

PLACES TO VISIT

Discover and explore some of the places that we have chosen for you

❖ Alcobça and Batalha

“Whoever visits Alcobça always returns for more.”

Visit and admire the **Santa Maria of Alcobça Monastery**, which was initially constructed in 1178. It is now considered one of the Seven Wonders of Portugal, classified as a World Heritage site by UNESCO and was the first entirely Gothic and the largest structure built in Portugal.

<http://www.mosteiroalcobaca.pt/en/>

Inside the monastery, you'll find the famous **tombs of King Pedro I and Inês de Castro**, the main figures in one of Portugal's most tragic love stories. Pedro I, first son of King Afonso IV of Portugal, was born in 1320 and forced into an arranged marriage by his father at the age of 16. His future wife, Constança, was the daughter of a descendent of the kingdom of Aragon, Castile and Leon. Although Constança gave him an heir and two other children, Pedro fell in love with Inês de Castro, his wife's lady-in-waiting. Feelings were mutual and, even with Pedro's increasing parental duties, his adulterous romance with Inês never wavered.

Concerned about the political threats that the affair would bring to the Portuguese Kingdom, King Afonso IV sent Inês to exile in Castile. Despite this, Pedro and Inês continued to exchange passionate letters, and Pedro's relationship with Constança continued to deteriorate. In the meantime, Constança died during childbirth and Pedro admitted his affair with Inês.

King Afonso IV, fuelled by anger towards his son, sent three men to assassinate Inês. When

Pedro discovered that the person behind this tragedy was his own father, he became even more bitter and vowed to avenge her death. Two years later, Pedro acceded to the Portuguese throne and his first deed was to seek out the three men who assassinated his beloved Inês. Two assassins were found and Pedro ordered that their punishment fit the crime: their hearts were to be ripped out whilst still alive.

After having his revenge, King Pedro announced that he had secretly wed Inês, which made her, even in death, Queen of Portugal. According to legend, he ordered her body to be exhumed and brought to sit beside him on the throne. He had her crowned and forced the entire court to kiss the hand of the dead queen. Pedro also ordered that his love story be sculpted on his own tomb. When he died in 1367, his body was not placed next to Inês's, but rather facing each other. His tomb is now engraved with the words that they will be together “until the end of the world”. 20 km from Alcobça, you reach the town of Batalha. This modest town is home of the **Santa Maria of Victory Monastery**, one of the most impressive monuments in Europe. This magnificent feat of architecture was built to fulfil a vow made by King João to give thanks for Portugal's victory and securing its independence at the Battle of Aljubarrota. Construction continued for more than 150 years, meaning that various architectural styles were used over the years, from the predominant Gothic to Manueline, with a few Renaissance touches. Today, the monastery is a national monument and is also classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

www.mosteirobatalha.pt/en/