

Sé Catedral de Viseu

ABOUT



Photo: ARTP Centro de Portugal

Sé Cathedral of Viseu

The exterior of this cathedral is impressive, notwithstanding its heavy and austere appearance. The cathedral is built around a Romanic construction, of which the surviving elements are two towers flanking the main façade that exhibits architectural tastes and currents from a later epoch.

The main façade was erected in the mid-17th century in substitution of the former Renaissance façade that collapsed in 1635. Interesting details include six niches with stone sculptures. In the last of the six niches there is a statue of Santa Maria da Assunção, the patron saint of the Cathedral. Below, also in the centre, there is a statue of S. Teotónio, a man of many virtues who served as Prior of the cathedral between 1112 and 1119 and who is patron saint of the city of Viseu. The lateral niches contain statues representing the four evangelists with their respective symbols.

The most interesting aspect of this Portuguese cathedral is its interior, above all the original vaulted ceiling where the ribs intersect in a cross and are admirable stone sculptures, resembling a thick rope with a knot in the middle -- nautical attributes that were very popular in the Manueline style, conferring great elegance to the whole. The terminal points of the vaulted arches are completed by Ançã stone fleurons, that display the coats of arms of several Kings and bishops, in particular D. Diogo Ortiz - Bishop of the city and astrologer who was responsible for commissioning the building, that was terminated in 1513.

The main chapel, modified in the 18th century, was previously decorated with an exquisite altarpiece by Vasco Fernandes representing scenes from the life of Christ, which are now kept in the Grão Vasco Museum. The current altarpiece -- a baroque work that reveals the prevailing tastes during the reign of D. João V, was produced by Francisco Machado. The elegant 18th-century row of gilded woodwork chairs, is made of Brazilian Jacaranda wood.

To one side, a corridor covered in 18th-century azulejo tiles provides access to the sacristy, built in 1574, enriched with paintings on the wooden ceiling, and featuring the coats of arms of the Bishop D. Jorge de Ataíde in the centre, who was commissioned the building. The walls are totally covered in 17th-century polychrome azulejo tiles.

In order to round off the tour, it's well worth visiting the cloister, accessed from the church and the cathedral's Treasury-Museum.

Contacts

Adro da Sé 3500-195 Viseu

Telephone: +351 232 436 065

Accessibility