

Leiria

Leiria District · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Leiria is a medium-sized city in central Portugal, about halfway between Lisbon and Porto. A medieval castle stands on the hill above the old town and the river Lis. It is the second-largest city in the Central Region after Coimbra.

The city is a calm, practical base. Visitors come for the castle, a small walkable centre and easy access to Batalha, Alcobaça, Nazaré and the Atlantic coast. It suits a short stay of one or two nights. Industry, especially plastics and moulds, drives the local economy. The poet *Francisco Rodrigues Lobo* lived here, and the novel *O Crime do Padre Amaro* by *Eça de Queirós* is set in the city.

Official visitor information is at Visit Leiria.

When to visit

Spring and early autumn are the most comfortable seasons. Summer is hot and dry, with very little rain in July and August. Winter is mild but wet, and November to February are the rainiest months.

The biggest event is Extramuralhas, a gothic music festival held in Leiria in late August. Book accommodation early if you plan to visit then.

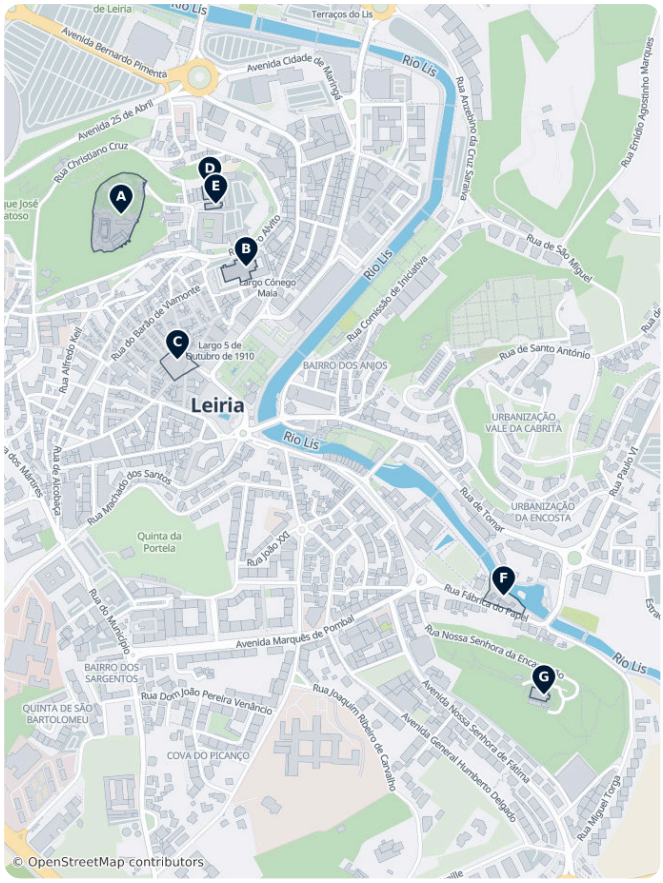
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for cycling	15° / 19° Feels like 12°	6° / 1°	12 rainy days · Dry air
February	Great Great for cycling	16° / 21°	7° / 2°	Dry air
March	Great Great for cycling	19° / 25°	8° / 4°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	10° / 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° / 37°	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 cycling	18° / 23°	10° / 4°	13 rainy days · Dry air
December	Good Good for cycling	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 Castelo de Leiria is the symbol of the city. Kings lived here, and the Paços Novos palace has a loggia with views over the rooftops. Storm Kristin damaged parts of the castle in January 2026, so check which areas are open before you go.
- B Sé de Leiria is a late Renaissance cathedral, built between 1550 and 1574 below the castle hill.
- C Praça Rodrigues Lobo is a central square in the old town, named after the local poet *Francisco Rodrigues Lobo*. It is a good place to start a walk.
- D Museu da Imagem em Movimento is a museum about film and pre-cinema. It is inside the castle walls, in the former stables.
- E Igreja de São Pedro is a Romanesque church next to the castle. It was once the city's cathedral.
- F Moinho do Papel is a museum in a restored water-powered paper mill. It shows how paper was made.
- G Santuário da Encarnação is a sanctuary of Our Lady of the Incarnation, the patron saint of Leiria.



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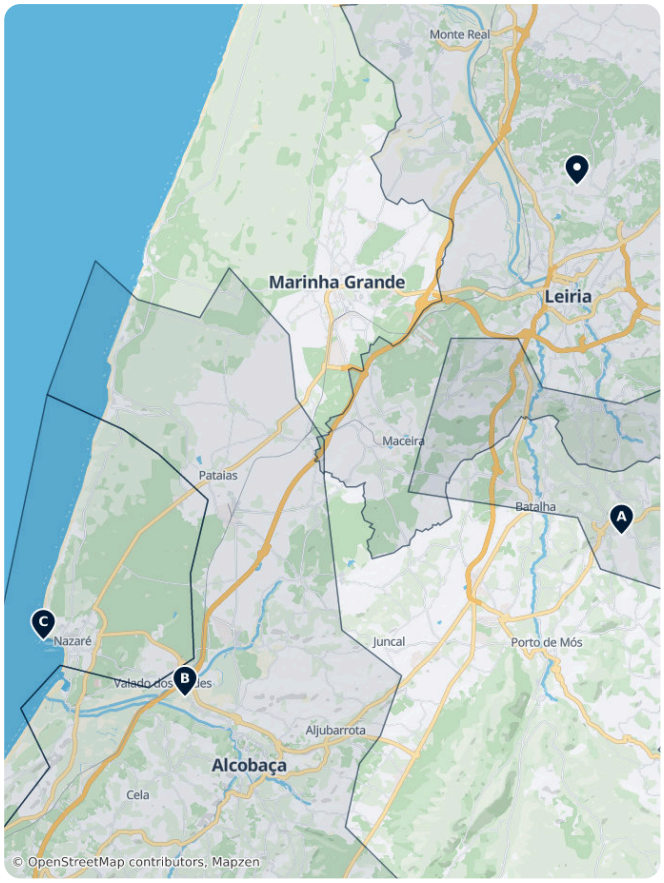
What to experience

- Go to the Extramuralhas gothic festival in late August. It brings concerts to the city.
- Spend a beach day on the Leiria coast, for example at Praia de Pedrógão or São Pedro de Moel. The coast is about 25 to 30 km from the city.
- Walk or cycle among the pines of the Pinhal de Leiria, a large pine forest near the coast. King *Dinis* expanded it, and its timber was later used to build ships.

Day trips

Leiria is a good base for the monasteries and coast of central Portugal. Most places below are easy by car. Buses also run to the larger towns.

- A Batalha, about 10 km south. The Gothic monastery is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Fátima, about 25 km southeast, about 20 to 25 minutes by car. It is one of the main Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. The largest pilgrimages are on 13 May and 13 October.
- B Alcobaça, about 30 km south-west. The large medieval monastery is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- C Nazaré, about 35 km south-west. A beach town known for its fishing tradition and giant winter waves.
- Coimbra, about 70 km north. A university city with a historic old town.



Where to explore

Monasteries and towns

- Batalha is the closest and has a major Gothic monastery.
- Alcobaça has another large medieval monastery.

Coast and countryside

- Nazaré is a beach and fishing town on the Atlantic.
- Óbidos is a walled medieval town further south.
- Serras de Aire e Candeeiros is a limestone nature park with caves and walking routes.

Getting there

- By air: The main gateway is Lisbon airport (LIS), about 140 km south. Porto airport (OPO) is about 180 km north. Both need a bus, train or car for the rest of the trip.
- By bus: Buses are the easiest option. Direct buses from Lisbon take about 2 hours. The bus station is in the city centre.
- By train: Leiria is on the Linha do Oeste. The station is about 2 km from the centre. From Lisbon the train is slower than the bus, with a change on the way. Book at Comboios de Portugal.
- By car: The A1 (Lisbon to Porto) passes Leiria. The A8 also runs here from Lisbon.

Getting around

- On foot: The old town and the castle are close together and easy to walk. The castle is on a hill. Free lifts help visitors reach the top.
- City buses: Leiria has a local bus network called Mobilis.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town and castle are compact. The castle hill is steep, but free mechanical access helps.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Cycling is possible in the valley, but the old town is hilly.

Driving

- A car is not needed for the old town and the castle. It is useful for the coast, the pine forest, Fátima and the smaller towns around Leiria.
- The A1 and the A8 charge tolls. Ask your rental company how electronic tolls are charged.

Food & drink

Regional dishes include roast suckling pig (leitão) and migas. Brisas do Lis is a sweet from Leiria. Look for it in local pastry shops.

Cafés and restaurants are concentrated in the old town around Praça Rodrigues Lobo.

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

Leiria is a calm city and safe for visitors. Take normal care with bags and phones in busy places. The general emergency number is 112.

History

The Roman settlement of Collippo lay about 7 km from today's Leiria. King *Afonso Henriques* took the area from the Moors in 1135 and gave the town its first charter in 1142.

Later kings made Leiria a royal town. *Dinis* began the keep of Castelo de Leiria, gave the town to his wife, Queen *Elizabeth*, and expanded the Pinhal de Leiria. *João I* built the royal palace, Paços Novos, inside the castle walls in the late 14th century. In 1545 Leiria became a city and the seat of a diocese. Sé de Leiria was built soon afterwards.

The French invasions of 1808 and a great fire in 1811 damaged the city. In January 2026 Storm Kristin caused severe damage across the Leiria area, including to the castle.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



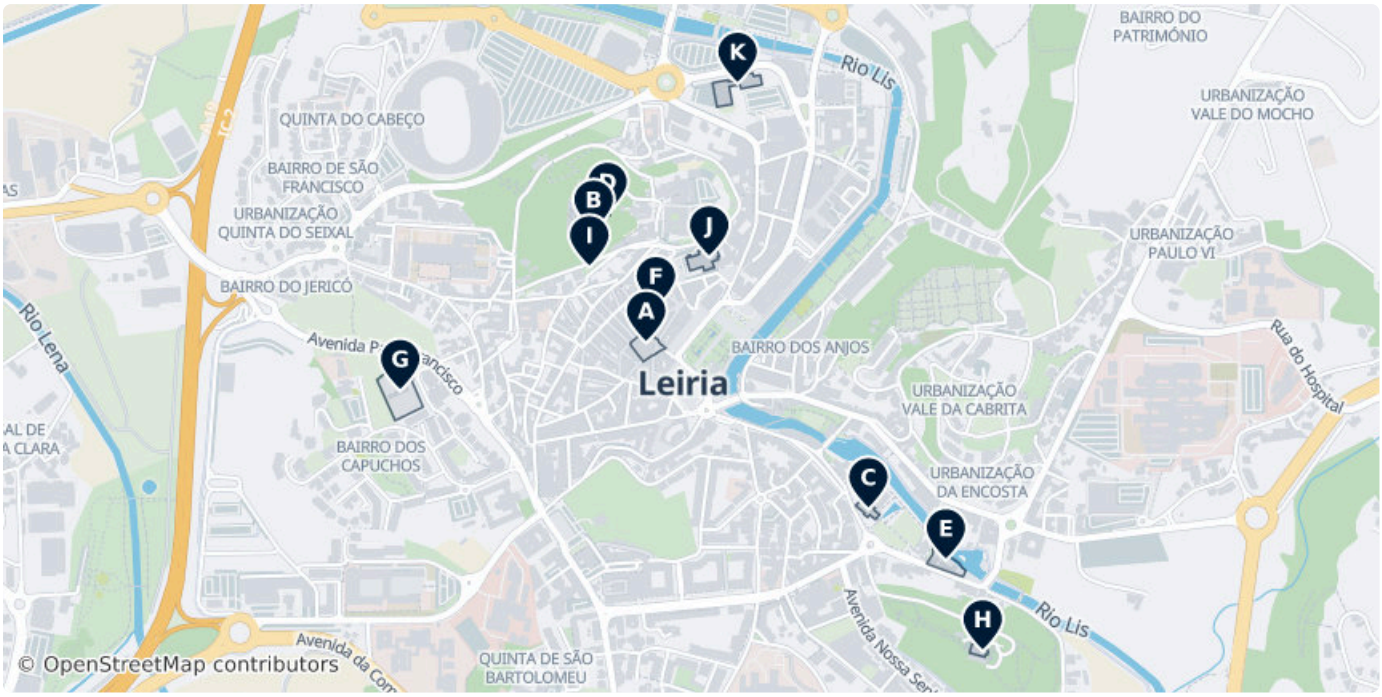
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Leiria's Essential Landmarks

Leiria’s historic center is defined by its medieval castle complex and the Gothic ruins of Santa Maria da Pena. The city’s architectural heritage spans from the 16th-century Mannerist Cathedral to the arcaded Praça Rodrigues Lobo. Key cultural sites include the 15th-century Moinho do Papel, one of Portugal’s first paper mills, and the former synagogue in the Jewish quarter. Hilltop sanctuaries like Nossa Senhora da Encarnação offer panoramic views, while the municipal market provides a glimpse into local daily life and regional commerce.





A Praça Rodrigues Lobo

The city's central square, characterized by its traditional calçada pavement and 16th-century arcades. Named after the local poet Francisco Rodrigues Lobo, it serves as the primary social hub within the historic district.

51 Praça Rodrigues Lobo, Leiria 2400217, Portugal
(39.74459, -8.80801)

B Paços Novos

Part of the Leiria Castle complex, these Gothic "New Palaces" were commissioned by King D. João I in the early 15th century. The structure features a distinctive arched loggia offering views over the city.

(39.74668, -8.80930)

C Igreja de Santo Agostinho

A 16th-century church and former Augustinian convent featuring a Baroque façade. The interior is decorated with traditional tile panels and gilded woodcarvings.

32 Largo da Infantaria 7, Leiria 2410111, Portugal
(39.74145, -8.80256)

D Porta e Torre Buçaqueira

Located within the castle walls, these 12th-century Gothic ruins represent one of the city's oldest religious sites. The structure was significantly renovated in the 14th century during the reign of King D. Dinis.

Largo de São Pedro, Leiria 2400235, Portugal
(39.74701, -8.80896)



E Moinho do Papel

Established in 1411 on the banks of the Lis River, this was one of the first paper mills in Portugal. It now functions as a museum dedicated to the traditional processes of paper and cereal milling.

14 Rua da Fábrica de Papel, Leiria 2410103, Portugal
(39.74049, -8.80066)

Sa	14:00–17:30
Su	09:30–18:00

visiteleiria.pt/pontos-de-interesse/mus..., +351 244 839 672

F Centro de Diálogo Intercultural de Leiria (Antiga Sinagoga de Leiria)

Housed in a building believed to be a medieval synagogue, this center explores the city's Jewish heritage and promotes religious tolerance through exhibitions on the history of Leiria's diverse communities.

10 Rua Afonso de Albuquerque, Leiria 2400080, Portugal
(39.74524, -8.80778)

Mo–Fr	09:30–12:30, 14:00–17:30

G Convento de Santo António dos Capuchos

Ruins of a 17th-century Franciscan monastery. The site preserves elements of its original monastic architecture and reflects the religious history of the city's outskirts.

128 Rua Miguel Franco, Leiria 2410236, Portugal
(39.74368, -8.81405)

H Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Encarnação

A 16th-century hilltop chapel reached via a monumental 158-step staircase. The interior is noted for its 18th-century azulejo tile panels depicting the life of the Virgin Mary.

(Unnamed Road), Leiria 2410, Portugal
(39.73877, -8.79976)

I Miradouro Ernesto Korrodi

A scenic viewpoint named after the architect who led the restoration of Leiria Castle. It provides a clear vantage point of the medieval fortress and the surrounding urban landscape.

(39.74601, -8.80941)



J Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Leiria

A 16th-century Mannerist cathedral designed by Afonso Álvares. Uniquely, it lacks an integrated bell tower; the bells are instead housed in a separate structure on the nearby hillside.

Rua Dom Sancho I, 2400-088 Leiria, Portugal
(39.74620, -8.80647)

leiria-fatima.pt

K Mercado Municipal de Leiria

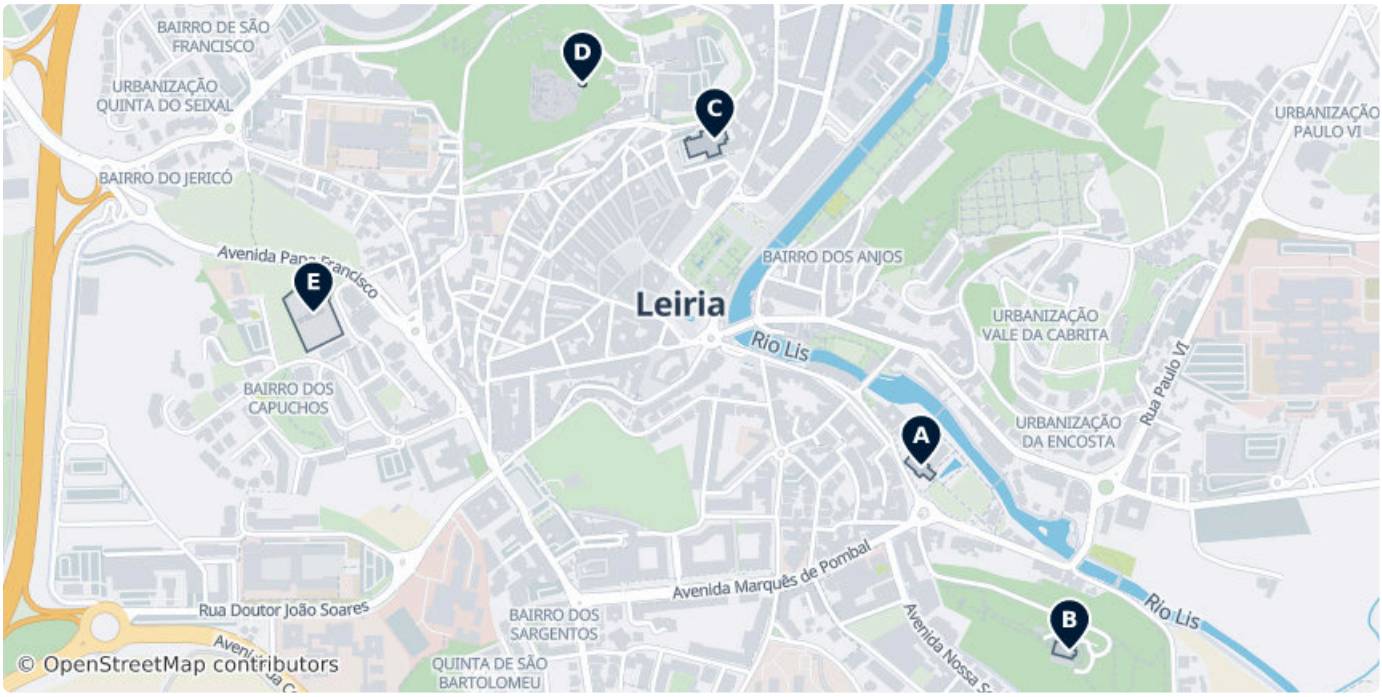
A traditional municipal market where local vendors sell fresh regional produce, fish, and flowers. It serves as a central point for Leiria's local food culture and daily trade.

Avenida Cidade de Maringá, 2400-221 Leiria, Portugal
(39.74947, -8.80577)

Mo–Su	08:00–12:00

Historic Heritage Sites

Leiria's historical landscape is defined by its diverse religious architecture, ranging from the 16th-century Mannerist Cathedral to the Gothic ruins of Santa Maria da Pena situated within the castle walls. This collection features significant sites like the hilltop Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Encarnação and the former Convent of Santo António dos Capuchos. These landmarks showcase centuries of evolution in Portuguese ecclesiastical design, including Baroque tilework and Mannerist structural elements, reflecting the city's spiritual and cultural development.



A Igreja de Santo Agostinho

A 16th-century Mannerist structure featuring significant Baroque elements and traditional Portuguese azulejo tile panels depicting religious scenes.

32 Largo da Infantaria 7, Leiria 2410111, Portugal
(39.74145, -8.80256)

B Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Encarnação

Hilltop sanctuary originally built in the 16th century and reconstructed in the 18th century. It features Neoclassical architecture and a monumental staircase.

(Unnamed Road), Leiria 2410, Portugal
(39.73877, -8.79976)



C Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Leiria

A 16th-century Mannerist structure commissioned by King João III. It is architecturally distinct for lacking an integrated bell tower, which stands separately on a nearby hill.

Rua Dom Sancho I, 2400-088 Leiria, Portugal
(39.74620, -8.80647)

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E Convento de Santo António dos Capuchos

Remains of a 17th-century Franciscan convent. The site preserves structural elements of the former monastery and its religious grounds.

128 Rua Miguel Franco, Leiria 2410236, Portugal
(39.74368, -8.81405)

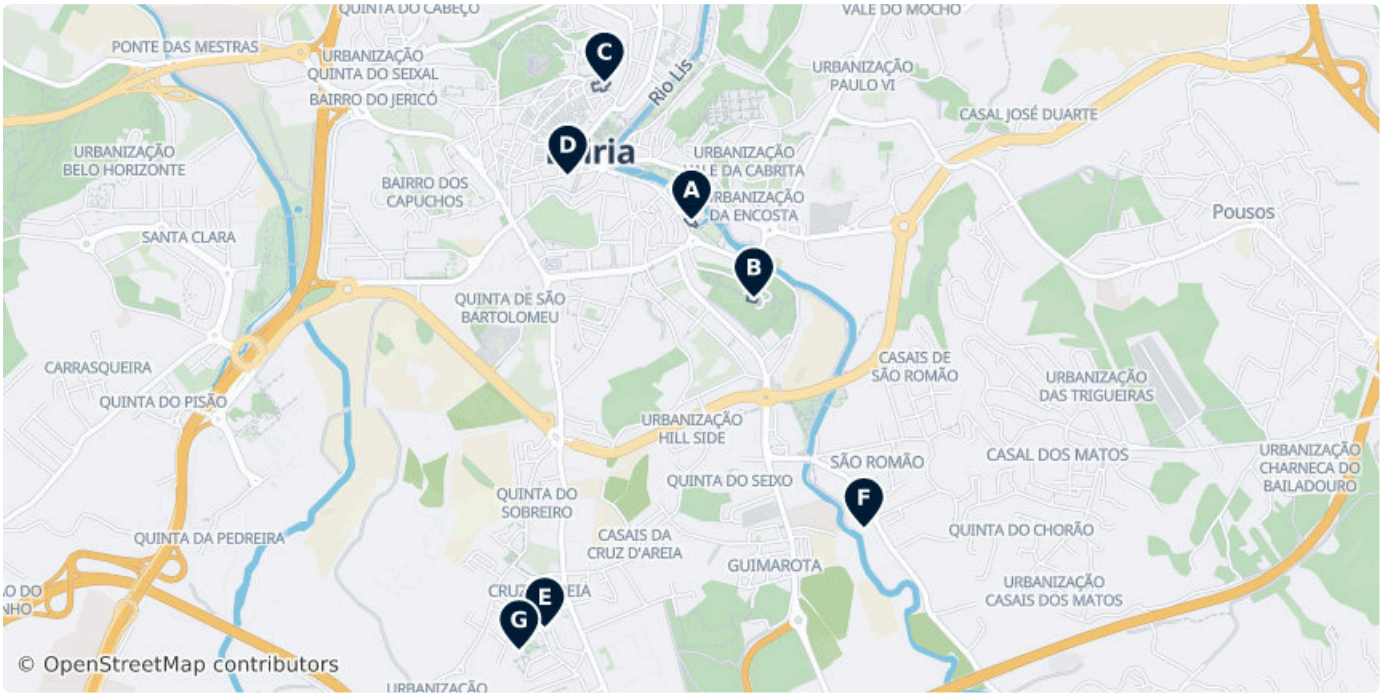
D Porta e Torre Buçaqueira

Gothic ruins located within the perimeter of Leiria Castle. Built in the 14th century, this former royal chapel features pointed arches and skeletal stone vaults.

Largo de São Pedro, Leiria 2400235, Portugal
(39.74701, -8.80896)

Christian Heritage Sites

Leiria's religious landscape features a mix of historic Mannerist architecture and modern places of worship. The city's spiritual heritage is anchored by the 16th-century Cathedral and the Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Encarnação, famous for its monumental staircase. Beyond Roman Catholic landmarks, the area hosts diverse Christian denominations, including Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist congregations. These sites range from centuries-old heritage buildings to contemporary pastoral centers, reflecting the evolution of the local faith community.



A Igreja de Santo Agostinho

16th-century Mannerist and Baroque church originally part of an Augustinian convent. It features an ornate interior and historic tilework.

32 Largo da Infantaria 7, Leiria 2410111, Portugal
(39.74145, -8.80256)

B Santuário de Nossa Senhora da Encarnação

16th-century shrine built on a hill overlooking the city. It is characterized by its long monumental staircase and Mannerist architecture.

(Unnamed Road), Leiria 2410, Portugal
(39.73877, -8.79976)



C Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Leiria

16th-century cathedral designed by architect Afonso Álvares. It is notable for its Mannerist style and for lacking an integrated bell tower, which sits separately on a nearby hill.

Rua Dom Sancho I, 2400-088 Leiria, Portugal (39.74620, -8.80647)

leiria-fatima.pt

D Igreja Baptista de Leiria

Place of worship for the local Baptist congregation.

20 Avenida dos Combatentes da Grande Guerra, Leiria 2400123, Portugal (39.74300, -8.80811)

igrejabaptistaleiria.pt, +351 244 832 252

E Igreja Adventista do Sétimo Dia

Place of worship for the Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

42 Rua Lino António, Leiria 2410055, Portugal (39.72741, -8.80914)

F Comunidade Pastoral São Romão e Guimarota

Catholic pastoral center and place of worship serving the local community.

(39.73084, -8.79483)

G Igreja da Cruz da Areia

Modern Catholic place of worship serving the local neighborhood.

15 Rua Tito Larcher, Leiria 2410062, Portugal (39.72663, -8.81030)

DATA SOURCES

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