

Vila Real

ABOUT



Photo: Nuno Calvet

The provincial capital of Trás-os-Montes, Vila Real stands on a 427m high outcrop that forms the watershed between the Corgo and Cabril rivers with its elegant houses harmoniously descending the slopes.

The first royal charter was granted to Vila Real by king Dinis (reigned 1279-1325) in 1289. In it, the king granted its inhabitants the right to refuse hospitality to nobility and knights who thus had to seek shelter beyond its walls. That did not prevent Vila Real welcoming in many noble families whose residences were incorporated into the city as it grew in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Whoever visits modern Vila Real cannot but be surprised by the sight of so many stone coats of arms dignifying the facades of so many buildings, and the city's coat of arms, featuring a sword and gaming stick tells the story of its first count.

The city's coat of arms features a sword and a gaming stick. To fully enjoy this attractive city, where looking up there are always the surrounding mountains, begin at the place where, in the 13th century, the first residents began building what has become "medieval Vila Real", followed by "old Vila Real ancient" and completing the stroll in the leafy Municipal Park, bordering modern Vila Real. From here, one possibility is to head up to Calvário, where there is a wonderful semi-circular view out over the city, including to the west, the Marão and Alvão hills and, to the south, the Montemuro mountains. To the north of this viewpoint are the more recent neighbourhoods of the last hundred years.

Roughly 3 Km from the city, visit one of the most outstanding jewels of Portuguese Baroque the Mateus Palace.