
Barcelos

ABOUT



After crossing the old bridge over the River Cávado, we enter into one of the most emblematic cities of popular Minho art, Barcelos.

Is an ancient city, situated in an area that has archaeological remains dating back to prehistoric times, although it was really in the 12th century that its history began, first when D. Afonso Henriques granted the settlement a charter and turned it into a town, and then later, in 1298, when D. Dinis rewarded his chief steward by making him a count and giving him the town as part of his title.

In 1385, the Constable Nuno Álvares Pereira became the seventh Count of Barcelos. He then gave Barcelos as a dowry in the marriage of his daughter D. Beatriz to D. Afonso, the bastard son of D. João I. There then followed a period of great development and dynamic growth for Barcelos, displayed by the building of the bridge, the city walls, of which there still remains the Torre da Porta Nova, the Paço dos Duques and the Igreja Matriz.

It is these monuments that today form the city's historic centre, which still retains a pleasant mediaeval atmosphere and amidst which are scattered manor houses and other historic residences, such as the Solar dos Pinheiros or the Constable's House.

A stroll around Barcelos must necessarily include the old fairground, now known as the Campo da República, where you will find the 18th-century churches of Bom Jesus da Cruz and Nossa Senhora do Terço and where Portugal's largest handicraft fair is held every Thursday.

If you miss the weekly market, you should definitely visit the Ceramics Museum and Barcelos Handicraft Centre, where you can get a good general view of Minho arts and crafts. The brightly-coloured Barcelos Cockerel is the most representative of all the pieces produced here, but one should not forget the brass bands and the figures depicting the region's customs and habits.