The beautiful building that was once the episcopal palace now houses one of the most carefully kept museums in inland Portugal. Visiting the museum is a double pleasure, firstly because of the great wealth of the museum’s collections and secondly because of the opportunity that it provides to walk around the inside of an old palace, appreciating its grandeur and austere beauty.

Amongst the collections exhibited, special attention is drawn to the paintings of Vasco Fernandes, more popularly known as Grão Vasco, and the collection of Flemish tapestries. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the bishop of Lamego, D. João Madureira, commissioned a large altarpiece from the great Portuguese master, which was to be used to decorate the cathedral chancel. Of the 20 panels originally painted by the artist, five have survived until the present day and are all exhibited at the museum: the Creation of the Animals, the Annunciation made by the Angel Gabriel to Mary, the Visitation of the Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, the Presentation of the Infant Jesus at the Temple and Circumcision, examples of some of the very best creative work in sixteenth-century Portuguese art.

The tapestries at Lamego museum date from the same period as Grão Vasco’s paintings and were manufactured in Brussels. Nobles and clergy used them to decorate the interior of their palaces, whilst simultaneously making them more comfortable. Amongst the exhibits is a tapestry alluding to the Judgement in Paradise, an extremely beautiful composition entitled the Temple of Latone, illustrated with mythological episodes relating to the goddess Latone and four tapestries telling the story of Oedipus, the most tragic episode in Greek mythology.

On the ground floor are a series of rooms devoted to archaeology, displaying a number of mediaeval tombs, a most beautiful mediaeval cross and various stones bearing the coats of arms of Portuguese families, amongst other exhibits.

Attention is also drawn to the four chapels that belonged to the Chagas Convent and have been completely reconstructed inside the museum, displaying Portuguese baroque art at its most creative.

Also worthy of note are the collections of Portuguese and Indo-Portuguese furniture, various ceramic pieces, including some seventeenth-century azulejo panels, gold and silver jewellery, and a rich collection of religious vestments.

Contacts

Largo de Camões 5100-147 Lamego
Characteristics and Services
Shops
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Timetable
10am -6pm (Tuesday to Sunday) Closed: Mondays, 1 January, Easter Sunday, 1 May, 8 September and 25 December.

Payments
Travellers Cheques accepted