Palácio Nacional e Convento de Mafra

ABOUT

Photo: JTC Estoril

Palácio Nacional e Convento de Mafra

The sheer magnificence of the monumental architectural design of the palace, convent and basilica of Mafra bears witness to the opulence of the court of king João V (1707-1750). It was king João V who ordered the building of what proved to be the defining landmark of the Portuguese Baroque era. The design was by Frederico Ludovice who incorporated an architectural language and style Italian in inspiration.

The summer residence of the royal family, the Palace includes various collections featuring works by mainly Portuguese, Italian and French artists working to royal order including Baroque painting and sculpture, religious vestments and ornaments and mural paintings by leading Portuguese artists including Cirilo Volkmar Machado and Domingos Sequeira.

The Basilica houses a set of six organs, unique worldwide and they come in addition to two carillons totalling 114 bells - 57 in each tower. Made in Antwerp in the 18th century, they are also the largest of their kind worldwide.

The Rocaille Library must be seen. On the eastern wing of the Convent of Mafra, the library is housed in an 83-metre main room, the longest in the complex. It is by far the most important monastic-royal library of the 18th century in Portugal. The Monks from the Convent of Arrábida organised the some 40,000 18th and 19th century volumes into a system that has survived to this day. They drew up a catalogue featuring the titles of all books acquired through to 1819. This valuable collection includes, 16th, 17th and 18th century books, many of them highly rare, such as the 22 foreign incunabula and 41 maps.

Contacts

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Characteristics and Services

Shops
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Timetable

10am – 4.30pm (Wednesday to Monday) Closed: Tuesday, 1 January, Easter sunday, 1 May and 25 December

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