

## Day 17 | EVOKING OUREANA

### Seiça ➤ Sanctuary of Fátima

The seventeenth day of the Route **begins in Seiça**, at the Main Church (Rua da Igreja) and **ends in the Sanctuary of Fátima**, at the Chapel of the Apparitions. It covers 23 km, which can be completed in around 6 hrs. It consists of a **combination** of footpaths, local and municipal roads and short stretches of main road. The landscape is highly varied. It passes through predominantly flat areas, but has some steep sections, with a maximum altitude of 350 m. Therefore, this final day is **difficult**, above all as it demands physical effort, and in addition careful attention when passing through densely populated urban areas (such as the city of Ourém and on reaching Cova da Iria at the outskirts of the Sanctuary) in order to ensure one's personal safety.

This part of the Route makes its way through the Municipality of Ourém in Portugal's Central Region and covers the **mountainous, arid and beautiful terrain of the Aire Mountain Range**. The climate and natural conditions are characteristic of a transitional zone between the Atlantic and Mediterranean environments. **Limestone mountains and rocky slopes** are the predominant features, amidst which you will see **small valleys and caves**. In many senses this is the landscape and habitat that the young shepherds of Fátima knew and lived in. The geological formations and fossils evoke the passing of millions of years, and in this region **nature and life are indissociable**. In addition to the overarching **rural** impression, there are **urban centres** that have developed in order to undertake administrative (Ourém) and religious (Fátima) roles.

The **Cultural Heritage** is rich and varied. A **castle** with its fortifications, as well as **churches, museums** and other monuments are as important as the **historical sites** that evoke the figures and events of the past, above all those related with the apparitions that took place at Fátima. Furthermore, the **Immaterial Heritage** underscores the values associated with the **relationship between cultures, peoples and religions**, which since times long past history has recorded, and tradition conserved and kept alive. The **legend of Oureana** takes us

back to the coexistence and **familiarity between Christians and Muslims** during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as this was a region of **Mozarabic culture**. It is a story of the love between Gonçalo Hermingues, a templar knight and Christian poet, and Fátima, a beautiful Muslim and daughter of the Emir, and how following their marriage she took the Christian name of Oureana. Beyond the historical events and the legend's subsequent development, they are names rooted in the local places names of Ourém and Fátima.

During this final day, the Route makes its way exclusively through the **Municipality of Ourém**, where Geography and History recall bygone eras. Having left Seiça, follow the National Highway for about 1 km and from there take local roads through an area of woods. You will skirt the village of **Coroados**. Continue walking amidst this wooded landscape and make your way into **Vale Travessos**, next to the **Chapel of Our Lady of Livramento** (Largo de Nossa



Senhora do Livramento) and near **Quinta da Casa Velha** (Rua da Escola), a rural space dedicated to the local natural environment. Shortly after having crossed the IC9 by taking the bridge, take Rua das Achadas and then Rua da Fonte do Carriço, where there is a delightful rustic scenery.

As you make your way along Rua das Passadeiras, you steadily enter an urban area. This is the city of **Ourém**, whose name and tradition is associated with the legend of **Oureana**, and which evokes the Mozarabic culture of the Aire Mountain Range during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. The legend was transmitted by oral tradition until the sixteenth-century, when the monk Bernardo de Brito, Chronicler of the Cistercian Order set it down in writing.

Conquered from the Moors in 1136 with the help of the **Templars** and integrated into the Condado Portucalense (County of Portugal), **Ourém became a noble estate**, and was given by the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, to his daughter Teresa, who became the Countess of Flanders and later the Countess of Burgundy. It was Teresa who granted the city its **charter in 1183**. In the fourteenth century, King Fernando I created the **County of Ourém**, which



included estates and properties. Nuno Álvares Pereira was the third Count of Ourém, and this connection to the **House of Bragança** is still maintained today.

The first settlement grew up on the hill site where the **medieval town area** is located today, with its **castle and palace** and the impressive **city walls** that protected the town's inhabitants. As you make your way through the city you can glimpse the **monumental complex** which is classified as a **national monument**, and if you are interested or keen to do so you can climb the hill and get to know one of the most impressive examples of historical and artistic heritage.

As the municipal centre responsible for the Sanctuary of Fátima, Ourém is profoundly linked to the memory of the shepherds of Fátima. At the entrance to the city, on your right, is the **Municipal Cemetery** (Rua de Nossa Senhora de Fátima), where since 2008 the **Jacinta Marto Memorial**, recalls the little shepherdess who was buried there prior to her tomb being transferred to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima at the Sanctuary.

Further along the Route, in the city centre, you will see the **Municipal Museum**, a multi-site museum, which includes the **Administrator's House**, a conserved period







room, where in 1917 the Council Administrator questioned the shepherds. Today it is an exhibition space devoted to the themes related to the experiences of the shepherds and the local historical context. Close by (Praça da República) you will find the **Main Church** or the historic Collegiate Church of Our Lady of Mercies, a monumental complex that includes the tomb of Dom Afonso, Marquis of Valença and 4<sup>th</sup> Count of Ourém, which is a renowned example of fifteenth-century tomb design.

As you leave the city the Route follows tracks and local roads, and makes its way through fields and villages. You can pause in **Zambujal**, where the Leisure Park offers the chance to muster strength for the uphill climbs to come. As you pass through villages such as **Vale da Perra** and **Alvejar**, you will note the traditional ambience and customs of this area of the Aire mountain range.

Having walked for some time through a setting completely surrounded by woods, you will come to the **Parish Church of Fátima** (Rua do Adro), **where the shepherds were baptised**. It is a church dedicated to Our Lady of

Pleasures, which in the sixteenth century separated from the Collegiate Church of Ourém and was transformed into the Parish Church. It is surrounded by a churchyard and a bell tower has been integrated into the centre of its façade. The chapel with the **baptismal font** is a historical site associated with the shepherds.

Continue on until **Aljustrel**, the historic village, **where the shepherds were born and lived**. Just a few metres off the Route is the **House of Francisco and Jacinta Marto** (Rua dos Pastorinhos), where the visionary brother and sister lived with their family. Today it is a museum space devoted to ethnographic displays. Also in this village, but further away are two sites associated with the apparitions (Loca do Cabeço and Valinhos).

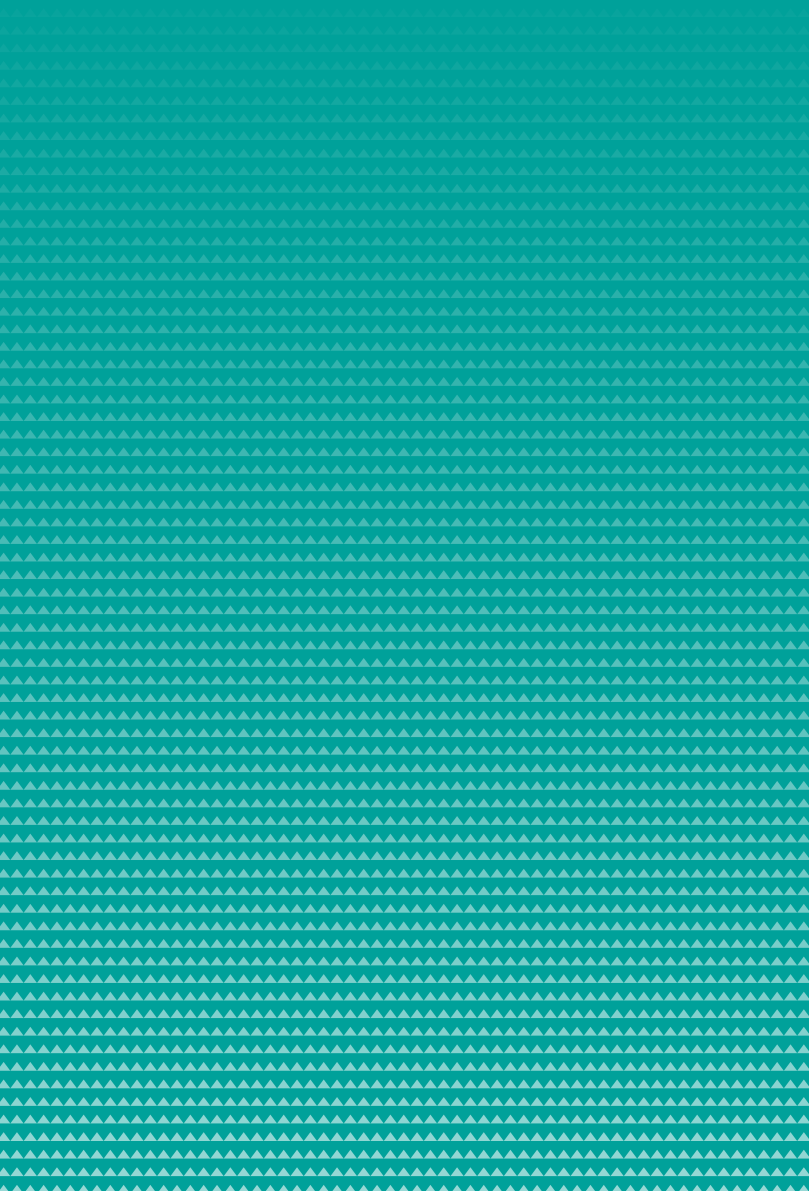
Following the national highway EN317, you approach the **outskirts of the Sanctuary**. Having passed the Roundabout with its **monument to the three shepherds**, continue along the same road, through what is now a pedestrian area.

On arriving at the Basilica of the Holy Trinity, turn right and enter the **Sanctuary of Fátima** and then make your way to the **Chapel of the Apparitions**, where all Routes to Fátima end.



➔ 39°37'53" N 8°40'23" W

# The Sanctuary of Fátima







## PILGRIMAGE SITE AND ART SPACE

The walking paths and itineraries lead us to **Fátima** in a true spirit of pilgrimage. On arrival at the **Sanctuary**, we encounter an emblematic site where religion and art are intertwined.

The Sanctuary stands on the site of **Cova da Iria**, the location where the Virgin appeared to the three shepherd children in 1917. Around this remote territory populated by olive trees and holm oaks, the sanctuary was erected and the city of Fátima grew, a city whose history is inseparable from the apparitions and the construction of the sanctuary.

### HOLM OAK

Located in a limestone massif, Cova da Iria has a wetter climate than the surrounding arid mountain range. These characteristics have allowed Fátima to develop a magnificent natural ambience of trees and plants, a green lung in which the Holm Oaks stand out.

These highly resistant trees adapt to the characteristically rugged landscape of the São Mamede plateau, which is notable for its series of geological depressions. The characteristics of the soil and climate have contributed to the scientific importance of these ancient trees that shape the surrounding landscape, in which they are deeply rooted. With sturdy trunks and broad canopies that pass through a wide spectrum of colours throughout the year, these trees provide a source of endless aesthetic fascination to the region.

It was in this wild and beautiful natural environment that the Virgin appeared to the three young shepherds (Jacinta, Francisco and Lúcia) in one of the holm oaks, in 1917. Preserved from this antique landscape in the area around the sanctuary is a large holm oak, currently located next to the small chapel erected on the site of the apparitions.

A meeting place for pilgrims and visitors and a place of faith, the sanctuary is also a space dedicated to artistic expression.

The **Sanctuary** consists of a series of monumental structures, including the **Chapel of the Apparitions** (built in 1919), the **Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary** and the **Church of the Holy Trinity**.

The **Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima** and the **Church of the Holy Trinity** reflect mutually distinct architectural and aesthetic orientations. Their spatial organisation facing each other across a large plaza creates an enormous space for prayer, where millions of pilgrims gather. Another setting dedicated to prayer and important religious ceremonies, the **Chapel of the Apparitions** stands in a location visible to all assembled pilgrims and is protected by a large covered gallery.



**THE CHAPEL OF THE APPARITIONS** is the central sacred and congregational space of the Sanctuary of Fátima.

Built in 1919 at the behest of the Virgin Mary in one of her apparitions to the three children, the first Mass was celebrated here in 1921. On 6 March of the following year, it was destroyed by a bomb and then immediately rebuilt. The chapel is a simple building, visually and architecturally designed for the congregation of the faithful and pilgrims around a space of prayer and to provide a visual focus on the site of the apparitions.

In the centre of the chapel, the Virgin of Fátima stands on the site of the holm oak of the apparitions, which was removed branch by branch by believers.

Since the 1980s, the architectural interventions have incorporated a porch structure which protects the chapel and all those who gather there for private and public ceremonies of prayer and faith.

Exquisite **art and architecture** combine to create an atmosphere of sophistication throughout the Sanctuary. Responding to the unique requirements of space, climate and materials, the various artworks serve in particular to reflect and enhance the site's prevailing spiritual ambience.

Designed by Gerardus Samuel van Krieken (1864-1933), the first stone of the **Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary** was laid on 13 May 1928. Its consecration took place on 7 October 1953. The façade of the Basilica is preceded by an imposing staircase that extends in a colonnade, designed by architect António Lino (1909-1961). In their structural form, the Basilica and colonnade merge together to form the ample prayer space, creating an amphitheatre open to the world and for the spiritual advancement and participation of the faithful.

The sculptural elements of the colonnade (executed from 1953 onwards) are the creative expressions of various sculptors, including Álvaro de Brée (1903-1962), António Duarte (1912-1998), Leopoldo de Almeida (1898-1975), Salvador Barata Foyo (1899-1990), Domingos Soares Branco



(1925-2013), Maria Amélia Carvalheira (1904-1998), Sousa Caldas (1894-1965), Vasco Pereira da Conceição (1914-1992), Irene Vilar (1930-2008), José Manuel Mouta Barradas (1960) and Vítor Godinho Marques (1964). The sculpture representing the **Immaculate Heart of Mary** was placed in the centre of the basilica's façade on 13 May 1958 and is a work by the sculptor and Dominican monk Thomas MacGlynn (1906-1977).

The works of art inside the temple are equally representative. The statue of São Domingos de Gusmão is the work of Maria Amélia Carvalheira (1904-1998). Those of St. António Maria Claret and St. John Eudes are the work of Martinho Felix de Brito, while the statue of St. Stephen of Hungary is by António Amaral Paiva. The representation of the shepherds is the work of two contemporary sculptors: José Rodrigues created the representation of St. Francisco Marto and Clara Menéres that of St. Jacinta Marto.





Works notable for their emotional spontaneity and for the coherence of their formal language, the 14 golden bronzes of the **Mysteries of the Rosary** are also the work of Martinho de Brito.

The works of high relief on the vault of the main chapel are by Maximiano Alves (1888-1954), while the stained-glass windows on the lateral altars were developed by João de Sousa Araújo (n. 1929) and present the litany of Our Lady. The 15 mosaic panels are the work of Fred Pittino (1906-1991).

Within the **Sanctuary's** enclosure stands the **Nativity scene**, originally presented in the exterior space in 1999 by the sculptor José Aurélio (1938). The piece is notable for its modern design, charged with symbolism and iconographic references. In the form of a 5-metre-high elongated triangle in stainless steel, it presents an angel with raised wings welcoming and heralding the birth of Jesus.





Inaugurated on 12 October 2007, the **Church of the Holy Trinity** opened a new dialogue of convergence and community, inviting meditation, prayer and communion. Designed by Greek architect Alexandros Tombazis (b. 1939), the church incorporates national and international artistic elements in a considered blending of art and architecture.

The artworks in the new temple were commissioned from a diverse range of renowned contemporary artists. Álvaro Siza-Vieira (b. 1933) painted the tiled panel dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul and located on the lower floor of the Church. Pedro Calapez (b. 1953) created





the main portico, while Francisco Providência (b. 1961) is responsible for the names of the Apostles to which the side doors of the temple are dedicated. The Canadian artist Joe Kelly designed the front wall of serigraphed glass in countless languages, while Slovenian artist Ivan Rupnik produced the gold leaf mosaic which adorns the wall of the Presbytery, the New Jerusalem of the *Apocalypse of St. John*. Irish artist Catherine Green conceived the great bronze crucifix suspended over the altar, while Italian artist Benedetto Pietrogrande carved the image of Our Lady in Carrara marble for the Presbytery. Outside, the Cross over the Sanctuary of Fátima was produced by German artist Robert Schad, while the monumental statue of Pope John Paul II is the work of Polish artist Czesław Dzwigaj.

