

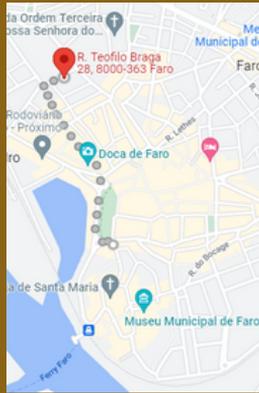


THE OLD TOWN

Outell, come!

HOSTELS & GUESTHOUSES

How to get there?



The Old Town or "Vila -Adentro" is a must see in Faro, even if you just have a few hours, you shouldn't skip this!

Just 8 min walking from our reception, cross the "Jardim Manuel Bivar" with the Marina on your right side, surrounded by the Ria Formosa Natural Park.

We recommend you to start the visit from the "Town Gate" or "**Arco da Vila**" in portuguese. At your left side is the *Tourist Office* and the building at your right side housed the *Civil Government of the Algarve* for centuries until only a few years ago.

- ! There are 3 entrances or gates ("Portas"): Arco da Vila, Porta Nova and Arco do Repouso.

"Arco da Vila"



Built on one of the medieval gateways to the city, this monumental archway you see as the entrance, was commissioned by Bishop Francisco Gomes de Avelar in the early 19th century.

The project was carried out by Italian architect Francisco Xavier Fabri and inaugurated in 1812, following the reconstruction works after the earthquake of 1755

On an inner niche, there is an Italian made statue of Saint Thomas of Aquinas. It is one of the finest examples of the Italian neo-classical to be found across the Algarve.



! It is still possible to make out the Arab entranceway. This was part of the old Muslim walls and represented the entranceway into the city for anyone arriving by sea. It is considered a unique example of Moorish architecture in Portugal taking into account both its high level of preservation and that it still remains in its place of origin.



Prepare yourself to walk amongst cobbled streets with centuries-old architectural sights and little magic alleys. Go straight ahead and take a minute to admire the large white storks (an *ex-libris* of Faro) that nested on the roof behind you. You will be walking towards the "Largo da Sé", a strategic location throughout the times, where you find the Cathedral, the "Sé".

! Instead of doing the same path as you will see everybody doing, turn right in the street "Rua Monsenhor Boto". In this street, at some point, you won't be able to see its beginning nor the end! Also, the view you get from "Largo da Sé" is much more interesting!

"Sé"



It is probable that the Church of Santa Maria of Faro - consecrated to Marian Devotion and built from 1251, two years after the reconquest of the village, by order of the Archbishop of Braga, D. João Viegas - has been built on the remains of an ancient Paleochristan basilica that had been converted into a mosque.



It conserves a number of architectural elements of the original building from the 13th / 14th centuries, like the bell tower and two chapels of the cross. In 1271, the temple was gifted to the Order of St. James as a reward for services rendered in conquering the area. It was elevated to Cathedral in the 14th century, when it underwent a series of extensions during the reign of D. Dinis.

In 1596, the church and the city were ransacked and set on fire by the English troops of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. Of the Gothic era, only the sanctuary chapels, the facade tower and the walls of the nave survived, while the altars and the wooden ceilings were destroyed.



The interior of the Faro Cathedral deserves a visit. It contains one of the most valuable artistic ensembles of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Algarve. There is also a little chapel made from human skull and bones. Climb the 68 steps to the bell tower and have an amazing view of the city and the Ria Formosa!

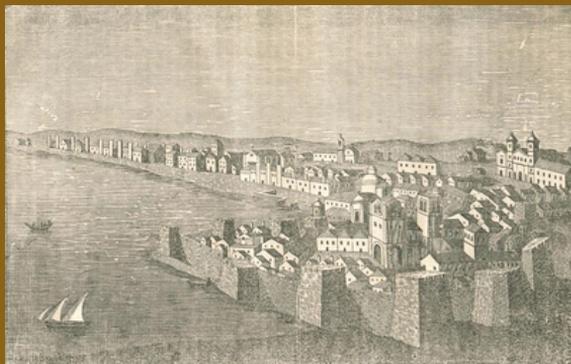


It is quite interesting to check the Cathedral's clock: there's *IIII* written instead of the number *IV*. Although both versions are accepted, the roman number *IIII* is the oldest version.



Also, some stones outside are marked with symbols, letters and "drawings", made by those who were involved in the cathedral's construction.

The whole "**Vila Adentro**" stands on a hill, about 9 meters high, surrounded by the Ria Formosa, which would have been an island or peninsula during the ancient times, benefiting from a defensive position, which also allows easy access to the ria's abundant economic resources and fertile land. The Cathedral Square was, and still is, the old town's heart.



Close to the square is the gate "Porta Nova". It gave direct access to Ria Formosa many centuries ago. Nowadays goes straight to the pier where you can catch the ferryboats that connect Faro to the different islands.



We bet you noticed the great amount of orange trees around you...they seem yummi right? Although the region is well known for its juicy and tasty oranges, these type of trees are merely decorative (citrus aurantium type). The flavour is sour, like acid.

"Episcopal Palace"

In the main Cathedral Square two other notable buildings warrant attention: the Episcopal Palace and the Episcopal Seminary of St. Joseph.



The Episcopal Palace was built at the beginning of the 17th century and is without doubt one of the most representative buildings of the “chão” (plain) style in the Algarve.

On the main façade, which is symmetrical in composition, two floors can be seen topped by a cornice, and seven scissor-roofs.

The 1755 earthquake caused some damage to the building and some work was needed on the door and window surrounds which were redone in the Rococo style.

From the point of view of decoration, the highlight of this palace is the magnificent collection of tiles on the inside. Consisting of examples from the 18th century in the Baroque and Rococo styles (the latter showing enormous chromatic richness), as a whole they produce a wonderful scenic effect.

The most notable works of art in the episcopal Palace collection are 17th and 18th century sculptures and also a collection of paintings with portraits of a number of bishops of the Algarve.

"Municipal Museum"

It's the second museum to be created in the Algarve. In 1894, on the 500th anniversary of the birth of Infante Dom Henrique (Henry the Navigator), Faro inaugurated the Museum Archeologico Lapidar Infante D. Henrique dedicated to the heroe of Sagres.



The museum's archaeological collection is the most significant, with artefacts from pre-historical, roman and medieval periods.

The most important objects are those from the roman period which include a mosaic from the 2nd/3rd centuries, the busts of Emperor Hadrian and Agrippina and a collection of epigraphs of Ossonoba. The high quality painting collection from the 16th to 19th century is mainly composed of religious works of art, originating from ancient temples in the Algarve. Also the 20th cent. painting by Carlos Porfirio about legends of the Algarve is very important.



King Afonso III statue stands in front of the Museum. The King is remembered for his wise and fair reign and it was he who won back the town of Faro from the Moors. In 1249 the Christian forces surrounded the town walls, while the royal fleet took up a position outside the gate which gave on to the Ria Formosa.



It is said that the gate "Arco do Repouso" (in free translation "Arch of Rest") was named after the King has sit there for a while to rest, after the conquest.

"The city walls"

Vila Adentro, is surrounded by a wall that is oval in shape and dates back to the Roman period about two thousand years ago. The wall underwent major alterations and enlargement between the 9th and the 11th centuries during the period of Arab occupation.



Despite the damage caused in the 16th century by earthquakes and attacks by English privateers, as well as the destruction caused by the great earthquake of 1755, the walls have survived until the present day and some restoration work has been carried out in recent years.



Nowadays what remains of the Castle is only part of the Faro defensive structure at the time. On the 17th century, other reconstruction and conservation works took place for the adaptation of the Castle and city Walls to the use of artillery.

On the 19th century the Castle was leased to a company that converted it in a alcohol factory. The alterations for the construction of the factory, and also the opening of a street through the Castle adulterated quite a lot the overall aspect of the Monument. This year, the city mayor aproved a project that allows the Castle to be transformed into an important artistic centre.