

ESCAPE



Solares de Portugal, based in the enchanting and historic town of Ponte de Lima, is an accommodation resource with a treasury of 100 manor houses, stately homes, country and farm houses throughout Portugal.

The list is very impressive and with our love of history and a desire to discover the real Portugal, we managed to stay in five of these captivating family properties over nine days.

The Solares represent centuries of Portuguese history and culture and the majority of the grandiose 17th and 18th century houses are of noble origin – and still owned by descendants of the original owners.

It's a feast for the senses – and our stopover in Obidos was just one of them.

Obidos is an outstanding tourist destination, rightly known as one of the Seven Wonders of Portugal.

We parked next to the remains of an aqueduct built in 1575 (and financed by Queen Caterina from Austria). With a length of 3km, it's a great start before entering the city via an oratory chapel lined with highly ornamental 18th century tiles.

Wandering through the narrow winding medieval streets of this “Pearl of Western Portugal” we were enchanted by its Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque features. The beautiful narrow laneways filled with picturesque recesses, rough-hewn

FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Staying in a historic 19th century Portuguese manor house below an ancient city and a castle right out of an action movie ... what more could you ask for?

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steps, steep inclines and fascinating doorways all covered in beautiful full flowering bougainvilleas were breathtaking.

The narrow main street (Rua Direita) is filled with little cafes and small shops selling all sorts of local specialties and clothing. We stopped several times to taste a small chocolate cup with Ginginha – a sweet local liquor made with local cherries poured into it. At just €1 per cup it was very tempting to repeat the

delicious treat at several other stands along the way ... and above all of this sits the castle.

Originally built in Roman times on the top of the highest crag on the northern end, it's a perfect specimen of a medieval fortress which was successively enlarged and repaired by various monarchs over the centuries and, being part of a very long wall, it afforded the town below shelter and protection.

The southern end of the walls

features a high torchlit watchtower.

With great care we strolled along the top of various sections of the 1565m long walls of this city whose origins are lost in the mist of time as Obidos was created, destroyed and rebuilt over many centuries – archaeological work within its ancient protective walls dates its origins to around 308BC.

Close by the castle is a barbican (clock) tower with the machinery dating back to 1842. There are four

historic churches, the Igreja Matriz De Santa Maria (Saint Mary's Parish Church) was built in the 8th century and its history includes being converted into a mosque at the time of the rule of the Moors, but returned to the Christians after reconquest.

Just wandering around the old city area visiting the municipal museum, looking at the aqueducts and fountains, or taking a walk along the ancient wall is a great way to spend an afternoon or better still, stay and have a typical Portuguese evening meal in one of the many restaurants as the sun sets over this remarkable city.

Our tour was just another perfect stopover recommended by Solares de Portugal and our beautiful accommodation below the city dated back to the 19th century.

Casa d'Obidos, was built by an engineer from the French Eiffel team who was in Portugal to direct its railway construction. Open all year round with cosy interiors, it offered us a warm and peaceful atmosphere and with a choice of six bedrooms with private bathrooms plus four fully self contained apartments it was easy to relax, especially in the large lounge and games room area. The outside swimming pool, tennis court and gardens were perfect.

Obidos is 80km from the Portuguese capital Lisbon.
solaresdeportugal.pt
casadobidos.com



Part of Obidos' 3km long wall around the city; breakfast time at Casa d'Obidos; and a view of the gorgeous 19th century manor house from the pool area.