
Tour of Guarda

ABOUT



Photo: Turismo Centro de Portugal

Tour of Guarda

The fresh, healthy mountain air in Portugal's highest city flows through the mediaeval streets to which the granite lends nobility and a dark colour.

This is the colour of the **Cathedral**. Tall, huge and imposing, it has the appearance of a fortress with mighty towers rising as a symbol of the defence of faith and the territory. And if the exterior impresses us by its inspired design and Gothic decoration, the interior is surprising for the overwhelming height of the naves and an enormous altarpiece carved in stone.

Outside in the square, the 16th century arcades house cafés where you can rest and watch the pulsating heart of the city. Narrow streets radiate from here, with granite palaces and old houses with Gothic windows and gargoyles in the eaves. The entire **historical centre** is protected by walls, gates and mediaeval towers that have lasted to the present day almost intact.

Next to the walls lies the **Judaria** (Jewish Quarter). Most of the buildings date from the Middle Ages, preserving symbols carved in stone and the original architecture with two doors - a narrow one to access the family living space on the upper floor, another wider door to the shop on the ground floor, since most of the Jews were tradesmen.

No visit would be complete without a stop at the **Guarda Museum** housed in the former Bishop's Palace, the **Misericórdia Church** with its Baroque interior, and the **Church of São Vicente** with its remarkable tile panels. Outside the town centre, the Romanesque **Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Mileu** is one of the oldest monuments, dating from before the 12th century.

Don't miss

- > wander the streets of the Jewish Quarter and discover the Hebrew symbols etched in stone
- > visit the cathedral
- > relax on a terrace under the arcades of the 16th century Praça Velha (Old Square)
- > climb the Keep of the castle to enjoy the view over the city and the mountains

NEARBY

Serra da Estrela, located nearby, influences the quality of the air you breathe here, which was acclaimed for its purity

by the European Bioclimate Federation. The mountain is 1993 metres at its highest point and can be visited by car, or discovered in more detail by following the hiking trails of the Nature Park.

Other suggestions for nearby trips are the river beaches at Aldeia Viçosa and Valhelhas, ideal for summer days, and the historic villages spread across the region.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Getting around the city:

Buses - Guarda Municipal Transport <http://www.transportes.mun-guarda.pt>

GETTING HERE

- By road: A23 (Guarda-Torres Novas) with connection to the A1 at Torres Novas and A25 (Aveiro-Vilar Formoso) with connection to the A1 at Albergaria
- By train: (www.cp.pt) Beira Baixa and Beira Alta lines
- Bus: Rede Expressos (<http://www.rede-expressos.pt>)