
Fado, music of the world and world heritage

ABOUT



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A shawl, a Portuguese guitar, a voice and heartfelt emotion. This simple image could describe Fado, a recognised symbol of Portugal, and a music of the world that is genuinely Portuguese.

At its heart is sentiment, lost love, longing for a departed one, everyday life and triumphs. After all, the vicissitudes of life provide endlessly inspirational topics.

They say fado is fado, that it is ingrained in the Portuguese soul, with no distinctions to be made. Even so, some dare tell a professional from an amateur singer. Professionals earn a living from their voice. Amateurs sing the Fado also known as vadio (vagabond), and this has different qualities, although longing is still present as a main leitmotif. Making a comeback in Lisbon's working-class districts, fado vadio singers are never invited... they invite themselves and do not have a set repertoire. In Coimbra, fado has particular characteristics and is sung by students.

In 2011, UNESCO granted Fado **World Heritage** status, as an urban Lisbon song symbolic of the city and the country.

To learn all the details, the best is to pay a visit to the **Fado Museum** in Alfama, one of Lisbon's historic districts. Housing a vast collection, gathered from hundreds of bequests, you can get acquainted with the history of Fado from the first quarter of the 19th century to modern times.

The house where **Amália** lived, today converted into a **museum**, is also in Lisbon, close to Madragoa. She was the most charismatic of all fado singers who took the fado across borders to the great European halls. A singer with a striking presence on stage and a natural instinct for spectacle, we owe her the classic image of the black dress and shawl.

FADO VOICES

Choosing a fado singer is always a hard task, since fado can be sung in different ways. The traditional form continues to feature performers such as Amália Rodrigues, Hermínia Silva, Alfredo Marceneiro, Maria da Fé and Argentina Santos, household names for the intensity they devoted to fado, and Carlos do Carmo is an impressive male performer for the heartfelt emotion he puts in singing about Lisbon, his birthplace.

The new generation of fado singers upholds these traditions while exploring new approaches. The list is long: Mariza, Ana Moura, Camané, António Zambujo, Cuca Roseta, Mísia, Carminho, Mafalda Arnauth, Katia Guerreiro, Mariana Bobone, Marco Rodrigues, Raquel Tavares, Hélder Moutinho, Rodrigo Costa Felix, Ricardo Ribeiro, among many

others. They have brought fado up to date without detracting from the feeling. But when it comes to choosing, its best is to keep an open mind and give in to surprise.

The Great Night of Fado is held every year in Lisbon and Porto. It's a special evening when new talent is presented to the public.

COIMBRA FADO

The Coimbra Fado is traditionally sung by men, by the university students, dressed in their black academic gown and thick cape.

Originally, it had a great instrumental closeness to Lisbon Fado, but it took on a more erudite slant in the lyrics and different vocal effects, while being performed in different spaces. It became the perfect vehicle for expressing the memories of student life, the best time of one's youth, the sleepless nights, unrequited love and for serenading.

The Queima das Fitas, the festivities to bid farewell to academic life, which take place in May, is the best time to hear it. And the Serenading Night, outside the old Cathedral, is undoubtedly a unique emotional moment.

Some students have taken fado out of the confines of academia. Adriano Correia de Oliveira and José Afonso are two voices of reference, as are the guitars of Artur Paredes and Carlos Paredes.

WHERE TO HEAR IT

Guitars are tuned, lights are dimmed. "Silence, fado is about to be sung!" This is how the evening begins.

Fado houses are the best places to hear it. With their own special atmosphere, they are intimate places where dining in candlelight, hearing the sound of this melody which enters your soul even if you don't understand the lyrics, is a unique, unforgettable experience.

Although Lisbon is the city of Fado, with a wider offer in the working-class districts, it can be heard all over the country, particularly in Porto and Coimbra.

To find somewhere where you can listen to fado, search the site and choose this option on the list of restaurants.