
Buçaco

ABOUT



A large and majestic forest, the Serra do Buçaco is a genuine botanical garden where roughly 700 native and exotic species can be found, all of them protected by a Papal Bull issued in the seventeenth century threatening anyone damaging the trees with excommunication.

It was in the sixteenth century that the Vicar General of the Barefoot Carmelites considered this to be the ideal spot for building a retreat, a place where the friars could devote themselves to a life of contemplation in contact with nature. A modest convent was therefore built here, as well as various penitential hermitages and chapels scattered around the forest. Together with the numerous lakes and crosses, these buildings lend this spot a truly magical atmosphere. The breathtaking beauty of the Serra do Buçaco, particularly the Vale dos Fetos (Fern Valley) and the Fonte Fria (Cold Fountain), can be admired from the Miradouro da Cruz Alta (High Cross), from where there is a panoramic view over the whole of the surrounding region.

Today, the only parts of the original monastery that can be visited are the cloisters, the chapel and some of the monks' cells, since in the nineteenth century some of its original area was replaced by a neo-Manueline palace that has since been converted into a luxury hotel.

In the nineteenth century, the Serra do Buçaco was the site of a famous battle in which the Portuguese obtained an important victory over Napoleon's invading French troops. Today, this event is permanently commemorated by an obelisk and remembered in the Military Museum, with the victory being celebrated each year on 27 September.