

The West Coast

When the Sea invites the Land, magic happens.

Formerly known as Estremadura the Atlantic West is a fertile region. Thousands of hills with scattered whitewashed villages and the characteristic windmills that symbolize the West, dominate its landscapes full of color, varying with the seasons of the year.

It is bathed in intense sunlight and blessed with a gentle climate due to the Atlantic influence, creating a unique harmony between the coast and the countryside.

The passing of time left in the region of the West Coast is a remarkable track of Medieval Castles, Renaissance Palaces, Manor Houses, Churches and Convents that allow any visitor an encounter with the representations of bygone times.

Cabo da Roca is a wild and rugged headland that marks the westerly point of mainland Europe. The windswept cliffs of Cabo de Roca were believed to be the edge of the world up until the late 14th century and the spectacular desolate scenery adds to the allure of the location.

The raging Atlantic Ocean waves pound the base of the massive jagged cliffs while challenging hiking trails follow the coastal paths.



Convento de Mafra, built in the 18th century by order of King João V (1689-1750) in fulfilment of a vow he made, to be blessed with an heir from his marriage to Maria Ana of Austria, or be cured of a serious illness, the Royal Convent and Palace of Mafra is the most important baroque monument in Portugal.



All in limestone and marble from this region (Pêro Pinheiro and Sintra), the building covers an area of almost four hectares (37.790m²), including 1.200 rooms, more than 4.700 doors and windows, 156 stairways and 29 inner yards and courtyards.



The monument also contains one of the most important European libraries, with a precious collection of 36.000 volumes, a synthesis of 18th century encyclopedic knowledge.

Curiosities: The Royal Convent of Mafra has a set of two carillons, or rather a series of bells tuned to each other. There are actually ninety eight bells in all, which makes them the world's largest historic carillons. The story goes that the Marquis of Abrantes, upon the King's request, was informed that one carillon would cost him 400.000\$00 réis - an astronomic price for a country as small as Portugal. Offended with such remark, King João V is said to have answered: "Well if it is that cheap, I'll have two".

The bells of the North tower carillon were wrought in Liège by Nicolau Levache, while those of the South tower were made in Antwerp by Willem Witlockx. Each bell tower had fifty eight bells, forty nine in each belonging to the carillon. Besides the carillon, there are eleven liturgical bells of Portuguese and Italian foundry, dating from 1730 to the late 19th century, an unique illustration of the liturgical use of bells.



Aldeia Típica de José Franco. Small town of Sobreiro, between Ericeira and Mafra, where one of the most recognized museum villages in the country is located. The history of the small village dates back to the birth of the potter José Franco, in 1920.



His father was a shoemaker and his mother, a pottery seller, selling clay from door to door, as well as through many fairs and markets in Extremadura. Since Sobreiro was an important pottery centre, José Franco was involved with the craft from an early age and, as a child, when he left primary school, he learned the craft with two local master potters, before working on

his own, at the age of 17. At that time, he rehabilitated the pottery that had belonged to his grandfather, which had been inactive for a long time. In the early 60s, José Franco gave wings to a dream of recreating an ethnographic village, where his childhood memories crystallized, a testament to the way of life of the local people, in homage to their land. His village would have two components: it would be a replica of

the old workshops and shops, of the spaces lived, decorated and equipped with real objects, where the customs and work activities intrinsic to his childhood and to the peasant life of the Mafra region were reproduced. Today, the small world shaped by the hands of José Franco (who died in 2009) is visited annually by thousands of people. Enjoy yourself!

All this, together with an amazing gastronomy and a diversity of traditions and customs that were not lost despite its proximity to Lisbon, Mafra is a unique destination ... not to be missed!

In fairs, regular markets and shops, we can find products from this region such as handicraft, sweet pastries, great cheeses and fruits (lemons, strawberries and *rocha* pear).

Mafra is also known for its tasty bread (*Pão de Mafra*), along with delicacies from the Atlantic Ocean like our sardines.

Mafra has no shortage of wineries with solid signs of wine tourism and don't miss the secrets and flavours of the typical Portuguese convent pastry known as "*Fradinho*", traditional pie filled with sweetened white beans, almonds and egg cream.

