

Alcobaça

Leiria District · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Alcobaça is a small town in the Oeste region region of central Portugal, about 110 km north of Lisbon. It is known for its huge Cistercian monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The town grew beside two small rivers, the Alcoa and the Baça, and today it is calm and easy to walk.

The monastery is the reason most people come, and it fills a half day. The area also has a long tradition of convent sweets and fruit orchards. The municipality reaches the Atlantic coast at São Martinho do Porto, a quiet beach town on a sheltered bay. Alcobaça suits a one-night stop or a base for the coast and nearby historic towns.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best seasons. Days are warm and mostly dry, and crowds are smaller than in summer. Summer is hot and sunny, and the coast is the best place to be. Winter is mild but wet, with the most rain from October to January.

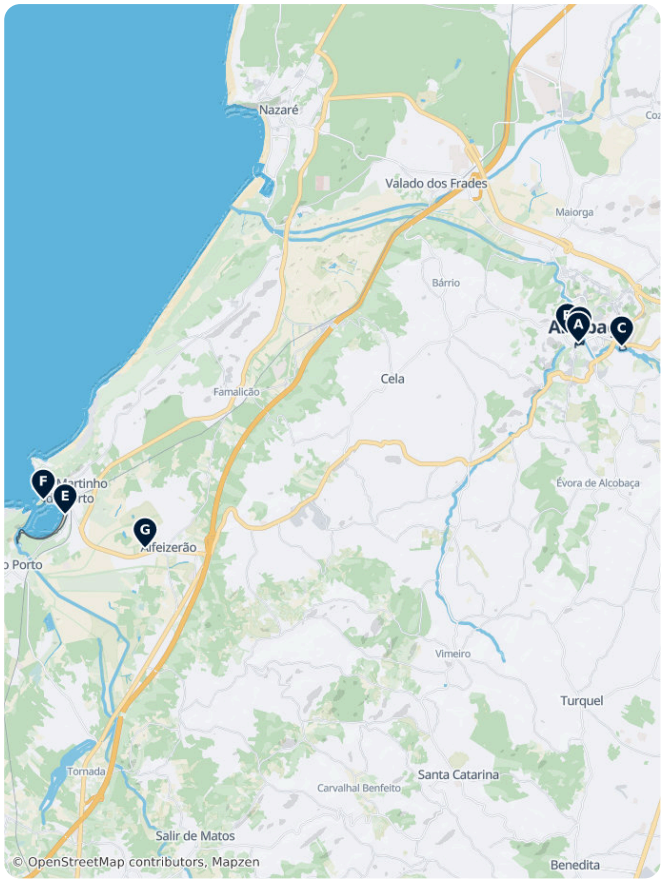
The biggest annual event is the Cistermúsica music festival. It runs from late June to late July, with concerts mainly in the monastery. Check the festival programme before you book a stay.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 18°	6° / 1°	12 rainy days · Dry air
February	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 20°	7° / 2°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 24°	8° / 4°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	10° / 7°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 31°	12° / 9°	Dry air
June	Great Great for the beach	27° / 35°	15° / 12°	
July	Great Great for the beach	30° / 36°	16° / 13°	25 sunny days · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	30° / 37°	17° / 14°	26 sunny days
September	Great Great for the beach	28° / 34°	16° / 12°	20 sunny days · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 30°	14° / 9°	
November	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 23°	9° / 4°	13 rainy days · Dry air
December	Fair Fair for sightseeing	16° / 19°	7° / 2°	12 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: April, May, June, July, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Monastery of Alcobaça is the main reason to visit. King *Afonso Henriques* founded it in 1153, and its Gothic church was finished in 1252. Inside are the tombs of King *Pedro I* and *Inês de Castro*, the great Portuguese love story. Do not miss the Cloister of Silence and the huge monastery kitchen.
- B Castelo de Alcobaça is a ruined medieval castle. It is a short walk from the monastery.
- C Museu do Vinho is a municipal museum of wine and wine-making in a former cellar in the town centre.
- D Museu das Máquinas Falantes opened in 2024. It shows gramophones, music boxes, telephones, radios and other old sound machines.
- E Praia de São Martinho do Porto is the main beach of São Martinho do Porto. It lies on a sheltered, shell-shaped bay with calm water.
- F Túnel do Morro de Santo António is a narrow pedestrian tunnel at São Martinho do Porto. It gives access to the open ocean from the bay side.
- G Castelo de Alfeizerão is a ruined medieval castle on a hill in the village of Alfeizerão, about 3 km from São Martinho do Porto. It is not open to visitors.

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What to experience

- Hear a concert in the monastery during the Cistermúsica festival, from late June to late July.
- Visit the conventual sweets and liqueurs fair at the monastery. It is usually held in November.
- Swim in the calm bay at São Martinho do Porto in summer. The water is shallow and sheltered from the open Atlantic.
- Walk through the pedestrian tunnel at São Martinho do Porto. Calm bay water is on one side and the rough Atlantic is on the other.

Day trips

Alcobaça sits in the middle of several famous sights. Times are one way.

- A Nazaré: about 15 to 20 min by bus or car. It is a beach town known for giant winter waves and a cliff-top village reached by funicular.
- B Batalha: about 20 min by car. Its monastery was built to mark the Portuguese victory at Aljubarrota in 1385.
- C Leiria: about 30 min by bus or car. It has a hilltop castle above a lively old centre.
- D Óbidos: about 40 min by car. It is a walled hilltop town with whitewashed streets.
- Fátima: about 40 min by car. It is one of the main Catholic pilgrimage sites in Europe.
- E Serras de Aire e Candeeiros Nature Park: about 30 to 40 min by car. The park has limestone hills and caves, including the Mira de Aire caves.



Where to explore

- Historic towns nearby: Batalha and Óbidos.
- Coast: Nazaré and the islands of Berlengas Islands.
- Bigger city: Leiria.
- Nature: Serras de Aire e Candeeiros Nature Park.
- The wider region: Oeste region.

Getting there

- By air: The nearest major airport is Lisbon (LIS), about 110 km away. Take a coach from the city or rent a car. Porto (OPO) is much farther.
- By bus: This is the simplest option. Rede Expressos and FlixBus run direct coaches from Lisbon, in roughly 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 hours. Coaches also link Alcobaça with Leiria and other towns. Rede Expressos coaches stop on Avenida Manuel da Silva Carolino. FlixBus stops at a different place in town, so check the stop when you book.
- By train: Alcobaça has no station in town. The nearest is Valado, on the Oeste line, in the next municipality. From Lisbon the train is slower than the coach and needs changes. Check times on CP Comboios de Portugal.

Getting around

- On foot: The monastery, the castle, the main museums and the restaurants are all in the town centre. Most are a short walk apart.
- Regional bus: Buses connect Alcobaça with Nazaré, Leiria and São Martinho do Porto.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The town centre is compact. The monastery, castle and museums are a short walk apart.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Cycling is possible on quiet roads, but few visitors use a bike here.

Driving

- Is a car worth it?: Not for the town, which is compact. A car helps for the coast, Batalha, Nazaré and the nature park.
- Roads: The A8 is a toll motorway and the fast route from Lisbon. Free national roads such as the N8 are slower.

Food & drink

Alcobaça is known for convent sweets, a local tradition. Look for them in pastry shops in the town centre. The area also grows fruit, and Alcobaça apples have protected geographical status. The harvest runs from late summer to October. Another local dish is frango na púcara, chicken cooked in a clay pot.

Restaurants cluster in the streets around the square in front of the monastery. For seafood, go to the beach villages of São Martinho do Porto and Paredes da Vitória.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Caldo Verde
A simple, comforting soup of shredded kale, potato, and slices of chourico sausage.

Francesinha
A hearty Porto specialty: a meat-stuffed sandwich covered in melted cheese and a spiced tomato-beer sauce.

DINNER

Bacalhau
Salt cod, Portugal's national dish, said to be prepared in hundreds of different ways across the country.

Sardinhas Assadas
Charcoal-grilled sardines, especially popular in summer street festivals and along the coast.

Arroz de Marisco
A rich, soupy seafood rice, similar to paella but wetter, packed with shellfish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Pastel de Nata
A small custard tart in flaky pastry, best eaten warm with cinnamon and sugar.

DRINKS

Vinho Verde
A young, light, slightly sparkling white wine from northern Portugal, meant to be drunk within a year of harvest.

Port Wine · Vinho do Porto
A fortified wine from the Douro Valley, aged in cellars around Porto, ranging from sweet ruby to complex aged tawny styles.

Ginjinha · Ginãa
A sweet liqueur made from sour cherries, traditionally served in a small cup, sometimes with a cherry at the bottom.

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Safety & health

Alcobaça is a safe town. Petty theft is rare, but keep bags and valuables out of sight in parked cars, especially near the beaches.

The open Atlantic beaches have strong currents. Swim only where a lifeguard is on duty and follow the flag signs. The bay at São Martinho do Porto is much calmer.

History

King *Afonso Henriques* founded the monastery in 1153. He gave it to the Cistercian order after he took Santarém from the Moors in 1147. Monks lived here until 1834, when religious orders were dissolved.

The monastery holds one of Portugal's best-known love stories. Prince *Pedro* loved *Inês de Castro*, who was killed in 1355 on the orders of his father, King Afonso IV. When Pedro became king in 1357, he had her body moved to Alcobaça. Their tombs stand in the transept of the church in Monastery of Alcobaça.

In 1385 King John I defeated a Castilian army at Aljubarrota, near here. The monastery of Batalha was built in memory of the victory. The old fortress above the town, Castelo de Alcobaça, has medieval origins and was rebuilt several times.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Alcobaça Essentials

Alcobaça is defined by its 12th-century Cistercian Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site housing the ornate tombs of Pedro and Inês de Castro. The town's medieval castle ruins overlook the urban center and its 19th-century Neo-Renaissance town hall. Along the Atlantic coast, the region features the traditional fishing shores of Nazaré and the high sand dunes of Salir do Porto. The selection also includes the coastal village of São Pedro de Moel, set against the historic Leiria Pine Forest, and panoramic viewpoints overlooking the shell-shaped bay of São Martinho do Porto.





A Monastery of Alcobaça

The Alcobaça Monastery or Alcobasa Monastery is a Catholic monastic complex located in the town of Alcobaça, in central Portugal, 120 km...

Praça 25 de Abril, 2460-018 Alcobaça (39.54837, -8.97907)

Oct-Dec Mo–Su	09:00–18:00
Apr-Sep Mo–Su	09:00–19:00

mosteiroalcobaca.gov.pt/pt/index.php, +351 262 505 120



B Nazaré Beach

Wide sandy shore known for its traditional fishing culture and colorful boats, located near the deep North Canyon responsible for world-record surfing waves.

Portugal (39.59864, -9.07446)



C Castle of Alcobaça

The Castle of Alcobaça is a medieval castle in the civil parish of Alcobaça e Vestiaria, municipality of Alcobaça, in the Portuguese...

130 Rua do Castelo, Alcobaça 2460036, Portugal (39.55046, -8.98241)



D São Pedro de Moel

São Pedro de Moel is a beach community dependent on the city, freguesia and municipality of Marinha Grande in the District of Leiria,...

2430, Portugal (39.75424, -9.03307)

E Miradouro de Santo António

Panoramic viewpoint offering views over the Atlantic Ocean and the unique shell-shaped bay of São Martinho do Porto.

(39.51489, -9.13875)

F Praia de Salir do Porto

Coastal area featuring one of Europe's highest sand dunes and the ruins of a 16th-century shipyard and customs house.

(39.50132, -9.15038)



G Castle of Alfeizerão

The Castle of Alfeizerão, is a Portuguese medieval castle in civil parish of Alfeizerão, in the municipality of Alcobaça, in the district...

2460, Portugal (39.50014, -9.11075)

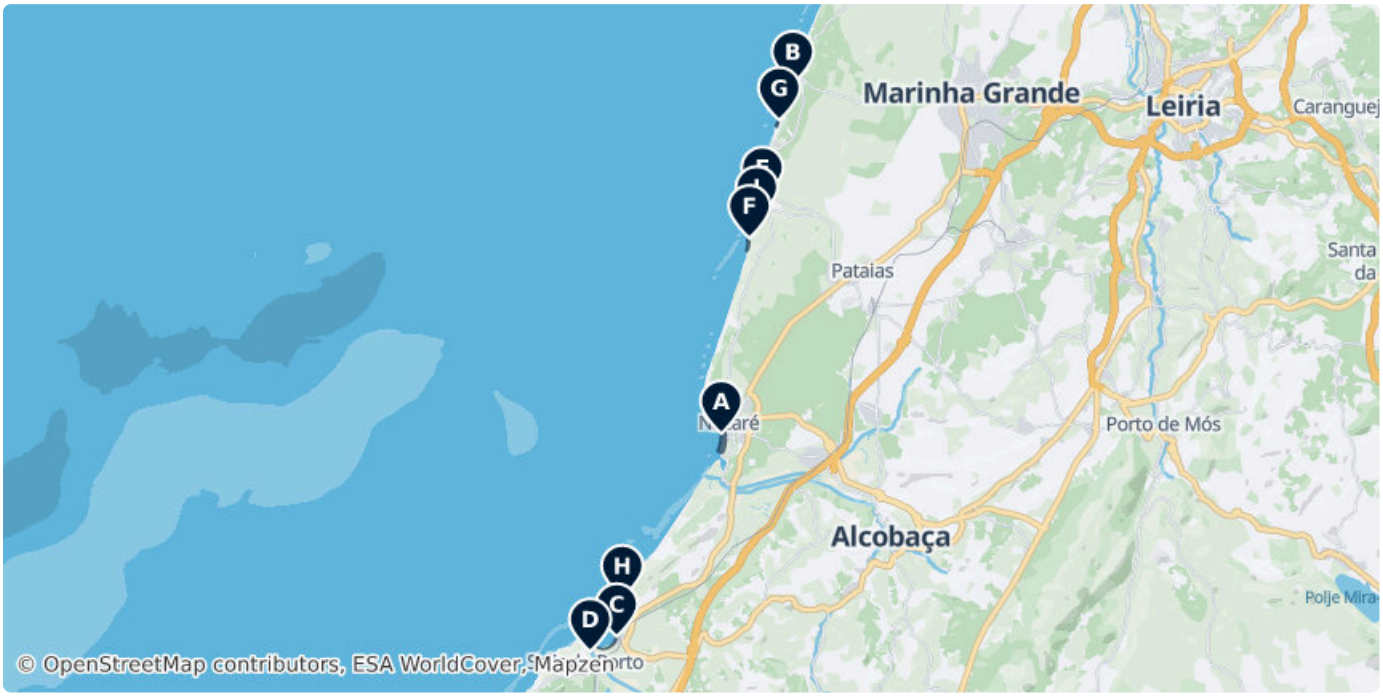
H Câmara Municipal de Alcobaça

Neo-Renaissance administrative building from the late 19th century, situated in the central Praça 25 de Abril near the monastery.

(39.55238, -8.97647)

Coastal Gems & Beaches

The Silver Coast offers a diverse shoreline, from the massive surf of Nazaré to the calm, shell-shaped bay of São Martinho do Porto. This stretch of the Atlantic features the highest sand dune in Portugal at Salir do Porto and the dramatic, multi-colored clay cliffs of Vale Furado. Many of these beaches are bordered by the historic Pine Forest of Leiria, providing a mix of wide sandy expanses, secluded naturist spots, and rugged coastal terrain.





A Nazaré Beach

Known for its traditional fishing heritage where fish are dried on wooden racks along the sand. The northern end features the Promontory of Sítio and the North Canyon, which generates some of the world's largest surfable waves.

Portugal (39.59864, -9.07446)



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São Pedro de Moel is a beach community dependent on the city, freguesia and municipality of Marinha Grande in the District of Leiria,...

2430, Portugal (39.75424, -9.03307)



C Praia de São Martinho do Porto

A natural shell-shaped bay enclosed by two headlands. The calm, shallow waters and protection from strong Atlantic currents make it a unique swimming spot on the Silver Coast.

Portugal (39.50808, -9.13503)

D Praia de Salir do Porto

Located at the southern end of São Martinho bay, this beach is home to Portugal's highest sand dune, standing approximately 50 meters tall. It also features freshwater springs known as Pocinho.

(39.50132, -9.15038)

E Praia de Paredes de Vitória

A wide sandy beach where a small river meets the sea. It is characterized by its surrounding cliffs and proximity to the Pinhal de Leiria forest.

Rua Rainha Santa Isabel, 2445-493 Alcobaça, Portugal (39.70271, -9.05063)

F Praia de Vale Furado

Noted for its tall, steep cliffs with distinct reddish and orange clay layers. The beach is accessible via a steep staircase and is known for its rugged, natural scenery.

Rua Oceano Atlântico, 2445-526 Alcobaça, Portugal (39.68560, -9.05813)

G Praia de Água de Madeiros

A quiet, sheltered beach surrounded by cliffs. It is located north of São Pedro de Moel and is bordered by the historic Leiria Pine Forest.

2445, Portugal (39.73812, -9.04097)

H Praia da Gralha

A secluded beach set against high cliffs, frequently used by paragliders due to the strong updrafts. It is also an established spot for naturism.

(39.52526, -9.13180)

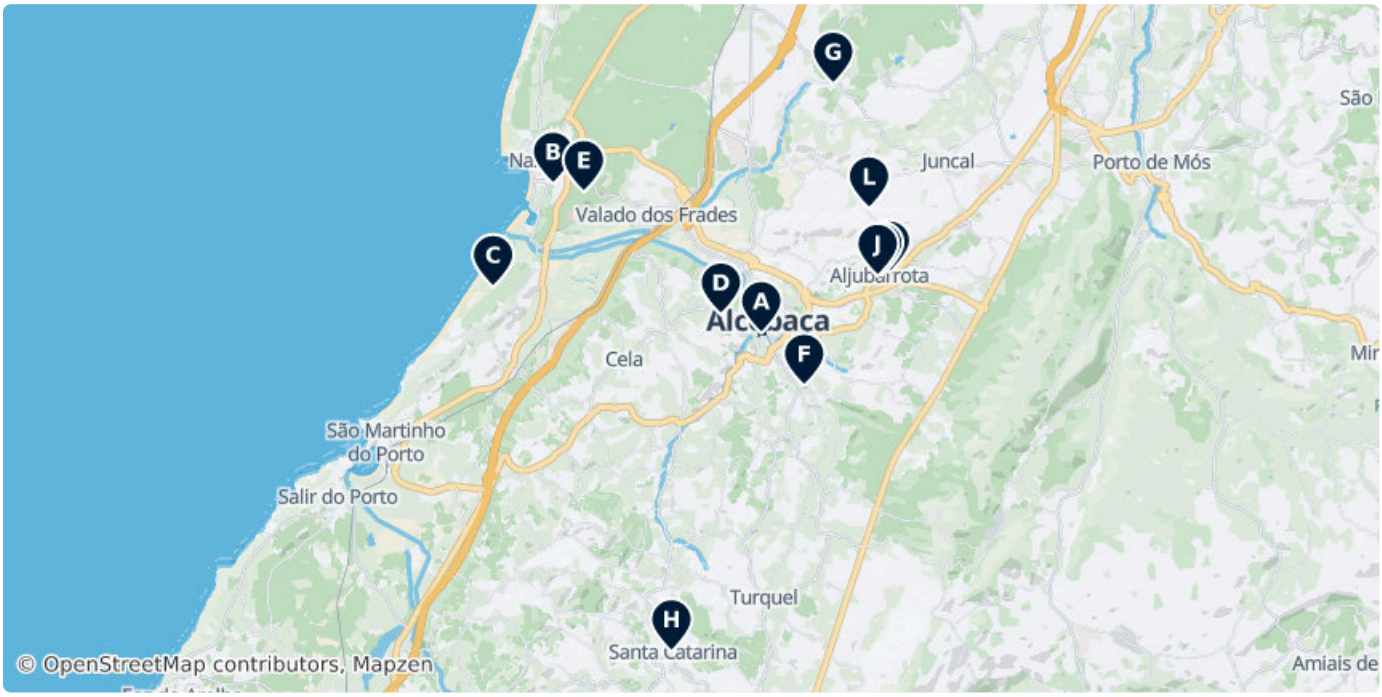
I Praia da Mina

A wild, undeveloped beach located between Paredes de Vitória and Vale Furado. It is accessed via a dirt path and offers a rugged landscape with minimal infrastructure.

2445, Portugal (39.69397, -9.05395)

Historic Churches & Monasteries

The Alcobaça region is defined by its profound Cistercian influence, centered on the 12th-century Monastery of Alcobaça, a UNESCO World Heritage site housing the royal tombs of Pedro and Inês de Castro. Beyond this centerpiece, the area preserves rare architectural landmarks like the 7th-century Visigothic Church of São Gião and several 16th-century Manueline parish churches. These sites, from the austere Convent of the Capuchos to the ornate tile-work of Pederneira, showcase the evolution of Portuguese religious art and the spiritual history of the Cistercian lands.





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mosteiroalcobaca.gov.pt/pt/index.php, +351 262 505 120

B Igreja da Misericórdia da Pederneira

16th-century church featuring a Manueline portal and an interior decorated with 18th-century blue and white azulejos.

1 Rua do Barão da Cortiçada, Nazaré 2450, Portugal (39.59574, -9.06477)

C Igreja de São Gião

A rare 7th-century Visigothic church, one of the oldest in the Iberian Peninsula, featuring a unique T-shaped floor plan.

(Unnamed Road), 2450, Portugal (39.56303, -9.08952)

D Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Ajuda

16th-century Manueline parish church in Vestiaria, noted for its ornate portal and historical ties to the Cistercian monks.

41 Rua Alcobaça, Vestiaria 2460743, Portugal (39.55430, -8.99570)

E Ermida de São Bartolomoeu

Small hilltop chapel offering panoramic views of the coast, traditionally linked to the early Christian history of Nazaré.

2450, Portugal (39.59312, -9.05212)

cm-nazare.pt/pt/monte-de-sao-bartolomeu

F Convento dos Capuchos

16th-century Franciscan convent known for its simple, austere architecture and quiet cloisters, reflecting the order's ascetic values.

6 Rua Senhor dos Aflitos, Capuchos 2460479, Portugal (39.53168, -8.96143)

G Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Esperança de Alpedriz

Historic church in Alpedriz containing a Manueline baptismal font and 17th-century tiles depicting religious scenes.

7 Rua Cinco de Outubro, Alpedriz 2460, Portugal (39.62742, -8.94953)

H Igreja de Santa Catarina

16th-century parish church in Santa Catarina featuring traditional Portuguese ecclesiastical architecture and regional religious art.

5 Avenida da Igreja, Santa Catarina 2500768, Portugal (39.44739, -9.01605)

I Igreja da Misericórdia

16th-century church in Alfeizerão belonging to the Misericórdia brotherhood, featuring a simple facade and historic charitable history.

33 Rua Direita, São Vicente 2460601, Portugal (39.56687, -8.92932)

J Igreja de Nossa Senhora dos Prazeres

The main parish church of Alfeizerão, featuring Manueline architectural details and 17th-century decorative elements.

12 Rua Dom Nuno Álvares Pereira, São Vicente 2460601, Portugal (39.56653, -8.93119)

K Igreja de São Vicente

Historic church in Alfeizerão dedicated to Saint Vincent, representing the traditional religious heritage of the local community.

N8, São Vicente 2460, Portugal (39.56761, -8.92613)

L Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Luz

16th-century church in Maiorga known for its baroque gilded woodcarvings and intricate tile panels.

Rua da Senhora da Luz, 2460396, Portugal (39.58794, -8.93476)

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