

Sacred Places Of Portugal Tour



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

Maps Show You Where... We Show You Why!

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Tour Summary

Richly endowed by both nature and history, Portugal is a sun-baked land of castles, dramatic coastlines, jagged mountains, lively festivals, and proud Roman Catholic traditions. From prehistoric cave dwellers, numerous empires and invaders, to several centuries of Roman and Moorish influence, Portugal had been on the forefront of Western civilization's development for many centuries. To understand Portugal's future is to travel into the country's glorious past. Portuguese citizens fostered the Age of Discovery, inspired one of Europe's most visited pilgrimage locations, and created an emblematic staircase known throughout the country – all within a nation about the size of Indiana. Follow this podcast on an exciting journey to the four most famous sacred destinations in Portugal.

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Introduction





For such a small country it is remarkable how much Portugal has contributed to the development of Western civilization, including Catholic pilgrimage destinations. Since Portugal was once a first-rate sea power in exploring the New World, the Portuguese language continues to be spoken around the world.



There is no more fitting place to begin our tour than in the age-old city of Evora where time seems to stand still. It is one of the oldest continuously-inhabited cities in Europe.



From Paleolithic cave paintings to Medieval pilgrimage destinations, Évora and the surrounding countryside is one of the most evocative locations in Portugal. The so-called “Diana” Temple in the heart of Évora is the single best-preserved Roman structure in the country.



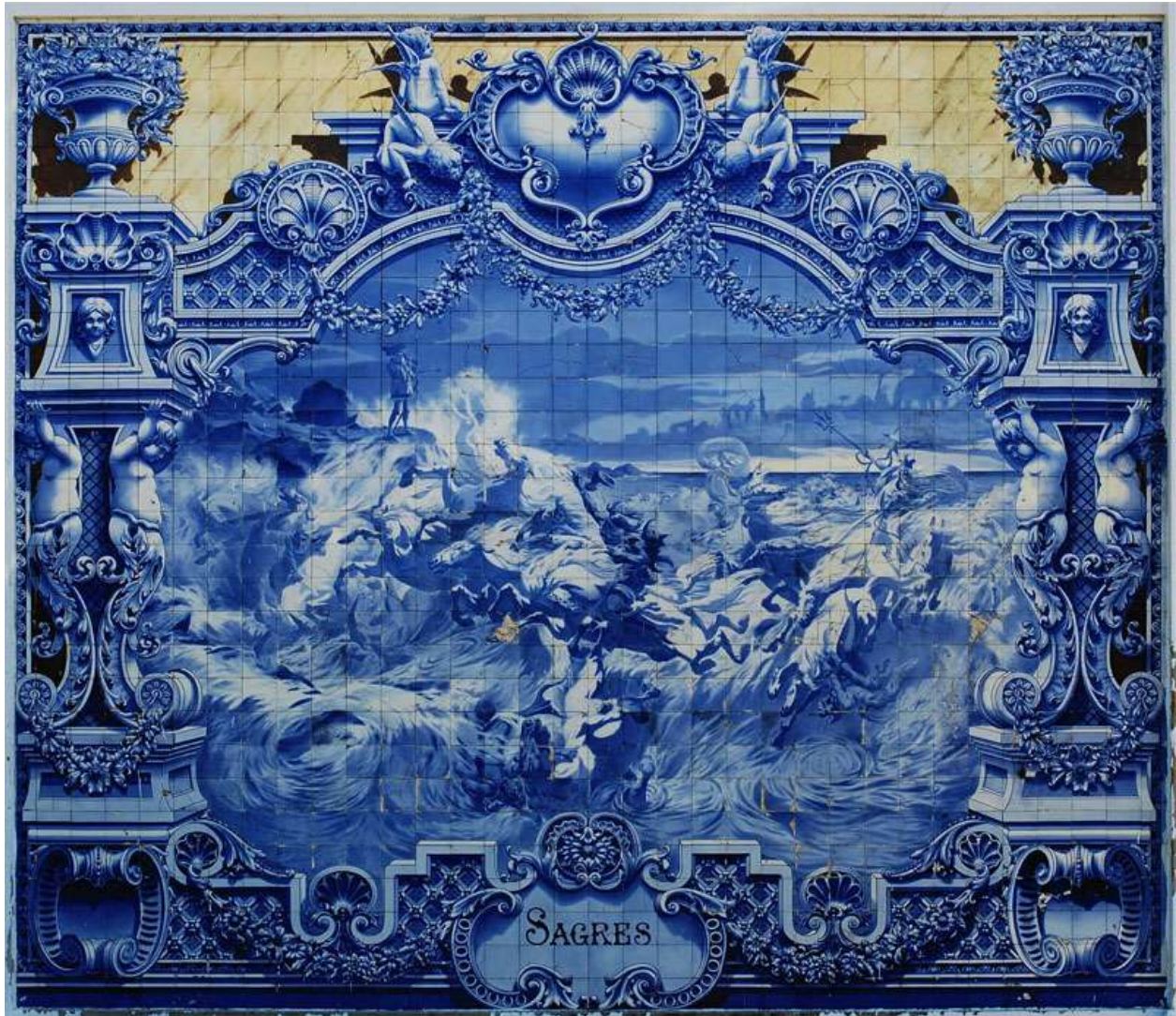
At the Neolithic ritual site called Almendres near Évora, two concentric circles of menhirs were built in the 5th and 3rd millenniums BCE, respectively. The inner circle was erected first, with the second added two centuries later. The site was frequented by many people over long periods of time.



Crossing over the Pointe Vasco da Gama Bridge spanning the Tagus River, our next stop is Belem, just outside of Lisbon. It is from Belem where the Age of Discovery sailors departed and subsequently charted the known world.



Explorers prayed at the Jeronimos Monastery before leaving on their epic voyages. Since it was this location that gained Portugal exceptional prominence and riches on a world stage, the monastery has become the national symbol of Portugal.



Some of the greatest explorers in history started their careers in Portugal. Within a century these brave explorers changed the perception of the ocean from a mystifying superstition to a golden opportunity.



Continuing due north we arrive in the small city of Fatima, made famous by three children who had visions of the Virgin Mary early last century.



As World War I was devastating Europe, three illiterate children in a poor Portuguese village started experiencing multiple visions of the Virgin Mary in an isolated ravine called Cova da Iria. Scorned, accused of

perpetuating a hoax, and finally accepted by Catholic authorities as a miracle, the three children, like their small village, had unimaginable fame thrust upon them. The town of Fatima is now one of the top pilgrimage destinations in Europe.



Finally, our tour of Portugal ascends the grand staircase of Bom Jesus outside the city of Braga. For the last 500 years, its steep trail and sanctuary has been the object of devout pilgrimage.



At the top of the Bom Jesus staircase the visitor is rewarded with a stunning view over Portugal's third largest city. Few people outside of Portugal have ever heard of Bom Jesus, but it is a rather renowned location to the devout Catholics of northern Portugal.

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