

WORLD HERITAGE SITES OF THE CENTRAL PORTUGAL

VISIT COIMBRA

UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA | PALACE OF STUDIA GENERALIA

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COIMBRA

The city of *Coimbra* presents an extensive and important historical and cultural heritage. In 2013, *UNESCO* recognised the exceptional value of the *University of Coimbra, Alta and Sofia*, as a *World Heritage Site*, since these two architectural centres correspond to the fundamental moments of the conception, evolution and consolidation of the University as a centenary institution, closely linked to the history of *Portugal*.

In fact, the University has established itself as a centre for the production and diffusion of knowledge and culture through significant periods of architecture, art and science. Its development is closely related to ideological, pedagogical, scientific, literary and cultural reforms, thus playing a unique role in the formation and unity of the Portuguese Language, becoming an important centre for the spreading of new knowledge; through here have studied the most illustrious writers, intellectuals, mathematicians, doctors and many other spreaders of the Portuguese language and culture.

Coimbra is undoubtedly linked to the founding of the *Portuguese Nationality*. This was the city where *King Afonso Henriques* established the capital of the newly formed *Kingdom of Portugal*. In 1537, *King João III* ordered the definitive transfer of *Studia Generalia* to *Coimbra*. In a first phase installed in the old colleges of *Saint Michael* and *All Saints*, dependencies of the *Monastery of Santa Cruz*. Later it was transferred to the *Royal Palace*, currently known as the *Paço das Escolas*, where many of the first dynasty kings were born and lived.

The present day *Paço das Escolas* is constituted by a unique heritage, stage of important historical events of the *Portuguese Nation*. One of the most significant acts took place in the *Ceremonies Hall*, former *Throne Room*, in 1385, with the acclamation of *King João I*, *Master of Avis*, as *King of Portugal*, thus ensuring the Portuguese independence. This room, besides hosting the most important academic ceremonies, also exhibits a gallery of painted portraits of the Kings and the Queens of *Portugal*, from *King Afonso Henriques* to *King Manuel II*; exception made only for the 3rd Dynasty. Special highlight to the *Joanina Library*, the University's ex-libris, a unique case of the baroque decorative arts, elaborated with the most advanced technologies known at the time: the 18th century.

The importance that *Coimbra* had during the first centuries of the monarchy is closely linked to other places such as *Alcobaça*, *Tomar* and *Batalha*, holders of unique monuments, whose values and importance are recognized with the *Seal of World Heritage*, helping out to acquire the history of the expansion and consolidation of the *Kingdom of Portugal*.



BATALHA

The *Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória*, better known as *Monastery of Batalha*, is one of the most beautiful examples of the Gothic Architecture in *Portugal*, classified as a *World Heritage Site* by *UNESCO* in 1983.

Its history goes back to the beginning of the second dynasty of *Portugal*, the *Avis Dynasty*, started in 1385, with *King João I*, *Master of the Order of Avis*, acclaimed king, in *Coimbra*, after a period of interregnum. The last king of the first dynasty, *King Fernando*, had died without leaving heir to succeed him; he had only one daughter, *Queen Beatriz* married with *King João I*, of Castile who considered, therefore, the right of succession to the Portuguese Crown. Consequently, this is how a period of military confrontation and civil war began in *Portugal*. The military battle that put an end to this dispute over the throne is known as the *Battle of Aljubarrota*, although it took place in *São Jorge*, about 4 km from the current village of *Batalha*. The victory of the Portuguese army, aided by the *Royal Constable Saint Nuno Álvares Pereira*, has become one of the most significant achievements in the country's history, as it not only reaffirms *Portugal's* independence but also reinforces the oldest European alliance not only with the signing of the *Treaty of Windsor* but also with the marriage of *King João I* to *Queen Filipa of Lancaster*.

In gratitude for the divine interception in the victory against Castile, *King João I* had the monastery constructed in honour of the Virgin Mary, offering it, in 1388, to the *Order of Saint Dominic*. The works begun shortly after the famous battle, lasted for six reigns, becoming one of the most beautiful jewels of Portuguese Architecture. Special mention for the *Founder's Chapel*, the first *Royal Pantheon* in *Portugal*, thought by *King João I* for himself and his family. It is here that are buried not only the royal couple and four of their children, the *Inclita Generation*, as *Camões* called them (*Prince* and *Regent Pedro* and his wife *Isabel de Urgel*, *Duchess of Coimbra*; *Henrique*, *The Navigator* and *Master of the Order of Christ*; *Prince João* and his wife *Princess Isabel*; *Fernando*, the *Holy Prince*) but also *King Afonso V* (grandson of *King João I*), *King João II* (son of *King Afonso V*) and the heir *Prince Afonso* (son of *King João II*).

Also noteworthy are the *Unfinished Chapels*, its construction started in the middle of the 15th century, by initiative of *King Duarte*, for his pantheon and his descendants; however, only he and his wife *Queen Leonor* (great-granddaughter of *King Pedro* and *Queen Inês de Castro*) were buried here, in a double tomb.

Inscribed on the *UNESCO World Heritage List* since 1989, the *Monastery of Alcobaça* is one of the first monastic founding's of the Order of Cister in *Portugal* and the medieval buildings that still preserves, as well as the church (the largest in the early Gothic style built in Middle Ages in *Portugal*) make of it a unique architectural complex.

The Monastery, in close connection with *Portugal's* claim as an independent kingdom, was founded by the initiative of *Portugal's* first king, *Afonso Henriques*, who donated the lands to *Saint Bernard of Claraval*, in 1153.

The construction of the Abbey of *Santa Maria of Alcobaça* began in 1178, a year with great significance for the Order, because it would be one of the first abbeys to be built after the canonization of *St. Bernard*. Thanks to the royal protection it become the main and most important house of the *Order of Cister in Portugal*.

In the *Royal Pantheon* of the Monastery one can find the tombs of some of the first dynasty royal family members, such as *King Afonso II*, *King Afonso III* and their descendants.

The major highlight goes to the tombs of *King Pedro I* and *Queen Inês de Castro*, dating from the 14th century and considered masterpieces of the Portuguese tomb. With a very rich decorative program, the crucial point of the representations is the *Last Judgment*, in the tomb of *Queen Inês*, and the *Wheel of Life*, in the tomb of *King Pedro*.

Says the legend that the *Prince Pedro*, who was born in *Coimbra*, fell in love for the lady in waiting of his wife, *Princess Constança*. Despite the marriage, *Prince Pedro* kept the romance with *Lady Inês* which caused a tremendous scandal in the court, reason why his father, *King Afonso IV*, expelled her from the court and from the Kingdom. After the death of *Princess Constança*, *Prince Pedro* has *Lady Inês de Castro* brought to *Portugal*, installing her in the palace next to the *Monastery of Santa Clara*, in *Coimbra*. However, *King Afonso IV*,

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MONASTERY OF ALCOBAÇA


advised by some noblemen, decides to have *Lady Inês* executed. After taking the throne, says the legend that *King Pedro* reveals that he had married his beloved *Inês*, gathering the court to be able to acclaim *Lady Inês* as *Queen of Portugal*, with all the formalities of the time, namely the traditional kissing of the King and Queen's hand, having also, according to legend, pursued and executed *Inês'* executioners.


TOMAR


The *Templar Castle* and the *Convent of Christ in Tomar* has been registered on the *World Heritage List* in 1983. The history of this place goes back to the beginning of *Portuguese Nationality*, when *King Afonso Henriques* donated a vast region, between the *Mondego* and *Tagus* rivers, to the Knights of the *Order of the Temple*, during the Christian Reconquest. This monumental complex began to be built, in 1160, by *Gualdim Pais*, the Portuguese First Templar Master and faithful knight of *King Afonso Henriques*. The final work is a structure that combines various architectural styles. The round church, that is one of the rare temples of its kind in all of Europe, was inspired in the temple that *Emperor Constantine* ordered to be built to mark the *Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*. Nowadays this place is the ex-libris of the whole complex due to the interventions made during the reign of *King Manuel I*, that endowed the famous *Charola* with mural and wood paintings, polychrome and gilded wood sculpture, in a unique decorative richness. In 1314, the *Order of the Temple* was extinguished by Pope Decree, due to the persecution of the King of France, *Philip IV*. In *Portugal*, the extinction had a different outcome: at the will of *King Dinis* the knights and their goods became part of a new order of Portuguese cavalry - the *Order of Christ*. In 1420, *Prince Henrique* was appointed first governor of the *Order of Christ*, and from then on, the Knights became an important ally in the *Portuguese Maritime Expansion*. At the end of the 15th century, with the rise to the throne of *King Manuel I*, he assumed the position of governor of the Order; the convent received several works of expansion and improvement whose decoration refers entirely to the Portuguese maritime discoveries, to the mystique of the *Order of Christ* and the *Crown*, with one of the most beautiful works of sculpture that was then made - the *Chapter Room Window*. Under the administration of *King João III*, the military religious orders were extinguished giving, the same ones, rise to orders exclusively of contemplation. The last periods of construction took place during the 3rd Dynasty and in the period that followed the Re-establishing of Independence in the 17th century, including the long block that delineates the conventual section, in mannerism style and the aqueduct.


CONVENT OF CHRIST - CHAROLA

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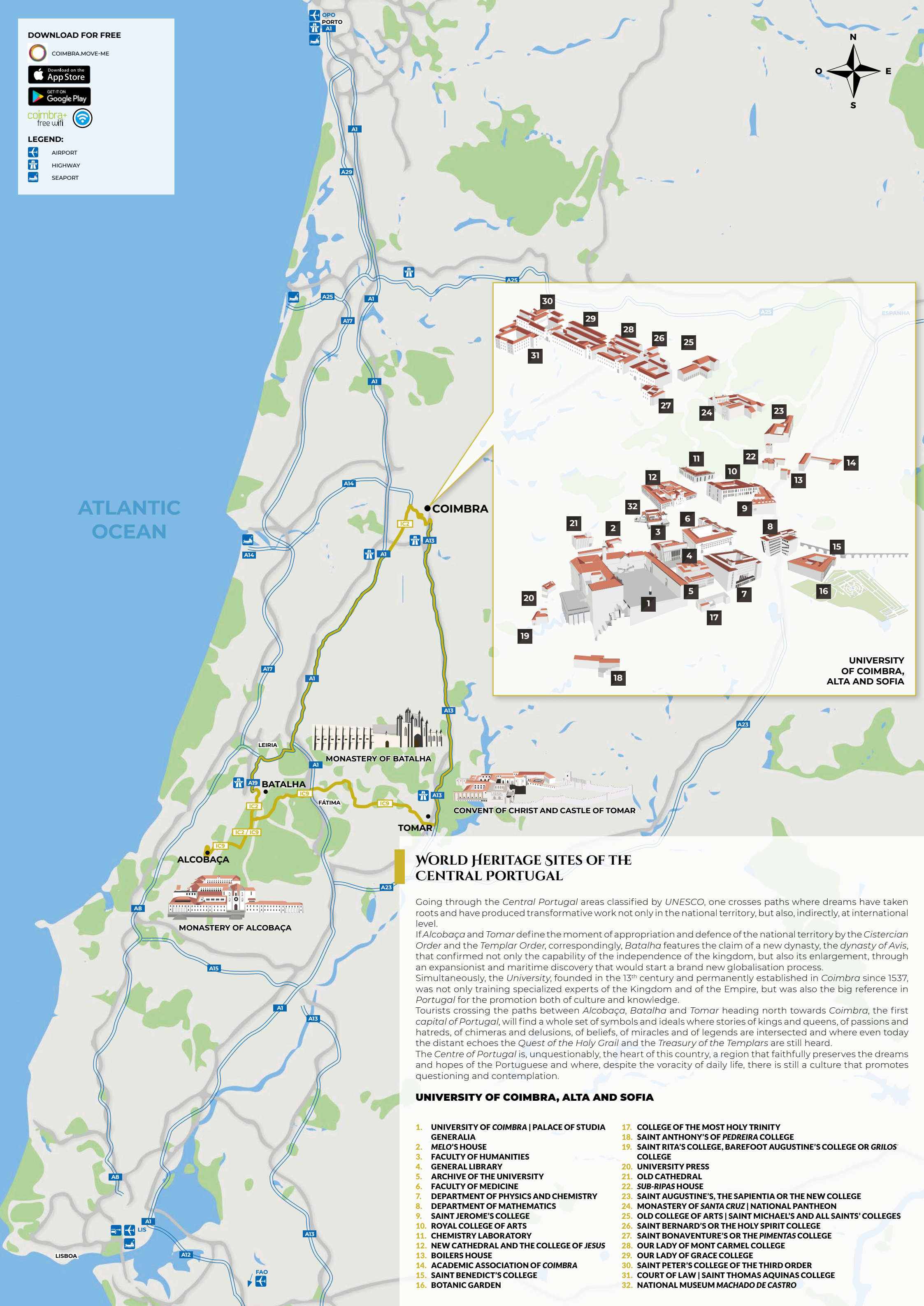
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WORLD HERITAGE SITES OF THE CENTRAL PORTUGAL

Going through the *Central Portugal* areas classified by *UNESCO*, one crosses paths where dreams have taken roots and have produced transformative work not only in the national territory, but also, indirectly, at international level.

If *Alcobaca* and *Tomar* define the moment of appropriation and defence of the national territory by the *Cistercian Order* and the *Templar Order*, correspondingly, *Batalha* features the claim of a new dynasty, the *dynasty of Avis*, that confirmed not only the capability of the independence of the kingdom, but also its enlargement, through an expansionist and maritime discovery that would start a brand new globalisation process.

Simultaneously, the *University*, founded in the 13th century and permanently established in *Coimbra* since 1537, was not only training specialized experts of the Kingdom and of the Empire, but was also the big reference in *Portugal* for the promotion both of culture and knowledge.

Tourists crossing the paths between *Alcobaca*, *Batalha* and *Tomar* heading north towards *Coimbra*, the first *capital of Portugal*, will find a whole set of symbols and ideals where stories of kings and queens, of passions and hatreds, of chimeras and delusions, of beliefs, of miracles and of legends are intersected and where even today the distant echoes the *Quest of the Holy Grail* and the *Treasury of the Templars* are still heard.

The *Centre of Portugal* is, unquestionably, the heart of this country, a region that faithfully preserves the dreams and hopes of the Portuguese and where, despite the voracity of daily life, there is still a culture that promotes questioning and contemplation.

UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, ALTA AND SOFIA

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| 1. UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA PALACE OF STUDIA GENERALIA | 17. COLLEGE OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY |
| 2. MELO'S HOUSE | 18. SAINT ANTHONY'S OF PEDREIRA COLLEGE |
| 3. FACULTY OF HUMANITIES | 19. SAINT RITA'S COLLEGE, BAREFOOT AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE OR GRILOS' COLLEGE |
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| 8. DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS | 24. MONASTERY OF SANTA CRUZ NATIONAL PANTHEON |
| 9. SAINT JEROME'S COLLEGE | 25. OLD COLLEGE OF ARTS SAINT MICHAEL'S AND ALL SAINTS' COLLEGES |
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| 12. NEW CATHEDRAL AND THE COLLEGE OF JESUS | 28. OUR LADY OF MONT CARMEL COLLEGE |
| 13. BOILERS HOUSE | 29. OUR LADY OF GRACE COLLEGE |
| 14. ACADEMIC ASSOCIATION OF COIMBRA | 30. SAINT PETER'S COLLEGE OF THE THIRD ORDER |
| 15. SAINT BENEDICT'S COLLEGE | 31. COURT OF LAW SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE |
| 16. BOTANIC GARDEN | 32. NATIONAL MUSEUM MACHADO DE CASTRO |