



A Chapel of Saint Sebastian



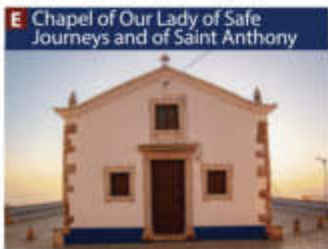
B Church of Saint Peter



C Church of Misericórdia



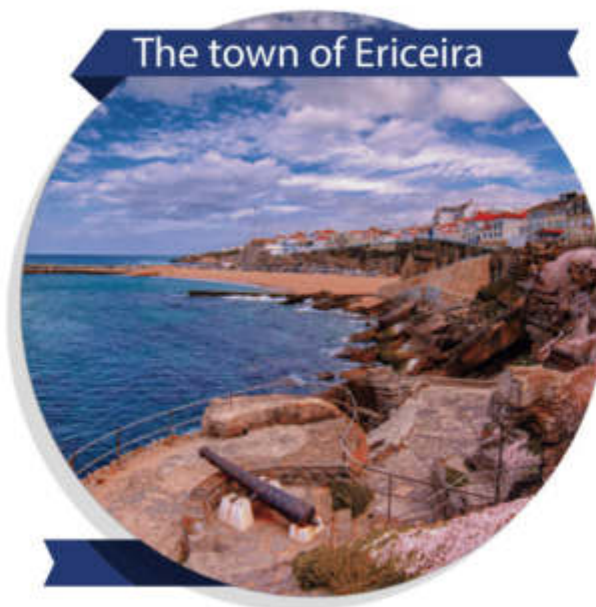
D Misericórdia's Museum and Archive



E Chapel of Our Lady of Safe Journeys and of Saint Anthony



F Church of Saint Martha



The town of Ericeira

ERICEIRA'S

Religious Heritage

The town received its first charter in 1229 from the Master of The Order of Avis, Fr. Fernando Rodrigues Monteiro, and a new royal charter from King Manuel on August 31st 1513. In 1622, Philip IV of Spain created the title of Count of Ericeira, which he granted to his chief steward, D. Diogo de Meneses. This was the beginning of a period of economic and urban development shown in a flourish of architectural activity: construction of the count's residence and the council building, improvements to many of the churches and growth of the town itself. A municipality until 1855, Ericeira's port was one of the most important in the area west of Lisbon. It was from the "Pescadores" beach, on October 5th 1910, that the Portuguese Royal Family began its journey into exile.



Misericórdia's Museum and Archive

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Religious Heritage

The five churches and chapels of Ericeira's historic town centre enshrine a great part of the town's cultural heritage. Successive generations have left their mark on the town's layout, on its stock of residential houses, on the craft traditions of land and sea and also on its religious heritage. Knowing the faces of the religiosity of Ericeira is to discover its rich and complex history.

A Chapel of Saint Sebastian



Set apart on the cliffs north of the town, this chapel already existed in 1567. It is built on a hexagonal plan, covered by a dome, and is in the mannerist style of the mid-16th century. The body of the main chapel is an extension built from 1678 on. This is approximately the date of the decoration of the inside walls and the carved marble inset of the main altar.

B Church of Saint Peter



Documented from 1446, this was a small chapel that did not become its main church until around 1530, the period to which the renaissance Saint Peter sculpture on the side entrance to the south belongs. A Manueline slab in the baptismal chapel constitutes the oldest remaining element of the building.

The tile panels of the nave are in the rococo style, as the main chapel, and the iconography of Saint Peter on four canvasses. In the 19th century, the elegant choir on the north side was built and the interior was decorated with numerous paintings.

C Church of Misericórdia



In 1678, Ericeira's council donated the Chapel of the Holy Spirit to Francisco Lopes Franco. It was left to this nobleman, with the fishermen's help, to lay the foundations of the new church. This is a baroque building, completed in the 18th century, and the paintings of the Visitation and the Virgin of Mercy date from that period, like the painting on the ceiling of the nave, they are the work of Manuel António de Góis.

D Misericórdia's Museum and Archive



The archive-museum was founded on June 1st 1937, as a memorial space to Ericeira's past. Among its many fine exhibits are the nine 16th century canvasses of the Passion of Christ cycle. The museum's collection of paintings also includes Our Lady of Mercy and the Visitation, both of which date from the first half of the 18th century, along with several ex-voto offerings. It also boasts several sculptures in ivory and wood, including one of Our Lady in Majesty, which was made in the 17th century and is an Indo-Portuguese work.

E Chapel of Our Lady of Safe Journeys and of Saint Anthony



For centuries, the bell and lantern that made known the port's location at night, and in times of fog and storm, were kept on the small west-facing platform. Rebuilt around 1644, its interior was decorated with patterned tiles, while the space above the triumphal arch was set aside for a small panel alluding to the Our Lady of Safe Journeys. The chapel is also dedicated to Saint Anthony.

F Church of Saint Martha



Documented as early as the 15th century, this church was dedicated to Our Lady of Good Health, because of the proximity of springs that bubble from the rocks south of the town. The statue of Our Lady was the focus of a considerable cult until 1599 when it was taken to Lisbon to become the basis of the Convento das Necessidades monastery. The current building dates from 1760. The tiles on the walls of the main chapel represent the Annunciation and the Birth of Christ.

Tile Panels



Anyone walking through the winding streets of the historical centre of Ericeira will find on the white facades of many houses a considerable number of tile panels illustrating the particular devotions of the former occupants. These patterns invoked divine protection against natural catastrophes, a constant source of fear in a community that had to live with the moods of the sea.

