

Leisure and Culture

IPT offers sports facilities for the practice of football, basketball, handball, indoor football, tennis, and beach volleyball. Users of these facilities must have the SAS-IPT card.

The associative spirit of our students led to the creation of the Tuna Templária (Student's Song Fest Group) in 2000. It is a male group and incorporates many different instruments. They have performed in several places across the country and abroad and have already won several awards. They have organized several International Festivals in Tomar and recorded a CD, which is already in its sixth edition. There is also a female group in Tomar, which started in 2001 and has also won some awards. The School of Technology in Abrantes also has its own musical group (ESTAtuna) founded in 2000.



Every year, over the course of one week in the month of May, the students commemorate the so-called “Queima das Fitas”. It is students’ week and includes several festivities such as a religious ceremony, a student’s parade, a ball and music concerts, among other things.

Cultural Life

Tomar is home to numerous cultural activities. The Cine-Teatro Paraíso, located downtown, offers theatres, music concerts and cinema.



The Convent of Christ is also a stage of several theatre plays and renaissance dinners offered throughout the year. Art lovers ought to visit museums or the Town Hall Art Gallery where temporary exhibitions are held throughout the year. The Lagares D'El Rei (old olive oil mills) is also home to several music and dance performances.

Local Festivities

Festa dos Tabuleiros is our main Festival and takes place every four years during the first week of July. It is a magnificent event dedicated to the Holy Spirit which involves several months of work and attracts about 500 000 visitors to Tomar. Hundreds of traditional *tabuleiros* decorated with paper flowers and loaves of bread are carried by women dressed in white accompanied by men wearing black trousers, white shirts and red ties, who form a procession and walk through the town's streets.



Santa Iria Fair takes place on 20th of October every year and is dedicated to Santa Iria, the patron saint of Tomar. It includes a popular trade fair and a great procession with flowers thrown into the Nabão River, the place where, according to the legend, the saint has been deposited after having been sacrificed.

The Soup Festival is a gastronomic event held every year in May where a wide variety of delicious soups, prepared by local restaurants, can be tried and enjoyed.

Interesting Places to Visit in Tomar

Tomar attracts thousands of tourists all year round because of its varied monuments and natural beauty. These include:

Castle and Convento de Cristo



Magnificent ensemble of 12th to 16th century architecture and art, it is the main monument of the city and one of the most important in Portugal. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1983. It has been the headquarters of the Templar Order and later of its successor, the Order of Christ.

Church of Santa Maria dos Olivais



Gothic style church (12th century), was built as the cemetery of the Templar Knights. Dom Gualdim Pais, founder of the city, was buried in the church and its original tomb, dating from 1195 with gothic inscriptions, is still preserved there.

Tomar Synagogue



Tomar has the best preserved medieval synagogue of Portugal. It was built in the mid-15th century and has an interesting interior with vaulting and columns with classic capitals. Since 1939, it houses the small Jewish Museum Abraão Zacuto, with interesting pieces related with Jewish history in Portugal.

Church of São João Baptista



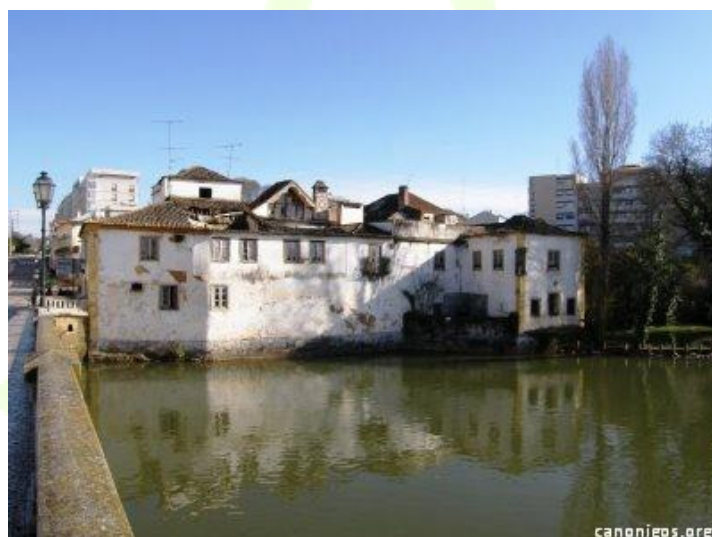
The main church in Tomar is located in the main square of the town, in front of the town hall (the building dating from the 17th century) and a modern statue of Gualdim Pais. The church was built between the 15th and 16th centuries and has many interesting artistic details, like the Flamboyant Gothic portal, the Manueline tower with a 16th century clock, the decorated capitals of the inner columns of the nave and several panels painted in the 1530s by one of Portugal's best Renaissance artists, Gregório Lopes

Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Conceição



Capela de Nossa Senhora da Conceição is a chapel built between 1532 and 1540 in pure Renaissance style, started by João de Castilho and finished by Diogo de Torralva. It was intended to be the chapel where King João III was to be buried. Its beautiful and clear architecture turns it into one of the most remarkable early Renaissance buildings in Portugal.

Church and Convent of Santa Iria



Located on the upper bank of river Nabão, this early 16th century building has a nice Renaissance portal and altar, as well as Manueline architectural details.

Historic Centre

The historic centre of Tomar is also worth a visit. It contains the greatest collection of monuments in central Portugal and hosts natural attractions such as the river, the weirs, the garden-island (the so-called Jardim do Mouchão) as well as renaissance-style architectural aspects.



The most important museums are:

- **Museu dos Fósforos** – with a collection of about 50 000 items it is one of the biggest in Europe.
- **Museu de Arte Contemporânea** – houses works of great Portuguese contemporary artists such as Almada Negreiros, Vespeira and Cutileiro. Collection donated by Professor José Augusto França.
- **Museu Judeu Português Abraão Zacuto** – installed at the synagogue, the museum is a very important testimony of the presence of the Jewish culture in the country and in the world.

Living in Abrantes

Abrantes Castle/Fort



Abrantes once had a strategic importance, namely during the Christian Reconquest (12th century) and the Peninsular War. The castle and fortress is a reminder of this historical role. It was built by the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques and was used for military purposes until the 20th century. The fortified walls now enclosed the great keep and the 15th century church of Saint Mary of the Castle, which lodges the Dom Lopo de Almeida Museum displaying archaeological finds, Moorish-style tiles, tombs and statues from the 15th and 16th centuries.

Misericórdia Church



This church displays a magnificent Renaissance portal and panels with painting attributed to Gregório Lopes (1490-1550), the Albuquerque Family Manor, once used as a royal palace, and the ancient church of Saint Vincent.

Church of São João Baptista



It dates back from the 12th century, having been remodelled in the 14th and 16th centuries. It has a mannerist facade and its interior is composed of three ceiling naves covered by wood panels and mannerist gold-carved altarpieces.

Church of São Vicente



Built in the 13th century, it was totally reconstructed in the 16th century under the reign of King Sebastian. The main facade is mannerist and is incomplete. This church built in the mannerist style has three naves, nine altars and 18th century tiling. The tile panels depicting Saint Vincent's vessel, some renaissance altarpieces and various artefacts are of significant artistic value.

A Barragem de Castelo do Bode



The Castelo do Bode Dam and the Nautical Leisure Park of Aldeia do Mato provides an opportunity to enjoy the river and its natural setting, ideal for the practice of water sports and boating.

Gastronomy



Palha de Abrantes



Tigeladas

Gastronomically, the region is famous for its typical cakes, based on ancient recipes created by nuns, namely *Palha de Abrantes* and *Tigeladas*, delicious specialities made with egg yolks and sugar.

Living in Mação

Sagrado do Vale do Tejo Museum of Prehistoric Art



Situated in the heart of the town of Mação, the Museum of Prehistoric Art and the Sacred Valley of the Tagus, whose Foundation dates back to the 40s, reopened to the public, after having been completely renovated in March 2005. The space, which is both harmonious and fascinating, goes well beyond the walls of the museum itself and embraces a whole region, attempting to preserve and exhibit, its culture, landscapes, collections, remains, and archaeological sites. Discover the importance of agriculture in the lives of our people and the stories of a journey that span the quaternal ages to the Christian Trinity.

Mação Town Hall



Located on Rua Padre António Pereira de Figueiredo, the Town Hall was erected here in 1875, the same year that Mação was made a county. In the years that followed, there was a large fire that destroyed most of the building and the city archive. Nowadays, it houses the administrative services of the local council.

Chapel of Espírito Santo



The current chapel was erected between the end of 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries at the site of an earlier temple that used to be the main Church for the town dwellers. It is a chapel of late-religious architecture, with the facade flanked by two bell towers. It has a unified interior space, giving prominence to the chancel with elevated flooring. The high altar and side altars are in the national style, with the altarpieces in gilt and polychrome.

The Bando de Codes Wind Farm



Environmental protection has become a huge concern and one of man's most important struggles.

When it comes to environmental problems, Mação has very few, yet the local authorities still strive to provide a striking example by developing alternative energy structures and other pro-environment projects. As such, the implementation of wind farms has become a reality in Mação and there is still a lot of room for them to develop even further, due to the excellent geomorphological conditions of the local area where some mountains reach heights of 600 metres.

Matriz Church



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The Igreja Matriz is a church that is agreeably situated at the meeting point of several streets in the historic town centre of Mação.

The construction of the church was completed in 1597, as it is inscribed on the tympanum above the main portal. The original bell tower, which is crowned by merlons and bevelled edges, still remains as part of the current structure.

In the mid 17th century, the walls were tiled with panels with repeating feature patterns.

Made in the Mannerist style, the church, which is of sizeable dimensions, is laid out in longitudinal plan in the shape of a Latin cross, with three naves which back onto the chancel, flanked by vestries on one side and the bell tower on the other.

The central axis is parted by the portico, which is flanked by a curved pediment, and a small circular window below the gable.

At the end of the church, there are two sacristies of different sizes; the one on the right side has two floors, whilst the one on the left has just one. Inside, the three naves, each of which is five bays long, are separated by arches supported by tall Tuscan columns. The main chapel is covered by a barrel vault, and decorated by gilded altarpieces and marble in the national style, which adorns the main chapel, altars and sides of the naves.

The polychrome tile pattern, decorate the walls of the both sides of the altars and also the middle of the central nave, displaying the small framed images portraying the devotional life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Also, on the altar by the Epistle, there's a depiction of the Tree of Jesse.

Another piece of artwork, featured on a panel on the front of the altar, represents an adaptation of Battistini's "the Last Supper" by Ghirlandaio dating from 1931. The pulpit is in the shape of a chalice.

Already in the 20th century this church has undergone several restorations, including work being done on the walls, tiles, columns, chapels and vestries.

Igreja da Misericórdia



The Igreja da Misericórdia (Church of Mercy) is dated from 1550. It is a building of great value. Inside you can see its beautiful altar decorated in gilt. On the outside, the glazed niche on the existing facade currently shows the image of Santa Maria de Mação, a stone sculpture from the 15th century.

Brejo Picnic Park



Located in Chão do Brejo, Brejo Park, with its picnic areas, is one of the best spots in Mação to enjoy the immense beauty of the county.

From its setting that towers over the surrounding areas, it's possible to see the marvellous landscape that Mação and the surrounding region have to offer. Some also say that, on sunny days, you are able to see the Serra da Estrela hills.

Casa Brasonada



Francisco Pina Falcão, who was married to the daughter of the Captain-General of Mação, is responsible for one of the most iconic examples of the civil architecture within the Mação municipality.

The Casa Brasonada, whose likely date of construction was during the first half of 19th century, was built in the Romantic style. This two floor *bourgeois* townhouse characterised by its finial parapet wall and neo-gothic broken arches, develops into an inverted “U” floor plan that shelters a quadrangular courtyard. The main facade is enclosed by pilasters and topped by a close capstone that overlaps the parapet.

All openings are bordered by a pointed arch, and the windows are decorated with flags embellished with floral motifs. The front wall is painted to look like it was made of marble and is also bedecked in patterned tiles from the 19th century, in orange and blue. Either side of the central window door, there are two coats of arms showing the heraldic shields of both the Pina and Falcão families.

Inside, the building is decorated with marble, simulating the appearances of tiles and wallpaper. As a particular feature its exterior is adorned by mock paintings made from the tiles of the era. Nowadays, this palace is the private residence of the descendants of the noble Pina Falcão family.

It also served as the headquarters for the Count of Lippe's troops during the French invasion.