

Sé Catedral de Faro

ABOUT



Photo: Turismo do Algarve

A remarkable artistic ensemble.

Although there is no documentary evidence, it is probable that the Church of Santa Maria of Faro - consecrated to Marian Devotion and built from 1251, two years after the reconquest of the village, by order of the Archbishop of Braga, D. João Viegas - has been built on the remains of an ancient Paleochristian basilica that had been converted into a mosque. It conserves a number of architectural elements of the original building from the 13th / 14th centuries, like the bell tower and two chapels of the cross. In 1271, the temple was gifted to the Order of St. James as a reward for services rendered in conquering the area. It was elevated to Cathedral in the 14th century, when it underwent a series of extensions during the reign of D. Dinis.

In 1577, Faro Cathedral was elevated to the Episcopal seat of the Diocese of the Algarve, replacing that of Silves. In 1596, the church and the city were ransacked and set on fire by the English troops of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. Of the Gothic era, only the sanctuary chapels, the facade tower and the walls of the nave survived, while the altars and the wooden ceilings were destroyed.

The interior was later rebuilt in Mannerist style during the 17th century, being enriched with several works in gilded carving and an organ built around 1715 - from which King D. João V had a copy made in 1750, and which was sent to the Cathedral of Mariana, in Brazil. The earthquakes of 1722 and 1755 caused some damage to the building and spurred other works, but since then this church has not undergone any major changes.

Therefore, the interior of the Faro Cathedral contains one of the most valuable artistic ensembles of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Algarve. The altarpiece and the chancel of the main chapel, the Chapel of the Saint Lenho, are noteworthy, being covered in gilded carvings, where you can admire an important set of reliquaries and the tomb of the founding bishop, as well as 17th century tiles, figurative panels of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the floor panelling in the main chapel and the side walls of the temple. The Chapel of Our Lady of Pleasures is a tiny jewel of Baroque art with fine examples of gilded carving, inlays, tiles and painting.

In the main Cathedral Square two other notable buildings warrant attention: the Episcopal Palace and the Episcopal Seminary of St. Joseph.

Contacts

Largo da Sé 8000-138 Faro

Telephone: +351 289 806 632 / 289 823 018

Accessibility