
Nazaré

ABOUT



Photo: Sebastião da Fonseca

Nazaré

Nazaré beach, with its mild climate and natural beauty, has one of the most ancient traditions connected to fishing in Portugal.

The long sandy half-moon shaped beach, which is also the town's sea front, is known for its grandeur and for the brightly-coloured awnings that decorate the white sandy beaches, contrasting with the blue of the water.

This is the beach in Portugal that retains the more colourful fishing traditions, and it's not uncommon to encounter fishmongers who still wear the traditional seven skirts. At the end of the afternoon on Saturdays during the summer months, don't miss sitting on the seawall to watch the fascinating "Arte Xávega" (Drag Nets) spectacle, in which nets laden with fish arrive from the sea and the women scream out their wares for sale. If you don't understand the words, don't worry - they use codes that often only they know.

Facing the sea on the right, you will see an impressive headland. This is **Sítio**, which provides one of the most famous views of the Portuguese coast. It is a 318 metre rock face with a sheer drop to the sea, and is reached on foot by the bravest, or by going up the funicular. At the top sits the **Ermida da Memória** chapel, famous for the legend of the miracle that Our Lady made to prevent the horse of the nobleman, D. Fuas Roupinho, leaping over the precipice. True or not, the Suberco Belvedere shows the imprint left in the rock by one of the horse's hooves that foggy morning in 1182. Sítio also houses the **Shrine to Our Lady of Nazaré** and not far away, the **Dr. Joaquim Manso Museum** for more details about the traditions of Nazaré.

If you have the time, walk from Sítio across **Pedralva Park**, to **Pederneira**, a natural viewpoint with an unmissable view over the Nazaré coast.

These days, Nazaré's major attractions are the waves and surfing, thanks to the "**Nazaré Canyon**", a submarine geomorphological phenomenon that allows the formation of perfect giant waves. It is the largest underwater canyon in Europe, about 170 kilometres along the coast, reaching a depth of 5,000 metres.

The Hawaiian surfer Garrett McNamara received worldwide publicity when, in 2011, rode the biggest beach-breaking wave in the world, about 30 metres high, at **Praia do Norte**. He won the Billabong XXL Global BigWave Award and entered the Guinness Book of World Records. Like him, surfers from around the world visit Nazaré every year to venture into the sea. The beach also attracts sunbathers, who provide a great audience to appreciate the stunts of the young surfers.

Take the opportunity of a casual stroll through the narrow streets perpendicular to the beach to get to know Nazaré

better. Take a break in one of the restaurants to enjoy a plate of fresh seafood, grilled fish or an appetising bouillabaisse. And in the evening, there's nothing like enjoying the setting sun on any terrace overlooking the sea, while the lights come on and night falls.

Don't miss

- > go up to Sítio
- > taste the fish dishes
- > enjoy the exploits of the most fearless surfers and bodyboarders
- > watch the sunset on the beach

USEFUL INFORMATION

- There is a city bus that crosses the town, between the Harbour and Pederneira.
- Maps can be downloaded from the City Council's website (www.cm-nazare.pt) and other useful information obtained such as the hours of the Funicular which connects the beach to Sítio.
- Between Nazaré and the preserved Praia do Osso da Baleia (Whalebone Beach), near Figueira da Foz, there is a 65km cycle path that allows you to travel the coast between the blue sea and the green of the Pinhal de Leiria (Leiria Pinewood).

GETTING HERE

By road:

- Between Nazaré and the preserved Praia do Osso da Baleia (Whalebone Beach), near Figueira da Foz, there is a 65km cycle path that allows you to travel the coast between the blue sea and the green of the Pinhal de Leiria (Leiria Pinewood).
- Belonging to the district of Leiria, Nazaré is about one hour's drive from Lisbon and 2 hours from Porto. Take the A8, the coastal highway that connects Lisbon to Leiria, to the exit signposted for Nazaré.

By coach:

- The bus station is in the town centre. For timetables on Rede Expressos: (www.rede-expressos.pt) and on Rodoviária do Tejo: (www.rodotejo.pt)

By train:

- Those arriving by train should get off at Valado de Frades, a small town about 6km away. Timetables available at www.cp.pt. Transfer to Nazaré is ensured by Rodoviária do Tejo bus or by taxi.