

Elvas

Portalegre District · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Elvas is a fortified town in eastern Alentejo, about 200 km east of Lisbon and a short drive from the Spanish city of Badajoz. Its bulwarked walls, forts and 16th-century aqueduct form a UNESCO World Heritage Site, listed in 2012 as a garrison border town.

The old centre is small and quiet. Elvas suits one night or a long stop on the way to or from Spain. The main draws are the forts, the walls and the local sweets made from Elvas plums.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are the best seasons. Days are warm and walking the walls and forts is easy. Summer is very hot and dry, so plan sightseeing for the morning or evening. Winter is mild but can be wet.

In December the historic centre hosts a Christmas programme.

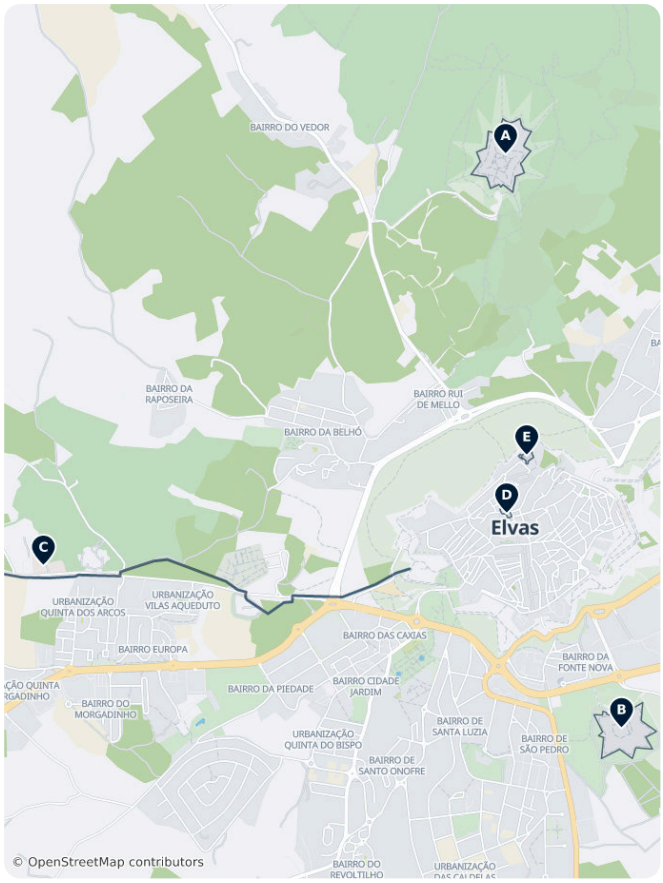
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	13° / 17° Feels like 9°	3° / -3°	Dry air
February	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 19° Feels like 11°	4° / -2°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 23° Feels like 14°	6° / 1°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 27°	8° / 4°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 33°	11° / 6°	Dry air
June	Good Good for sightseeing	31° / 39°	15° / 10°	23 sunny days · Dry air · UV 8 (Very high) · Up to 7 days above 35°
July	Poor Poor for sightseeing	36° / 41°	18° / 13°	28 sunny days · Dry air · UV 9 (Very high) · Up to 18 days above 35°
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	36° / 41°	18° / 14°	28 sunny days · Dry air · UV 8 (Very high) · Up to 18 days above 35°
September	Good Good for sightseeing	30° / 37°	16° / 11°	21 sunny days · Dry air
October	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 32°	12° / 7°	Dry air
November	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 22° Feels like 14°	6° / 1°	Dry air
December	Fair Fair for sightseeing	13° / 17° Feels like 10°	4° / -2°	Dry air

Best months: April, May, October

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

Top sights

- A Graça Fort stands on a hill about 1 km north of the centre. It was built between 1763 and 1792 to a design by *Count of Lippe*. The central tower holds a chapel and the governor's house.
- B Santa Luzia Fort sits on a hill south of the centre. It was built in the 1640s with a square plan and star-shaped outer works. Today it is a military museum.
- C Amoreira Aqueduct brings water to the town over about 7 km. Work began in 1529 and it was inaugurated in 1622. The arches rise in several tiers.
- D Old Cathedral is a late Gothic church with Moorish influences from the reign of King Manuel I. It was the cathedral of Elvas, which was a bishop's seat from 1570 to 1818.
- E Elvas Castle is the medieval castle in the upper town. It dates from the 13th century.
- The bulwarked walls and old gates around the centre are the best way to see how the town was defended.



Elvas – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

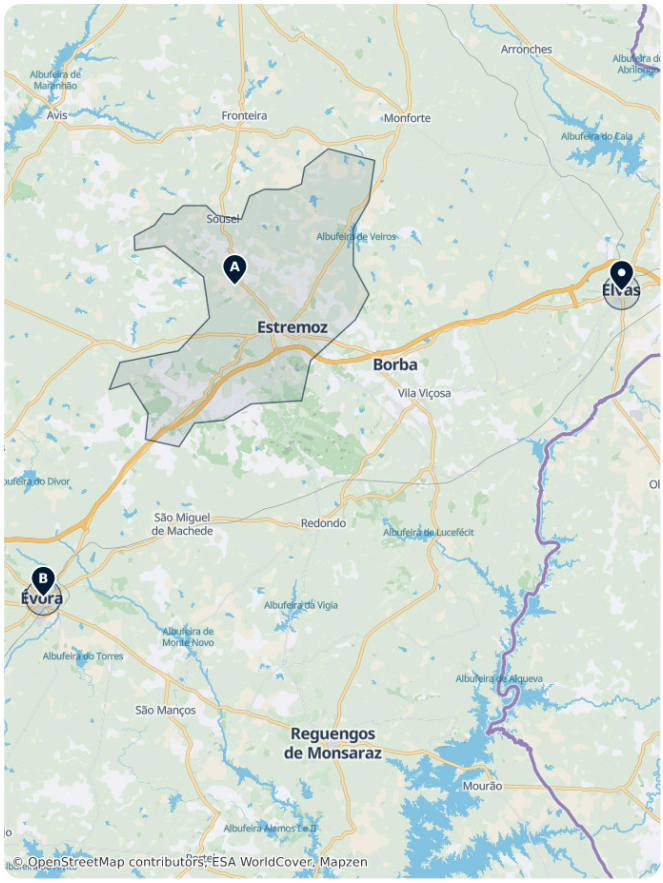
What to experience

- Watch the evening light from the ramparts of the Graça Fort. The wide views stretch over the plain towards Spain.
- Join the Christmas programme in the historic centre in December. See the event calendar on the municipality website.

Day trips

Elvas is a good base for short trips on both sides of the border. The list runs from closest to farthest.

- Badajoz, Spain: about 20 minutes by car. Visit the Moorish Alcazaba and the Gothic cathedral. Spain is one hour ahead of Portugal.
- Campo Maior: about 15 km north-east, 20 minutes by car. This was a major garrison town after Elvas. It has a rebuilt castle and 18th-century churches.
- A Estremoz: about 40 minutes by car. The old town and castle stand above a region known for marble.
- B Évora: about 1 hour by car. This is a UNESCO-listed old town with a Roman temple and a cathedral.



Where to explore

Heading north into the Alto Alentejo hills:

- Castelo de Vide is a hill town with a castle and a historic Jewish quarter.
- Marvão is a walled village on a high ridge near the Spanish border.

Getting there

- By air: the nearest main airport is Lisbon (LIS), about 200 km away. From Lisbon, continue by coach or car.
- By bus: coaches run from Lisbon in about 2.5 to 3 hours. Rede Expressos and FlixBus serve Elvas. Rede Expressos also links Elvas with Estremoz, Évora and Portalegre. Coaches arrive at the bus terminal.
- By train: only two or three trains a day stop at Elvas station on the Linha do Leste. The station is outside the old town, so plan a taxi or a long walk. Check the timetable first. CP Comboios de Portugal
- By car: see the driving section. The drive from Lisbon takes about 2 hours.

Getting around

- On foot: the old centre is compact and most sights are inside the walls. The streets are steep and cobbled. The two big forts are about 1 km from the centre, uphill.
- Cycling: hills make cycling hard work, and it is not needed for the sights.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old centre is compact. Streets are steep and cobbled, and the two big forts are about 1 km uphill.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Hills and cobbles make cycling hard in the old town.

Driving

- A car is not needed inside the old town. It is useful for day trips and for visiting the aqueduct and forts.
- From Lisbon, take the A2 and then the A6. Both are toll roads for visitors. The 2026 Alentejo toll exemption covers residents and local companies only.
- Park outside the historic centre and walk in. The streets inside the walls are narrow and steep.

Food & drink

Elvas is known for plums. Elvas green gage plums are preserved in sugar and have a protected origin label. The Fábrica Museu da Ameixa explains how they are made. The town's other signature is sericaia, a baked egg and cinnamon pudding that began in convent kitchens. It is often served with plums.

Restaurants and pastry shops cluster in the streets of the old town. Menus follow Alentejo cooking, with bread-based dishes and pork. The municipal market is a good place to see local produce.

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.

Elvas – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Elvas is very safe for visitors. Crime levels are low, but keep an eye on bags in busy places.

Summer heat is the main risk. Carry water, wear a hat and avoid the middle of the day when you visit the forts. The cobbled streets are uneven and slippery after rain.

History

Elvas grew as three walled towns between the 10th and 14th centuries. Its position on the border made it a frontier stronghold. Portugal regained independence from Spain in 1640, and the town was fortified again. The new walls were designed by the Dutch Jesuit *Cosmander*, with bulwarks and a dry ditch.

Santa Luzia Fort was part of that defence. On 14 January 1659 the garrison and citizens defeated a Spanish army in the Battle of the Lines of Elvas.

Later guns could shoot farther, so Graça Fort was added in the 18th century. The fort repelled Spanish troops in 1801 and French forces under Soult in 1811. Amoreira Aqueduct was built to supply water during long sieges.

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

Elvas Unmissables

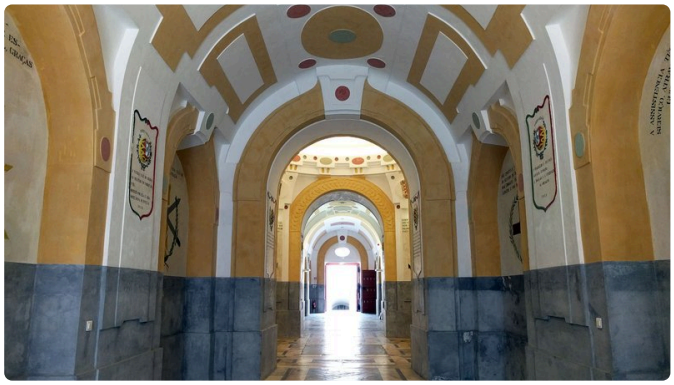
Elvas serves as a premier example of military architecture, holding the title of a UNESCO World Heritage site for its extensive dry-ditch fortifications. This selection features the 17th-century star-shaped Fort Santa Luzia and the imposing Nossa Senhora da Graça Fort. The city's engineering is further highlighted by the 16th-century Amoreira Aqueduct, which spans eight kilometers. Historic monuments like the Manueline pillory and the Baroque Sanctuary of Senhor Jesus da Piedade complete the architectural landscape of this border town.



A Pelourinho de Elvas

A 16th-century Manueline-style pillory located in the historic center. This stone monument features intricate carvings and represents the city's former judicial authority.

22 Largo de Santa Clara, Elvas 7350, Portugal (38.88184, -7.16417)



B Nossa Senhora da Graça Fort

The Nossa Senhora da Graça Fort, officially Conde de Lippe Fort and known historically as La Lippe, is a fort in the village of Alcáçova,...

Estrada Nacional 264, 7350-410 Elvas (38.89499, -7.16416)

Mo Closed

+351 268 625 228



C Fort Santa Luzia

Fort Santa Luzia is located in Alentejo, in the city of Elvas, district of Portalegre, in Portugal.

(38.87294, -7.15845)



D Aqueduto da Amoreira

Designed by Francisco de Arruda, this 16th-century masonry aqueduct spans 8 kilometers. It features 843 arches across four tiers and was built to supply the fortified city with water.

1 Rua de São Paulo, Elvas 7350160, Portugal
(38.87798, -7.17240)



E Santuário do Senhor Jesus da Piedade

An 18th-century Baroque church located outside the city walls. It is the focal point of the annual Feira de São Mateus and contains a significant collection of religious ex-votos.

(Unnamed Road), Assunção 7350, Portugal
(38.87256, -7.17896)

F Forte de Santa Luzia

A 17th-century star fort that formed a vital part of the city's defensive system. It features a military museum, well-preserved bastions, and a central keep.

(38.87267, -7.15824)

G Padrão comemorativo da Batalha da Linha de Elvas

A monument commemorating the 1659 Battle of the Lines of Elvas. It marks the site of the Portuguese victory over Spanish forces during the War of Restoration.

(38.89089, -7.17698)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikipedia, Tripomatic

IMAGE CREDITS

- Nossa Senhora da Graça Fort — "Interior del Fuerte de Nuestra Señora de Gracia en Elvas, Portugal" by Alonso de Mendoza, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Fort Santa Luzia — "Casa del gobernador en el fuerte de Santa Luzia de Elvas, Portugal" by Alonso de Mendoza, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Aqueduto da Amoreira — "Aqueduto da Amoreira by M. Ventura" by M. Ventura, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Santuário do Senhor Jesus da Piedade — "Interior do santuário do Senhor Jesus da Piedade" by LuisLC85, CC BY-SA 4.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 21, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.