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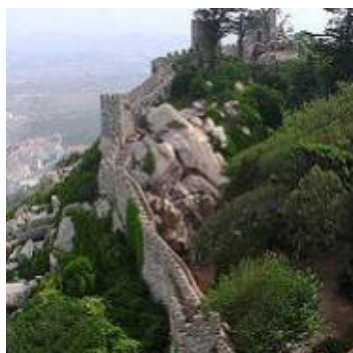
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News

Wednesday, June 13, 2007



Discover Sintra - Portugal

27 Sep 2006

Can there be a more romantic destination than a place called "Mount Moon"? The Sintra mountain range was so called, due to the sun and moon cults that were practiced there during past eras. On an exuberant strong green mountain, peeking over the Atlantic ocean, lays the village of Sintra, named Cynthia by the Romans and a poet and righter's preferred destination, like Byron who even dedicated a couple of verses.

Sintra is a distinctive tourism region, one of the most notable in Portugal. The strong green landscapes, the mountains and the ocean, the palaces, the houses and local gastronomy make of Sintra one of the most pleasurable locations of the country.

Named world patrimony by UNESCO due to the cultural landscape of the mountain range and the village, Sintra is a locality where you can easily confuse the symbiosis between Man and nature, in a romantic environment of great mysticism.

Sintra has been favored by elitists for many eras, and all cultural attitudes have marked the region. Full of interesting houses, surrounded by luxurious gardens, its isolation attracted monks and hermits, who gave Sintra its religious and cultural dimension. It was also the elected place, for a number of dynasties to set up their houses (permanent or for leisure), which have been conserved over the years. At the top of the mountain range we can observe the Castle of the Mouros, conquered from the Moors by D. Afonso Henriques in 1147.

Sintra has some of the most beautiful and romantic constructions of the country that coexist perfectly with nature. Perhaps the maximum exponent is the Palácio da Pena, built 500 meters up the mountain range, by King D. Fernando in 1839. The rooms are decorated according to the time, there are mysterious hiding places, all decorative details are beautifully put together and the view is indescribably breath taking. This is what you can expect from this architectural jewel.

Another place to visit is Quinta da Regaleira, an eccentric building, constructed at the beginning of the 20th Century. Inspired by gothic, manueline and renaissance styles, it emanates an impressive and mysterious atmosphere. The Iniciático Well, an intimidating spiral stair case inside the house, invokes esoteric rituals that were repeatedly practiced in the place. Sintra's



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Paço Real, with its long and conic emblematic white chimneys, marks the beginning of the Old Village of Sintra and is an un-missable monument of the patrimonial wealth, as well as the beautiful gardens of the Palace of Monserrate. But strolls around Sintra don't only include the Old Village and the beautiful mansions. Not far you will find beaches that are very popular. Such as Praia das Maçãs – Apple Beach – and Praia Grande - the Great Beach, preferred destinations of elitists of the region. Close by, Cabo da Roca marks the western most point of Europe. Also worth discovering are other villages such as Colares, where famous wines are produced, and Azenhas do Mar built on a cliff overlooking the ocean.

The visit to Sintra will not be complete without tasting and taking home some of its typical pastry, like the Travesseiros and Queijadas de Sintra, that promise to leave a sweet memory in your mouth of one of the most charming destinations in Portugal.

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