
Arraiolos

ABOUT



Arraiolos is a pleasant Alentejo town, whose foundation dates back to the second century BC. The mediaeval castle was built at the orders of D. Dinis (1279-1325), although the town soon spread beyond its walls. An important part of the town's artistic heritage is the sixteenth-century Salvador church, with some extremely beautiful paintings.

The name of this town is well known internationally thanks to the famous Arraiolos carpets, which are produced here by the local craftsmen and women, having been referred to in documents as long ago as the sixteenth century. Some art historians have devoted themselves to studying and characterising this art, which has continued to grow in importance over the years. The types of pattern that are used can be divided into three distinct periods: the first period (in the eighteenth century) was based on compositions that betrayed the decorative influences of Persian carpets (these are considered to be amongst some of the finest examples); the second period (again in the eighteenth century) brought popularly inspired designs, such as figures or animals; and the third period (at the end of the eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth century) brought less dense and much more stylised patterns.