
Óbidos

ABOUT



Photo: Francisco de Almeida Dias

Óbidos

The mediaeval town of Óbidos is one of the most picturesque and well preserved in Portugal.

Quite close to the capital and located on high ground near the Atlantic coast, Óbidos has had a strategic importance in the territory. It had already been settled prior to the Romans' arrival in the Iberian Peninsula, and the town prospered after being chosen by the royal family. King Dinis offered it to his wife, Queen Isabel, in the 13th century, and it became part of Casa das Rainhas (Queens' Estate), who improved and enriched it throughout the various dynasties. This is one of the main reasons for the high concentration of churches in this small place.

You will find a well preserved **castle** within the walls, and a maze of streets and white houses that are a delight to stroll amongst. Along with the Manueline porticoes, the colourful window boxes and the small squares, many fine examples of religious and civil architecture from the town's golden days provide a host of reasons for making a visit.

Santa Maria Main Church, the **Misericórdia Church**, the **Church of São Pedro**, the Pillory and, beyond the walls, the Aqueduct and the round-shaped **Senhor Jesus da Pedra Sanctuary**, are just some of the landmarks that warrant an attentive visit. So does the **Óbidos City Museum**, where you will find the works of **Josefa de Óbidos**, an influential 17th century painter and a woman with an irreverent artistic stance for her time. Her paintings reflect her studies with the great masters of the time, such as the Spanish Zurbarán and Francisco de Herrera, and the Portuguese André Reinoso and Baltazar Gomes Figueira, her father.

Any time is good to visit Óbidos. It is an inspiring suggestion for a romantic or simply a peaceful weekend because of the love stories that have been enacted there and for its mediaeval setting; and if you include an overnight stay in the castle, then you'll attain perfection.

The **local cuisine** features bouillabaisse made with fish from the Óbidos Lagoon, which will taste even better if accompanied by the wines of the region of Oeste. Another attraction is the famous Ginjinha de Óbidos (sour cherry brandy), which can be enjoyed in various places, preferably drunk from a small chocolate cup.

An all-year-round programme of events makes Óbidos a small but lively town. The most popular are the **International Chocolate Festival**, the **Mediaeval Market** and **Christmas**, when the town is filled with seasonal decorations. Also of note are the **Harpichord and Baroque Classical Music Seasons** and the **Opera Festival**, which lend a special feel to Óbidos, with open-air concerts on warm Summer evenings.

Not far away, is the long stretch of sand of the **El Rey Beach**, where golfers can revel in a golf course with a view over the Atlantic Ocean. Beyond **Caldas da Rainha**, whose history is also linked to Casa das Rainhas, you will find the

beach of **Foz do Arelho**, which links the Óbidos Lagoon to the sea. This is a wonderful spot for a seafood or fresh fish lunch or for a late afternoon by the sea watching the sunset.

Don't miss

- > climb up to the walls
- > drink gínginha from a chocolate cup

USEFUL INFORMATION

Tourist Office

Telephone: 262 959 231

Email: posto.turismo@cm-obidos.pt

Located at the entrance to the town. In the summer, there are one-hour guided tours twice a day, in Portuguese and English.

For more information on Óbidos and the region, visit:

www.obidos.pt

www.rt-oeste.pt

GETTING HERE

If you're driving, you will find a Car Park just as you get to Óbidos, outside the old town.

From Lisboa

By car, take the A8 for about 80km towards Leiria, and exit at junction 15.

From Santarém

Take the A15 motorway

From Porto

Take the A1 to Leiria and from here the A15.

Rodoviária do Tejo runs a regular coach service to Óbidos. Timetables and the various connection points can be consulted at www.rodotejo.pt

There is a railway station in Óbidos, but it is outside the town walls, and it will take 10 to 15 minutes to go up the castle hillside. Alternatively, you can call a taxi. Timetables can be consulted at www.cp.pt, under Regional or Inter-regional services.