



Ponte de Lima

Ponte de Lima is Minho personified, with its natural beauty and rustic air. It is located in the middle of the Ribeira do Lima valley, 23 kilometres from Viana do Castelo. It is full of history and was on the military road from Braga to Tui. It belonged to the diocese of Tui (Spain) until the time of King Afonso Henriques.

Queen Teresa gave it its first charter in 1125 and established a fair to encourage population and economic growth. Later in the 14th century, King Pedro I fortified the town. During King Fernando's reign it was the most secure defensive position of the North of Portugal.

It is a stately and legendary town. In the Middle Ages it was a fortified town with walls 600 meters long, 10 towers, 2 turrets and 6 entrances. The old roads have houses of granite, Baroque, neo-classical and 1800s façades and renowned religious buildings. In 1995 Ponte da Lima won the European Grand Prize of Tourism and Environment.



Architecture

- Albergaria de São João de Deus



Mannerist building with sober design improved by the cadence of the façades, organized in 3 bodies of different sizes. The royal regent Da Luísa de Gusmão had it built in 1659 to be the hospital for the wounded soldiers of the Restoration wars; afterwards, it was in charge of the members of the order São João de Deus till 1716. In 1805 after multiple occupations for several purposes it was donate~ to Santa Casa da Misericórdia to house the hospital; the French Invasions in 1808 took it again from that institution, that recovered it in 1874 after a series of other purposes and occupants.

Since its origins it has undergone lots of changes, for instance the restoration of 1787/1795 using stones from three towers of the old town walls, when the oratory and the chapel were demolished and the image of the patron saint was transferred to the chapel Capela de Nossa Senhora da Lapa. One can point out the frontispiece enriched by a small sculptural group of niche, the image of the old patron saint and some heraldic elements.

- City Hall

Dated from the second quarter of the 16th century, this building was several times rebuilt, such as in 1573 when a remarkable building, of which only a few walls facing South and an interior window persist, was constructed. In 1677, the main stairway was reconstructed, dating the upper body from 1751. By the end of the 19th century, during the Estado Novo's period, profound interior alterations took place, such as the rise of this building's ceilings. Its present features date from 1997. It lodged, simultaneously, the Town Hall, the Court, the Teatro D. Fernando and the Real Associação dos Bombeiros Voluntários de Ponte de Lima.



- Library, Former Hospital da Misericórdia



The architectonic composition of the City Library derives from the opening of the Rua Cardeal Saraiva, in the late first quarter of the 20th century, which divided in two the building of the former Hospital da Misericórdia (the reconstruction was finished in 1731), thus having been destroyed an interesting cloister of the 17th century and a part of the medieval wall. Adored to a section of the wall, there is an access to the battlement from the porched balcony facing the Largo da Picota, and in its interior there is still a flight of stairs of baroque features. Similarly to the building of "Igreja da Misericórdia", a new elevation facing Rua Cardeal Saraiva was built, with features identical to the remaining ones, such as the fenestrated structure, com ices and eaves. In 1993 large global restoration works were undertaken to house the City Library services.

- Medieval bridge



Two different branches, a roman and a medieval one constitute this bridge. The construction of this building draws back probably to the 1st century since the way opened by the Emperor Augustus passes over it. The medieval bridge has gothic characteristics and was probably finished 1370, by the time King D. Pedro I had the village fortified; King D. Manuel had the paving and the merlons done in 1504 and the two original towers that flanked it, along with great part of the defense urban system, were demolished in the second half of the 19th century due to traffic conditions. The simple roman bridge has a sloping deck over 7 full center ogival arches, which are irregularly arranged and have different spans, one of them covered by the plot where the church Igreja de Santo António stands and another one closed up down the stream. Two of the seventeen ogival arches of the Gothic bridge were hidden by the improvements carried out in Praça Camões; prismatic cutwaters crowned by spans also with ogival arch and, at the center, its Latin cross with faceted column, fleur-de-lis arms and shield in the capital are prominent.

- N. Sra. da Aurora House

Designed by the architect Manuel Pinto de Villalobos and built between 1714 and 1730 the house Casa de Nossa Senhora da Aurora is an urban baroque palace and represents the most frequent typology of those times. a long two-floor house divided by a horizontal frieze, an interior staircase and a chapel addorsed to one of the façades. Also called Casa do Arrabalde, it has a smooth frontispiece, a fenestrated noble floor wall ripped by eleven balcony windows with triangular pediments and forged iron gratings. Inside the chapel there is an 18th century retable with national-style carvings, as well as baroque tiles from the Capela da Senhora do Rosário (not existent anymore). Like the house, the gardens were designed in the baroque-style and are a leisure space with boxwoods, benches, lakes and different fountains.

- Villa Morais

João Rodrigues de Morais, an eminent figure from Ponte de Lima who made a fortune in Brazil, had this mansion built in 1892 in a combination of Brazilian and other styles. The façade has a neoclassical style, being the ground floor made of granite. The enlargement works in the 20's gave it an Art Nouveaux style, as well as the side door to the park, the iron gratings of the stairs and the window gratings of the basement. In its magnificent gardens, near big and unique trees, there is a lake crossed by two bridges and a cave, out of romantic inspiration. .



Festivals

- Feiras Novas (New Fairs)



religious festivals of Alto Minho.

The "old fair" was held every fortnight in Ponte de Lima since 1125. The "new fair" was established in 1826, together with the foundation of the cult of Nossa Senhora das Dores. After the harvests in September, usually on the 3rd weekend, there are 3 days and nights of feasts, fair and open air parties. Ponte de Lima receives thousands of visitors. There are livestock contests, the running of the "garranos" (wild horses), parades, music, festivals, folk dancing and it ends with the majestic procession of Nossa Senhora das Dores on a Monday. This festival ends the cycle of

Golf

- [Ponte de Lima's Golf](#)



Located over the skirts of Madalena Hill, Ponte de Lima course is a typical mountain course, covering six kilometres adorned with luxurious vegetation and well-restored, historical mansions, which supply infrastructure for golfing activity. The first nine holes are placed amongst age-old trees (chestnuts trees, cork and English oaks), leading, through a ravine, to the Quinta do Anquião, where holes 1, 2, 8 and 9 provide glorious views over the Lima valley and, 20 kilometres away, the town of Viana do Castelo. Hole 3 (par 5), at 622 metres, is the longest one in Portugal and one of the longest in Europe; hole 8's tee (Par 3) is situated higher, allowing one to attack directly the green below. The next nine holes are sited in the Quinta de Pias valley with its surrounding vines, cornfields, apple and pear trees.

Monuments

- [Anjo da Guarda Chapel](#)



The chapel Capela do Anjo da Guarda is a religious Romanic/Gothic construction, probably built in the last quarter of the 13th century. After the partial collapse due to floods, it was rebuilt in the 18th century according to baroque canons, strengthening the pillars, building turrets and adding a polychromatic ingenious image of São Miguel. Its localization near the bridge on the right bank of the River Lima and its small open quadrangular configuration give it a devotional character and it is used as a cult and shelter place for those who pass by. The archaism of its

pillars and columns, with claws in their bases, on the one hand and the vegetarian decoration of the capitals that hardly differ from the baskets on the other are its particular characteristics.

- [Chafariz](#)



In 1575 Ponte de Lima's Town Hall ordered the construction of this fountain. Concluded in 1603, it was placed in the current Largo Dr. António Magalhães, from where it was transferred, in 1929, to the Largo de Camões. Its renaissance outline and execution are currently attributed to João Lopes, the youngster, a famous master from Ponte de Lima. In order to collect money for the construction of this fountain, as well as for the distribution of Merim's water, a tax was charged on salt and olive oil merchandised in the village. The inscription reads the fines due to dirtying the fountain. The municipal

coat of arms is carved in the shaft.

- Convent of Refóios- Refóios de Cima

The current building is the result of reconstruction's from the 16th to 18th centuries. It was founded in 1120. It was the mother house of the Crúzios, a religious order with vast holdings in the region. Today the College of Agriculture of Ponte de Lima is installed here. It still has the imposing cloisters, a tiled chapel and a Renaissance altarpiece on the main altar. There are tiles in the huge convent kitchens.

- Lapa Church



The "Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Lapa" was erected out of expenses of alms in devotion to D. Tristão de Meneses from the house of Freiria and of the village parish-priest, and though unfinished, its building was stopped in 1768, and what remains today is supposed to be the chancel of the former planned temple. The plot was donated by the alcayde-mor D. Tomaz de Lima, who demanded his coat of arms to be placed there, as a patron symbol, which even today can be seen in the front façade. Inside the church there is the image of the black saint S. Benedito, after whom the medieval tower of the saint's door was named.

- Misericórdia Church

Though its institution dates back to 1530, the present day church was erected in the 17th and 18th centuries, and is composed by an only nave, chancel with vaulted panelled ceiling (1638) and main portico opening on the side upon the cemetery, which constitutes the churchyard presently closed by a curious railing. It is worth noticing the effect caused by the porched balcony that delimitates this court. The present architectural outline derives from the opening of Rua Cardeal Saraiva, in the late 20's, that divided in two the building of the former hospital, having then dislocated the baroque cloister portico to the façade facing this street. The ribbed vault in polychromatic and golden wood in its interior is to be pointed Qui, as well as the high-altar and the secondary altars in neo-classic style, and also the central panel in high-relief of the former high retable, the panel featuring the scene of the miracle of Jesus distributing the loaves, now placed beneath the altar table and 17th century painting of some interest. The two figures that are placed on both sides of the main portico represent an alms collector with the alms bag and a pilgrim.



- N. Sra da Misericórdia das Pereiras Chapel

Pedro Afonso Fiúza and his wife Catarina Madriz had this temple built harmoniously high above the village in 1525, to replace a small chapel that existed here. The present baroque architectural characteristics had their origins in a thorough reformation carried out in 1818 when the temple - then smaller than now - turned into a two-body building, the old rectangular ceiling was lifted up, a new transept arch was rebuilt and the chancel and sacristy were added. In 1979 - by the time in an advanced state of degradation - it was donated by its owners to the City Hall that carried out the last improvements in 1998, building a new choir and facilities to support cultural events but leaving the bell tower unfinished, as it has always been along its history. Inside, it is worth mentioning the polychromatic paintings on the granite stone of the transept's arch, whose images remained from the Chapel, as well as the installation of part of the 18th century retable left after the degradation it was subjected to along the years.

- [N. Sra da Penha de França chapel](#)

João Lourenço had it built in 1613 in front of Cadeia "Velha" (Old Prison) so that the prisoners could listen to the mass, since the prison had no oratory. It is an urban mannerist chapel, with simple characteristics and sober design, has a frontispiece ending up in a triangular pediment, crowned by pinnacles, a bell tower on the right side and a cross from the 18th century over the acroterium. Unlike the exterior simplicity, the wealth and dimension of the baroque rentable with golden carvings above the high altar (national-style) is noticeable.

- [Old Jail Tower](#)



The Torre da Cadeia Velha or Torre da Porta Nova is the result of several huge reinforcement and improvement repairs carried through on the tower that already existed here as part of the town walled structure (XIV century). Those repairs were carried out under the orders of King D. Manuel, to set up there the district correction prison, and were concluded in 1511. Inside, the abundance of signed stones as well as the corbels and grooves that support the framing and divide the tower in floors are worth special attention, and in the ashlar-masonry it still can be seen the series of alterations the ground-floor has undergone along all these years.

- [Parrish Church of Ponte de Lima](#)



King D. João I had it built in 1425 and it was finished probably in 1446. Due to the overlapping of multiple styles - Romanic, Gothic and Neoclassical-, it is perceptible that it suffered several changes and improvements along the centuries. An example of this is the gothic portal crowned by an 18th century rose window. The side altars, on the right to worship Nossa Senhora das Dores (17th century) and on the left to worship Nossa Senhora de Fátima (18th century) are remarkable due to the richness of the carving works. The old font is Manueline style.

- [Pelourinho - Pillory](#)

The former pillory is supposed to draw back to the 16th century and was erected on the strand, in front of the "Torre de S. Paulo". In the early 19th century, the coat of arms of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarve were added onto it. Compulsively demolished in the end of the liberal struggles, it was rebuilt during the Estado Novo in front of the Town Hall, using some fragments from the former monument

- [S. Paulo Tower](#)

It was erected in the 14th century as part of the defensive walled structure of the village, owing it's name to the existence of an image of S. Paulo in a niche over an adjacent wicket. This square-planned tower, crowned by merlons, keeps in its inside walls the supports of the floor timberwork. Being a building for structural reinforcement of the wall, massive and without windows, it was subjected to interventions in the early 16th century, which are perceptible in the only door opening to the level of the battlement of the adjacent wall. Facing the river, a blazed tiles panel represents the imaginary episode of King D. Afonso Henriques in Cabração (" Cabras São, Senhor!), a Jorge Colaço's well succeeded composition. On the façade to Rua do Postigo, dose to the level of the pavement there is a gothic inscription that reads: "The River reached this level".





Museums

- [Museum of Terceiros / Limiano Institute](#)

The "Museu dos Terceiros" was created in 1974 with the aim of keeping and exhibiting a meaningful collection of sacred-art,



occupying the area corresponding to the built-in complex composed by the "Convento dos Frades Menores da Província da Conceição" (of which not much is left but the "Igreja Conventual"), and the "Igreja da Ordem Terceira", its sacristy, consistorial room and its outbuildings around a small cloister, which is supported by a Tuscan arcade. The first Viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira instituted the "Convento de Santo António" in 1481. Between 1745 and 1747, the "Igreja da Venerável Ordem Terceira de S. Francisco" was built to the side out of a longitudinal project, an only nave and

essentially baroque decoration, its chancel featuring a magnificent Rocaille altar in golden and polychromatic wood carvings and a row of stairs assigned to the Italian Luigi Chiari. The museum contents include a representative set of religious statuary, 16th and 17th century glazed tiles, 16th and 18th century paintings and liturgical implements. The decoration of some of its areas is worth noticing: the fore-sacristy covered with polychromatic pattern tiles, the sacristy panelled tiles of sundry design, a chest of drawers with elevation decorated with panels allusive to St. António, Indo-Portuguese threads and a panelled polychromatic ceiling.



Places

- [Diogo Bernardes Teatry](#)



A promoting commission, consisting of several citizens of Ponte de Lima (Limianos) of which João Rodrigues de Moraes stood out, had the Teatro Diogo Bernardes built in 1893, having assigned the project to António Adelino de Magalhães Moutinho, the municipal architect of Viana do Castelo. The theatre was planned according to the architectonic patterns of the Italian theatre, typical of the 19th century and it exhibited in its inside elements of special interest, such as the ceiling paintings (now faded away) and Eduardo Reis' curtain. After a long period of degradation, the city hall of Ponte de

Lima acquired it: having carried out extensive restoration works, finished in 1999.

- [Largo de Camões](#)

In the space presently known as Largo de Camões, a stoned wall, separated a wide strand from an interior where green fields, houses and small farms coexisted, bounded, in the North, by Rua da Ponte, which converged with Rua do Rosário, and in the South, by Rua da Ribeira, nowadays called Postigo, which led to the Passeio 25 de Abril, right beside the Torre de S. Paulo or Expectação. During the second half of the 19th century, with the demolition of the stoned wall and of the Torre dos Grilos (located at the bridge's opening), the future Largo de Camões gained new dimension.

The small farms which were bounded by the wall became wide open and the houses which were held up by this structure were forced to find a new support or to reorganise their structures and façades. The floor was levelled and gravelled, making it the first

paved public space. Soon after the 1909's floods, the Largo was, once more, heightened - a thick layer of debris topped with gravel was placed. The current aspect started being outlined by the end of the 1920's, when extensive work was carried out:



the pavement was heightened and levelled in order to ease the connection with the Largo da Feira (then created) and the Passeio 25 de Abril, two bridge's arches were obstructed, the renaissantist fountain was placed and the new pavement began being drawn". The rectangular odd looking well from the 15th century, with a depth of 3 meters, totally filled with good quality ashlar and ending in a vault, integrated the former Casa do Patim (an imposing construction that used to exist).

- Palace of the Marquises



The palace dates back to the 15th century and was the old Governor's house in the castle, which overlooks the town. The façade is Manueline and the palace was enlarged later on. It belongs to the Viscount of Vila Nova de Cerveira.