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## Mosteiro de Alcobaça

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### ABOUT



The largest Gothic church of the Order of Cister.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this imposing monastery is one of the most impressive and beautiful testimonies of the Cistercian architecture throughout Europe. The Abbey Foundation Charter dates from April 8, 1153 and, despite its almost 900 years, its set of medieval premises remains intact. Its church is the first and largest in primitive Gothic style, built in Portugal during the Middle Ages.

Contemporary of the foundation of Portugal, the Monastery also plays a role in its history. Founded by the first king, D. Afonso Henriques, and later consecrated to the Marian cult, it was built from the donation of lands in Alcobaça to Bernardo de Claraval and to the Order of Cistercians for the victory over the Moors in the conquest of Santarém.

Construction began in 1178 and ended about 100 years later. At the time, the master masons of the Order of Cîteaux were experimenting with a new "mode" of construction - Gothic - introducing this architectural language into Portuguese territory. The monks, who wore white habits, created a work of unique civilization in the region, whose primary example is the public school system introduced from 1269. Royal grants received by Decree throughout several reigns became the Coutos de Alcobaça, vast territorial domains that the monks populated, developed and where they established a school of agriculture.

On the Church's facade, only the Gothic portico is original. Flanking it, the airiness of the statues of St. Benedict and St. Bernard conflicts with the heavy baroque frontispiece and bell towers that were added in the 18th century, when the last buildings of the monastery were also completed.

The grand central nave, stripped of any adornment, gives a sense of elevation and spirituality. At the centre of each arm of the transept we can see two masterpieces of the medieval statuary, the tombs of D. Pedro I (1357-67) and D. Inês, placed face to face so that they can meet again on the Day of Resurrection.

Be sure to visit the impressive collection of medieval buildings, such as the Refectory, the Dormitory and the Chapter Hall, as well as the Cloister of D. Dinis, the surprising Kitchen and the Hall of the Kings.

### Contacts

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**Timetable**

October to March 9.00 -&nbsp; 18.00April to September 9.00 - 19.00&nbsp;Ticket office closes 30 minutes before the monument closes.

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**Accessibility**