to the upper and lower openings.

An arduous process

Private or communal property, groups of 6 to 8 people worked on them, depending on the size of the kiln. All kinds of firewood and brushwood, except fern, were used as fuel.

First, the lime was cooked at a low temperature, raising the heat to around 1,000ºC. It was then kept at this heat for 5 or 6 days.

This caused the limestone, now quicklime, to slowly shrink. It was left to cool for two days and then extracted to share out among the locals.

ZUGARRAMURDI
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