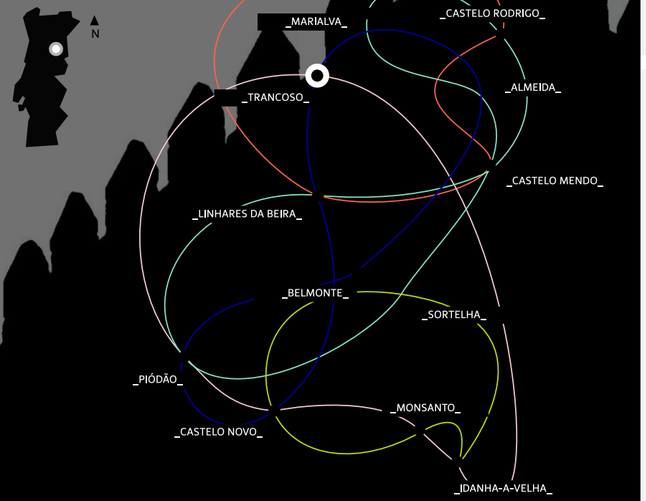
TURISMO DE PORTUGAL centro

12 HISTORICAL VILLAGES, WELL WORTH A VISIT

Start in Trancoso and finish wherever you like. You have 600 km to explore.



ALDEIAS HISTÓRICAS DE PORTUGAL

Living history

TRANCOSO
N40° 46.8498',
W007° 20.982'

_ALMEIDA_BELMONTE_CASTELO MENDO_CASTELO NOVO_CASTELO RODRIGO_IDANHA-A-VELHA_
_LINHARES DA BEIRA_MARIALVA_MONSANTO_PIÓDÃO_SORTELHA_TRANCOSO_

OUR HISTORY, YOUR TIME.

ALDEIAS HISTÓRICAS DE PORTUGAL

1 - Castle
2 - King's Gate
3 - Boeirinho
4 - Meadow's Gate
5 - Oak's Gate
6 - Treason's Gate
7 - Sun's Eye
8 - Saint John's Gate
9 - Countermure
10 - House of the Olive Trees
11 - Saint Mary's Church
12 - Linden
13 - Duke's Palace
14 - Beresford Head-Quarters
15 - Moutinho Garcez's Manor House
16 - Pillory
17 - Saint Peter's Church
18 - Arche's House
19 - Mercy's Church
20 - Former Post-Office House
21 - Black Cat House
22 - Master's Well
23 - Isacc Cardoso Jewish Culture Interpretation Centre
24 - Bandarra's House
25 - Town Hall
26 - Gonçalo Anes Bandarra Statue
27 - Arche's House

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Cultural Route 1

TRANCOSO

VILLAGE WITH MEDIEVAL WALL

ALDEIAS HISTÓRICAS DE PORTUGAL

Living history

VILLAGE WITH MEDIEVAL WALL

To get to know the ancient enclosure of Trancoso is to relive history, discovering, at each step, monuments and marks from a more or less remote past. It is also the opportunity to find a Historical Center alive and dynamic that was able to renew and adapt to the demands of the times and, for that reason, never ceased to be a vital area of Trancoso.

Located on top of a plateau, with visibility over an extensive territory located between the Estrela mountain ridge and the Douro valley, Trancoso appeared because of the castle, established in the 8th-9th Century.

Throughout all the medieval period it was an extremely important location in terms of military strategy, set in an area that corresponded to an unstable frontier, where several conflicts and battles took place, first between Christians and Muslins and later between Portugal and the neighboring kingdoms.

With a Charter granted by D. Afonso Henriques (1162-65), in the beginning of the nationality, Trancoso was already one of the main settlements in the region. It was also an important mercantile center, where, since D. Afonso III (1273), one of the most ancient and busy markets (exempt from taxes) occurred. This market is perpetuated today through the famous Saint Bartholomew fair.

With a distinct and illustrious past, Trancoso had a decisive role in the formation and maintenance of Portugal's independence. It was cherished by the first monarchs that conceded the village special attention and privilege, it was also the place selected by D. Dinis to celebrate his matrimony to the Saint Queen, D. Isabel de Aragão, in 1282.

The village was also the birth place of one of the biggest Jewish communities in the region and is associated to several notable historical and legendary figures such as: Gonçalo Vasques Coutinho, Bandarra, Magriço and João Tição, among others.

The old urban settlement is still surrounded today, almost in all its extension, by the imposing wall built during the period of D. Afonso III or D. Dinis (1248-1325) and greatly improved in the period of D. Fernando (1370-83). The top is crowned by the millenary castle, which reminds us, through its solid presence and ample view, of its original defensive function, lookout spot and territory control. Target of a profound reform in the Gothic period (14th - 15th Centuries), this monument still preserves some structures that point to its origin in the Pre-Romanesque period (10th - 12th Centuries), such is the case of the unusual keep, that, due to its antiquity and well preserved condition, is considered one of the *ex-libris* of Portuguese military architecture.

From the medieval period some characteristics of the urban fabric are also preserved. The streets are sinuous near the castle and reveal the spontaneous growth of the village in the first centuries of its existence. On the other hand the straight design of the streets and blocks on both sides of the Corredoura Street are typical of the expansion planned after the enlargement of the walls conducted by D. Afonso III/D. Dinis, and testify another facet of the medieval Portuguese urbanism.

The two structuring axis in the urban center, the Merchant's Street (today corresponding to the Corredoura Street and Xavier da Cunha Street) and the Cavaliers' Street – that connect, albeit in an uncommon way, the main gates of the wall – also date from this stage. The same happens with the Guimarães Yard (Saint Mary's Square and Eduardo Cabral Square), the Saint John's Yard and the square in front of Saint Peter's Church, that, in the end of the 15th Century, is converted into the village main public space, where the Town Hall, Pillory, Holy House of Mercy and the, now disappeared, Saint Clare's Convent are installed.

Showcasing the dynamism of the settlement and the will to adapt to new techniques, needs and tastes, the buildings of the old enclosure were reconstructed through out the times. Although several buildings from the 15th Century are still preserved, for the most part the buildings present characteristics from the 17th-18th Centuries or from the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century, with the austere churches, mansions and other notable Baroque style constructions (18th Century) characterizing the landscape.

Possessor of a unique image and exceptional historical, artistic and architectonic value, Trancoso Historical Center has the castle, walls and pillory listed as Grade 1 monuments, and, since 1955, a special legislation established a protection area surrounding this relevant constructions.