

Sheet 4: Lisboa – Coimbra

The Entire route is now well waymarked.

It is little used and most is on quiet country roads (70%) the balance split between dangerous main roads, delightful farm tracks and woodland paths. Facilities for pilgrims are minimal with no dedicated hostels. Accommodation *may* be available in towns with a Fire Brigade *Bombeiros* but with climate change fuelling forest fires this option is likely to be more limited. Youth Hostels and camping from €10, Hostales and Pensões €20, Hoteles €30, Casa Rurales €40, Quintas €50, Pousadas €90. **Note:** This route should only be undertaken by experienced walkers with good physical fitness and a reasonable grasp of the Portuguese language.



Igreja Santiago Lisboa



Catherine 'of England' & Ponte Vasco da Gama

Distances provided are approximate only and start at the cathedral in Lisboa. The church of Santiago is located 500m past the cathedral at the start of Rua Santiago which leads to the ancient hilltop castle *São Jorge*. The church (open afternoons) adjoins the Miradouro S. Luzia & café (Tram # 28) with splendid views of the route north along the banks of the Rio Tejo.

The way out of **Lisboa** is along busy main roads. The first opportunity to walk the river bank is at Parque das Nações (Expo '98 - see photo above). Here the 'path' begins past the handsome statue of *Catarina de Bragança* who left Lisbon in 1662 to marry Charles II. Her dowry included Bombay and she and her court introduced tea to England for the first time. Take the rail or metro service from Santa Apolónia to Oriente (Parque das Nações) if you want to avoid the initial 5km slog. There are also regular rail and bus services to Santarém, Tomar (change at Entroncamento) and Coimbra.

Santarém provides good facilities. Here the camino to Fátima (53 km - blue arrows) veers off West. We follow the yellow arrows North to Santiago via **Tomar**, an historical gem beautifully situated on the rio Nabão. Plan to stay a day to soak up some of its fascinating Templar history & buildings (much of it World Heritage status). In 1125 it became the headquarters of the Knights who built the castle and Convento de Cristo (1162) with the *Charola* at its heart linked by secret tunnel to their mother church Sta. Maria do Olival which became a major pilgrim halt to Santiago from the 12th century.



Templar Convento de Cristo

There are 2 short detours (around 2 km) off the waymarked route at Condeixa-a-Velha. [1] The well preserved Roman ruins and museum at *Conimbriga*, and [2] *Condeixa-a-Nova* for overnight accommodation. The final stage is over the majestic Rio Mondega into **Coimbra** (pron: *Queem-bra*) ancient capital of Portugal (1143 - 1255). See next stage for details.



Camino Pathway

