

# **SACRED PLACES IN PORTO**

## **SHORT Religious Guide**

EUREL's International Conference – Regulating religions?  
Legal and social status in contemporary Europe.  
Porto, 23-24 September 2021



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## THE CATHOLIC PRESENCE AND LEGACY

Places of worship sacralize urban spaces. They are part of cultural and religious itineraries, attracting tourists and residents for their architecture and sacred art, as well as due to the cultural events they host, such as classical or contemporary music concerts. Throughout Portuguese history, Catholicism was – and to some extent still is – a religious monopoly.

Its strong legacy is very much visible in the public space through its religious architecture. Below you will find a short guide to some of the most significant Catholic churches in Porto.

### Church of Our Lady of Lapa

This magnificent architectural complex started being built in 1756, by the initiative of the Venerable Brotherhood of Our Lady of Lapa. However, it was only finished in 1863. Along with the church, a Seminary-College (now extinct) was also built, as well as a hospital (intended to be a shelter for pilgrims), and a graveyard.

The entrance is free of charge.



**Location:** Largo da Lapa

**More information:** [www.lapa.quatrof.com](http://www.lapa.quatrof.com)

## Clerics Church and Tower

A baroque-inspired building landmark

This building complex, which includes the House of the Brotherhood (converted into a museum in 2014), dates back to the 18th century and is one of the finest examples of Baroque-inspired architecture in the city. The entire building was designed by Nicolau Nasoni.

The Tower of the Clerics is approximately 75 meters high. At the top of the tower, visitors can appreciate a unique city's view, due to its 360° perspective.

Tickets can be bought at the entrance.



**Location:** Rua de São Filipe de Nery

**More information:** [www.torredosclerigos.pt/en/](http://www.torredosclerigos.pt/en/)

## Church of St. Francis

Gothic and Baroque fused

This church was originally built as a convent to house the city's Franciscan friars in the 14th century. From the outside is possible to enjoy its original Gothic rose window. Inside the building, there is an impressive 18th-century baroque gilded woodwork.



**Location:** Rua do Infante D. Henrique

**More information:** [www.ordemsaofrancisco.pt/en/](http://www.ordemsaofrancisco.pt/en/)

[www.agendaculturalporto.org/igreja-de-sao-francisco-no-porto](http://www.agendaculturalporto.org/igreja-de-sao-francisco-no-porto)

## Chapel of St. Catherine or Chapel of the Souls

A site for iconography enthusiasts

Both the chapel and the image of Our Lady of the Souls (inside the building) date from the 18th century.

The chapel is mostly famous for the 15.947 tiles that cover nearly all of this chapel's façade since 1929. For those interested in iconography, the themes portrayed on the outside are scenes from the life of St. Francis and St. Catherine.

The entrance is free of charge.



**Location:** : Rua de Santa Catarina, 428



## Church of Carmo and Church of the Carmelites

Two orders, two churches

Although at first glance this architectural complex looks like a massive church, these are two separate churches. In the middle of these two buildings stands the narrowest house in Porto.

The first to be built was the Church of the Carmelites, initially also a convent for the Carmelite Order, in the 17th century. The Church of Carmo was erected in the mid-18th century.

Visits to the Church of the Carmelites are free of charge. Visits to the Church of Carmo's complex have an admission fee of 3,50€ (bought at the entrance).



**Location:** Rua do Carmo

## Porto's Cathedral

A Romanesque-Gothic must see

The construction of the Cathedral's early structure dates back to the 12th century, having been concluded in the following century. Especially on the inside it truly resembles a church fortress, following the traditional features of Romanesque architecture.

Throughout the centuries several changes and additions were made to the building, both inside and outside. An impressive landmark is the Gothic cloisters, which give access to the House of the Cabido, where the Cathedral's treasure can be seen.

Visits to the Cathedral are free of charge but visits to the cloister have a 3€ admission fee.



**Location:** Terreiro da Sé

**More information:** [www.diocese-porto.pt/pt/catedral-do-porto/](http://www.diocese-porto.pt/pt/catedral-do-porto/)

**For further information see:**

A GUIDE TO "THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CHURCHES IN PORTO":

[www.portoalities.com/en/most-beautiful-churches-porto/](http://www.portoalities.com/en/most-beautiful-churches-porto/)

## São Bento Railway Station

Once Convent of St. Benedict of Hail Mary

São Bento Railway Station is one of the most impressive monuments in Porto. Its beautiful lobby contains more than 20.000 tiles. These panels recount important national historic events.

This railway station was officially inaugurated in 1916 but this site was once the Convent of St. Benedict of Hail Mary, which was built in 1518. The convent was destroyed in a fire in 1783, rebuilt but slowly decayed into disrepair, having been demolished in 1892. In this same decade, the construction of the São Bento railway station finally began, breathing new life into this once upon a time convent.



**Location:** Avenida Dom Afonso Henriques

## RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

With the Inquisition and the persecution of Jews, Portugal had a Catholic exclusivity between the 15th and 19th centuries.

It was only in the 1800s that Protestant evangelism was initiated by British citizens. Before that, they could worship but exclusively in private or in temples built inside spaces that were not visible to the public. Only the Republican Constitution of 1910 granted legality to minority religious institutions. The Estado Novo dictatorship persecuted or limited the action of minority religious groups, and their freedom was only recovered with the establishment of the democratic regime in 1974. Although not being as cosmopolitan as Lisbon, the city of Porto is a place where religious minorities also have material visibility and expression.

## PROTESTANT CHURCHES

### Methodist Church of Mirante

The oldest Protestant church in Porto

The Methodist Church of Mirante was built facing the public street in 1877, thus being the oldest 'visible' Protestant church in Portugal. It is a very important religious site, due to its history and long-standing presence in the city. Its significance surpasses the religious sphere since the implementation of Methodism (and Protestantism in general) in Portugal is linked to some early efforts to promote literacy campaigns in a time where most of the Portuguese population was still illiterate.



**Location:** Praça Coronel Pacheco, 23

**More information:** [www.igrejametodista.pt](http://www.igrejametodista.pt)



## Baptist Tabernacle of Boavista

The first Baptist church in the country

The first Baptist community in the country was organized in Porto in 1908. The construction of its first Baptist Tabernacle started the same year, having been concluded in February 1916.

The architectural influence behind the Baptist Tabernacle of Boavista is the Metropolitan Tabernacle of London.



**Location:** Praça Mouzinho de Albuquerque, 193

**More information:** [www.pib-porto.com](http://www.pib-porto.com)

## Cenacle of the Holy Spirit

A Neo-Pentecostal megachurch in the heart of the city

After the Carnation Revolution in 1974, new religious minorities – Christians and non-Christians – were arriving in Portugal, a phenomenon that was related to newcomers. Among them, the highlight goes to Neo Pentecostal churches, implanted in Portugal by Brazilian immigrants.

The Neo-Pentecostal Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) opened its first temple in Lisbon in 1989. Porto was the chosen location to build its first megachurch in the country.

The Cenacle of the Holy Spirit is a massive building located in one of the busiest areas of Porto and has a capacity of 2500 people.



**Location:** Rua Egas Moniz, 485

**More information:** [www.igrejauniversal.pt/porto/](http://www.igrejauniversal.pt/porto/)

## ORTHODOX WORSHIP SITES

### Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

In the 1990s and in the first decade of this century, Portugal welcomed many immigrants from Eastern Europe, namely from Ukraine and Russia. This growing community lacked a place for worship, hence the creation of the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in 2002. Although the building was originally a Catholic church, this parish is now under the religious jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow.



**Location:** Rua de Alexandre Herculano, 123

**More information:** [www.porto.cerkov.ru](http://www.porto.cerkov.ru)

### Church of St. Pantaleon

In the early 2000s, Porto's Roman Catholic Diocese has given the right to use the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Portugal. This allowed the growing Orthodox immigrant community from Eastern Europe (mostly from Ukraine) a place to worship.



**Location:** Rua da Constituição, 379

## ISRAELI COMMUNITY

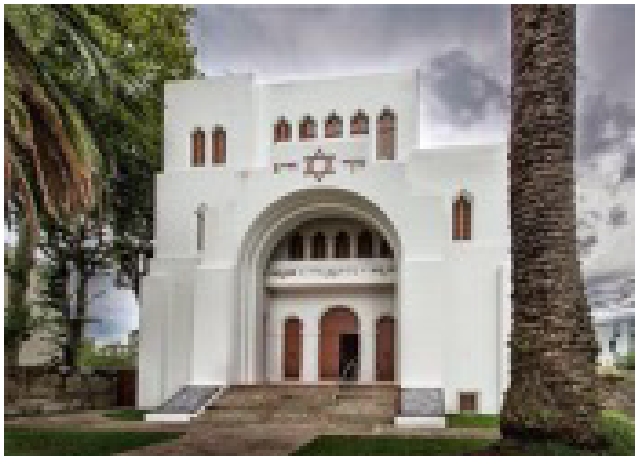
### Synagogue Kadoorie - Mekor Haim

The largest synagogue in the Iberian Peninsula

The synagogue Kadoorie – Mekor Haim (meaning “Fountain of Life”) is undoubtedly a religious and architectural landmark in Portugal. The early construction works started in 1929, having been finished in 1938.

The history of this synagogue – but also the Jewish community of Porto – is tied to the personal history of Army Captain Artur Barros Basto (Hebrew: Abraham Israel Ben-Rosh). He was pivotal in helping those who descended from the Jews who had kept their faith secret since the 15th century, but also Jewish refugees from World War II.

Kadoorie Mekor Haim is open for tours, but it is advisable to schedule in advance. Please check the ‘More information’ and ‘Contacts’ sections.



**Location:** Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, 340

**More information:** [www.comunidade-israelita-porto.org](http://www.comunidade-israelita-porto.org) |  
<http://facebook.com/tourism.synagogue.porto>

**Contacts:** [visitas@comunidade-israelita-porto.org](mailto:visitas@comunidade-israelita-porto.org) | [tourism@comunidade-israelita-porto.org](mailto:tourism@comunidade-israelita-porto.org)  
Phone +351 911 768 589 / +351 911 768 596

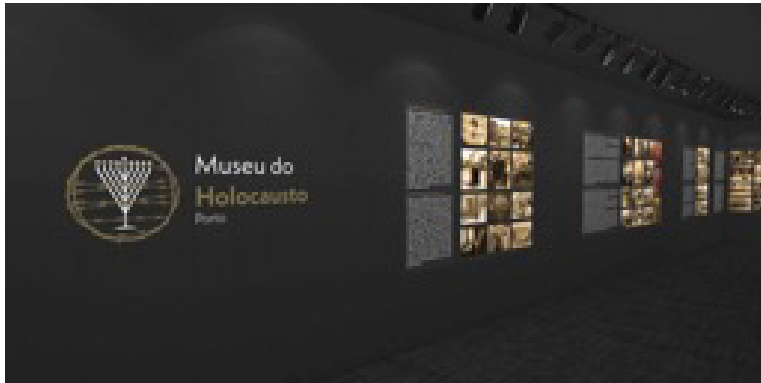
## Holocaust Museum

### A Memorial Site and Historical Hallmark

This Museum is one of the few existing Holocaust museums in the world that is entirely run by the local Jewish community, and the first in the Iberian Peninsula.

The Museum's archives contain official documents, photographs, letters, and personal testimonies, including those from Jewish refugees during World War II, among others.

The entrance is free of charge.



**Location:** : Rua do Campo Alegre, 790

**More information:** [www.mhporto.com](http://www.mhporto.com)

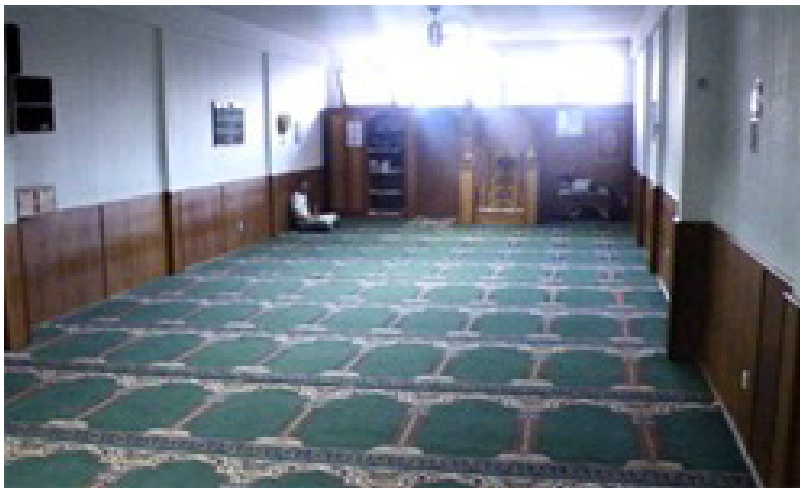
## MUSLIM COMMUNITY

### Mosque Hazrat Bilal and Islamic cultural centre of Porto

A diversified and growing community

The Islamic Cultural Centre (ICCP) is the heart of the Islamic community in the city. There can the whole religious community come together for prayer since the ICCP facility is also a mosque.

The Muslim community in Porto is quite recent, having been formed in the last quarter of the 20th century, mostly due to recent immigration flows. The ICCP played a key role in providing all Muslim believers in the city with a place of worship. It has also been developing efforts to establish a dialogue and better understanding between the Muslim community and the broader society.



**Location:** Rua do Heroísmo, 223

**More information:** [www.halal.pt/en/](http://www.halal.pt/en/)

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND TOOLS FOR A SAFE TRIP

This guide that we present you was mainly thought to provide an overview of Porto's religious heritage.

However, there is much more to our city. Should you wish to visit museums, theatres, iconic cafés and streets, and other interesting spots, we suggest checking the following guides to explore Porto a bit more.

+ VisitPorto: [www.visitporto.travel/en-GB/porto-style-culture#/](http://www.visitporto.travel/en-GB/porto-style-culture#/)

+ Porto's Cultural Agenda:

[www.agendaculturalporto.org/o-que-fazer-no-porto-roteiro-turistico/](http://www.agendaculturalporto.org/o-que-fazer-no-porto-roteiro-turistico/)

+ 16 unmissable things to do in Porto:

[www.thecommonwanderer.com/blog/things-to-do-in-porto-portugal](http://www.thecommonwanderer.com/blog/things-to-do-in-porto-portugal)

Please bear in mind that due to the pandemic, the number of visitors admitted into museums and cultural sites, as well as the time schedules for entrance, may change.

For the time being, in compliance with the guidelines of the Health General Department, the use of masks is mandatory both indoors (restaurants, hotels, public offices, etc.) and outdoors.

For official information, statistics, and numbers related to the pandemic Covid-19, please access the official National Health General Department website:

**[www.dgs.pt](http://www.dgs.pt)**

The VisitPorto's website to access the instant chat where visitors can seek advice and ask for useful information regarding Covid-19 measures in the city (English available):

**[www.visitporto.travel/en-GB/](http://www.visitporto.travel/en-GB/)**

You can always request a member of the organization of the event for further information and help.



