
Tour of Castelo Branco

ABOUT



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Not too big, not too small, Castelo Branco is a town on a human scale that is well worth knowing. We give some suggestions, but discovering it should be done at your own pace, exploring nooks and crannies that are not always encountered by tourists.

The visit starts in the **Cathedral (or Church of São Miguel)** and continues to the **Francisco Tavares Proença Junior Museum**. Here you can admire the Castelo Branco linen quilts, hand embroidered in many-coloured silk threads that demonstrate the skill of the artisans of the region.

The Museum is housed in the former **Bishop's Palace**, whose **Gardens** are the pride of the city. In a Baroque style, they combine fountains, lakes and waterfalls, but are mostly known for the statues of the Kings of Portugal adorning the steps. And when you look more closely you will notice that three are smaller than the others... they represent the Spanish Kings who ruled the country between 1580 and 1640. An ironic way to assert our independence!

Across the street, the former kitchen gardens of the Palace are now the **City Park**, a leisure space that besides the water fountains and reflecting pools, retains vegetable and herb gardens that recall its former purpose. Nearby is the **Museum of Sacred Art** in the Graça Convent, another visit not to be missed.

Praça de Camões or the Praça Velha (Old Square) is the centre of the **old city**. The façades of some of the buildings have markings etched in the stone, such as the armillary sphere in the Paços do Concelho (Town Hall) and the Cross of Christ in the old Order of Christ building. More mediaeval traces are to be found in the houses in the surrounding streets, such as Rua Nova and Rua dos Peleteiros (furriers). This road leads up the hill to the **castle**, the best viewpoint in the city.

The most recent attractions in the city should also be seen: the modern architecture of the **Civic Centre**, and the **Cargaleiro Museum** with a large collection of the painter's works. A boat ride on the Lake in the **Urban Park** (Parque Urbano) or a dip in the **beach swimming pool**, if it's summer, provide some pleasant moments of relaxation.

Don't miss

- > stroll in the gardens of the Bishop's Palace
- > admire the Castelo Branco quilts
- > climb up to the castle and admire the view

NEARBY

Nearby, it's worth visiting the Naturtejo Geopark, a preserved area where various species of flora and fauna are conserved. Here, there is still a way of life traditionally linked to agriculture and the rural environment, and the opportunity to taste local produce such as honey, sausages and the strong smelling Castelo Branco cheese, bearing the name of the town.

GETTING HERE

- Castelo Branco is located about 50 kilometres from the border with Spain (Segura)
- By road - A23 (Guarda-Torres Novas) with connection to A1 in Torres Novas
- By train: Beira Baixa line www.cp.pt
- By bus: Rede Expressos <http://www.rede-expressos.pt>