

The Glorious Heritage

Exquisite art and cultural legacy

For as long as the Tagus river has flowed through Ribatejo, different peoples have settled there, leaving a legacy that remains visible to this day.

Neolithic settlers first arrived, followed by others who were drawn by the fertile plains. Jews, Muslims and Christians all played a role, with the Santarém synagogue being the oldest in Portugal. The Muslims created the dykes and engineering works, improving the land and introducing Arab words into the Portuguese language as they did so.

The medieval period saw the Ribatejo become a popular haunt for kings and courtiers who founded churches, convents and chapels and enjoyed falconry and hunting.

The Gothic influence is widespread through the region and the ornate Manueline tradition left a uniquely dramatic legacy, particularly when seen alongside the beautiful ceramic tiles decorating the interiors of churches and monuments. The religious art, often still adorning the walls of churches, both grand and humble, throughout the region, is stunning.

The Ribatejo has a rich, proud and colourful history - get to know its fascinating heritage for yourself.

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