

City of Guimarães

Guimarães, a mediaeval town with origins in the distant tenth century, was the first capital of Portugal and it is known as the *Cradle City* due to its fundamental role in the formation of the Portuguese identity.

It is an exceptionally well-preserved and authentic example of the evolution of a mediaeval settlement into a modern town which makes this a fascinating city, enjoyable for everyone.

Historical Centre of Guimarães

Guimarães' Historical Centre has been designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Major restoration work has taken place over the past years which renewed the ancient architecture, streets, squares, and infrastructure (even the TV antennas are gone and all electrical wires are now ingeniously hidden along the buildings). The ancient homes and buildings had to be reconstructed according to the original design using only the materials originally used.

There you can find **The Santiago Square**, a very ancient square that still maintains its mediaeval aspect. It is named after St. James who, according to the legend, brought an image of the Virgin Mary to Guimarães and placed it in a pagan temple that stood here. Just around the corner we entered *Largo Oliveira* which is home to several impressive monuments. The 1,342 stone cross **Gothic Salado Memorial** commemorates the Battle of Salado fought in 1340, the old **Council Chambers** which now houses the Museum of Primitive Art and the **Church of Nossa Senhora de Oliveira**, the interior of which is quite simple with stone walls and pillars. There are two panels above the stall which are the work of the painter Pedro Alexandrino. In the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament there is a silver altar covered by a silver altar cloth and in the sacristy a chapel whose walls are covered by patterned tiles.

The Palace of the Dukes

The Palace of the Dukes of Braganza (*Paço dos Duques de Bragança*) in Guimarães was probably built between 1420 and 1422, for Afonso, Count of Barcelos – bastard son of King John I of Portugal and future Duke of Braganza. It shows elements of architectural styles common in the great manor houses and palaces of northern Europe. In the nineteenth century, it served as a military barracks. In the mid-twentieth century, after a period of disuse and abandonment, the palace was renovated and saw new life as a museum displaying items from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to the Palace's role as a museum, its top floor also as an official residence of the President of the Portuguese Republic whenever staying the north of the country. The Palace is Classified as a National Monument.

Penha

Penha Mountain offers the visitor a wide range of services and spaces. Apart from the sanctuary there is a number of facilities including a camp-site, a guest-house, a mini-golf, keep-fit circuits, a horse-riding centre, picnic areas, restaurants, bars and cafés. It is possible to explore numerous grottoes and enjoy the magnificent landscapes which the natural vantage-points allow.

The Penha cable-car extends over 1.7 km and climbs 400m providing the passenger with an unforgettable ride between the city and Penha Mountain lasting approximately 10 minutes.

For further information: <http://www.cm-guimaraes.pt>