
Marian Shrine Route

ABOUT



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Venerated in various ways over time, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is a constant presence in Catholic religious expressions in Portugal. Visit some of the temples dedicated to her to discover the depths of this devotion.

Fátima, where Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in 1917, is undoubtedly the main place of worship in Portugal and one of the world's principal shrines of Marian devotion. This place of faith and peace has received pilgrimages ever since, especially on the 13th of each month, and they reach their peak in May and October, when crowds express their faith in a way that touches everyone, believers or not.

In Portugal, the worship of Our Lady dates back to the founding of the nation and gave rise to monasteries, chapels, churches and shrines that are the scene of celebration and popular feasts. Most cathedrals in Portugal, therefore, are dedicated to Saint Mary, as is the case of the **Cathedrals of Porto, Viseu, Lisbon, Évora** and many, many others.

On a journey from north to south, we would immediately highlight the Church of **Nossa Senhora da Agonia** in Viana do Castelo, the centre of one of the most colourful religious festivals in Portugal. Braga is home to the oldest Portuguese cathedral dedicated to Saint Mary, and nearby there are demonstrations of great devotion at the **Shrine of Nossa Senhora do Sameiro, the Church of Santa Maria da Falperra** and the **Shrine of Nossa Senhora da Abadia** in Santa Maria do Bouro, Amares. In Guimarães, the Church of Nossa Senhora da Oliveira and the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Penha are well worth a visit. In Lamego, the Shrine of Nossa Senhora das Remédios that dominates the city perched at the top of a flight of monumental steps, is one of the most famous places of Marian devotion on the occasion of its great pilgrimage.

In Porto we have the cathedral dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Assunção (Our Lady of the Assumption), and in **Coimbra, the Old Cathedral**, or Church of Santa Maria, is another fortress-like church of Romanesque features, associated with the foundation of Portugal. Continuing south you will find two monuments dedicated to Saint Mary, which are World Heritage: the Cistercian **Abbey of Alcobaça**, built by the first King of Portugal, and the true compendium of stone carving which is the Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória or **Batalha Monastery** because it commemorates the victory in a battle for Portugal's independence. Nearby is the beach of **Nazaré** whose Church of Our Lady is the setting of another busy pilgrimage, associated with a well-known local miracle.

In Lisbon, there are several churches dedicated to Our Lady, some of true popular devotion, such as the Chapel of Senhora da Saúde, in the historical Mouraria district. But, besides the Romanesque **Cathedral**, or Church of Santa Maria Maior, the most important is the **Jerónimos Monastery**, one of the most striking monuments in the capital, classified as World Heritage, whose church is dedicated to Saint Mary of Bethlehem. South of Lisbon, you will find the **Shrine of Nossa Senhora do Cabo**, in Cape Espichel, the setting of an important pilgrimage, known as Círio da Senhora do Cabo or Círio Saloio.

In Alentejo, one of the major pilgrimage sites is the **Shrine of Nossa Senhora de Aires**, near Viana do Alentejo, but the **Shrine of Nossa Senhora da Conceição**, or Solar da Padroeira, in Vila Viçosa, has also gained prominence ever since King João IV proclaimed Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception as the patron saint of Portugal in 1646. Finally, in the Algarve, the Cathedral of Santa Maria, in Faro, the Church of Santa Maria do Castelo, in Tavira, and the Festival of Mãe Soberana (Sovereign Mother), held in Loulé in honour of Our Lady of Piety, are worth noting as part of a route of Marian devotion.

Don't miss

- > visit the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary and the Chapel of Apparitions in the Shrine at Fátima, but also the more recent Most Holy Trinity Basilica
- > near Porto, visit the Church of Santa Maria, in Marco de Canaveses, designed by Álvaro Siza Vieira
- > visit the Church of Madre de Deus, part of the National Tile Museum, in Lisbon, whose Baroque decoration is truly exuberant
- > also in Lisbon, visit the Church of Senhora do Monte, from which you can enjoy a breath-taking panoramic view over the Castle and the city centre
- > visit the church of the Monastery of Nossa Senhora do Espinheiro, in Évora, now converted into a hotel, although the church remains open to the public

USEFUL INFORMATION

Shrine of Fátima - www.fatima.pt

Tourist information on churches in the city of Lisbon, with suggestions on things to see and schedules of events and Masses - www.quovadislisboa.pt

GETTING HERE

Portela Airport, in Lisbon

Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport, in Porto

Faro Airport

Train: www.cp.pt

Coach - Rede Expressos: www.rede-expressos.pt