

# Guide to the Churches and Chapels of Tavira



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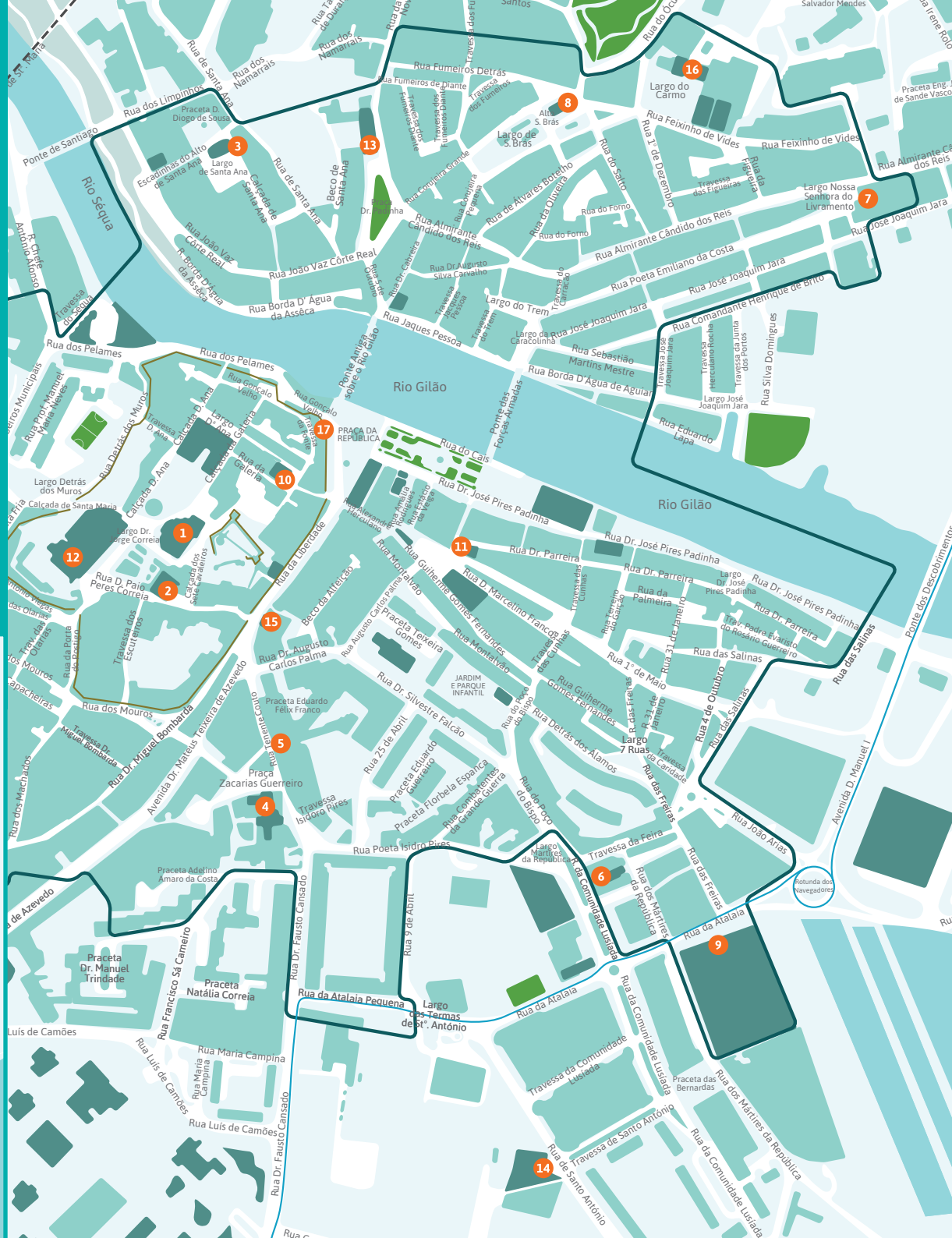
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# Introduction

Tavira boasts one of the most interesting sets of religious architecture in the Algarve. Despite not having been chosen as the seat of the Bishopric of the Algarve in the sixteenth century, when Silves was in decline, the city manifested considerable religious sensitivity, building many places of worship, which is also a sign of its importance and prosperity over the centuries.

This guide provides visitors with an overview of Tavira's religious heritage. The accumulated artistic value in these churches and the plurality of styles, disciplines and artists found in them are especially worthy of note. The quality of the Gothic and Manueline features of the Church of Santa Maria and the old Convent of São Francisco, the Renaissance elegance of the Misericórdia, which was the work of master stonemason André Pilarte, and the force of the "plain style" in the churches of São Paulo and Graça or the exuberance of the Baroque spaces in the churches of Carmo and São José, jointly define, in these or in other temples in the city, a route that is indicative of Portuguese art and of great importance for the history of the city and the region.

Check the opening times of the buildings here [www.cm-tavira.pt](http://www.cm-tavira.pt).



## Main Church of Santa Maria do Castelo

**TAVIRA** | LARGO DR. JORGE CORREIA

**COORDINATES** 37.125346, -7.651747

**CENTURIES** 13<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup>

The Church of Santa Maria is believed to have been built in the thirteenth century on the site of a former mosque dating from the time of the Muslim occupation. Due to the serious damage caused by the 1755 earthquake, work to rebuild the church began in 1790 under the guidance of the Bishop of the Algarve, D. Francisco Gomes de Avelar, in accordance with a neoclassical project by Italian architect Francisco Xavier Fabri.

The merit of the intervention is due to the skilful combination of the modern project with its neoclassical characteristics and what remained of the old mediaeval church, resulting in a uniquely eclectic church. The chevet and some of the side chapels were retained and serve as important witnesses to the old church. The old mediaeval portal, in Gothic style, was also retained and incorporated into the new neoclassical design of the main façade.

Dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, the Senhor dos Passos side chapel, from which a dynamic multi-ribbed vault remains, is a good example of local interpretation of the Manueline style.

In the chancel, on the Epistle side, there is an engraved stone corresponding to the tomb of the “seven martyred knights of Tavira”. Legend has it that the knights were killed in a treacherous manner shortly before Tavira was conquered from the Moors in 1242.

Inside the church, in addition to some carved retables from the Baroque and Rococo periods, various examples of tilework, paintings and religious imagery are worthy of note.

**NATIONAL MONUMENT**



# Main Church of Santiago

**TAVIRA** | RUA D. PAIO PERES CORREIA

**COORDINATES** 37.124843, -7.652029

**CENTURIES** 13<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup>

Founded in the thirteenth century, this church very probably benefited from the structures of an ancient building from the Muslim period. In 1270, King D. Afonso III donated the church to the Bishop of Silves, D. Bartolomeu, and from then on it remained in the hands of the Chapter. It became the main church of the extensive parish of Santiago, which stretched all the way to Moncarapacho until the fifteenth century.

The church was very badly damaged by the 1755 earthquake and it took a number of years for it to be rebuilt because of the parish's lack of funds. For this reason, in 1763, King D. José I ordered that the income of the brotherhoods which conducted activities in the church should be used to fund its reconstruction. From an architectural point of view, it is very plain, an indication of the lack of means in the period following the earthquake. The simplicity of the floor plan is broken only on the south façade, where a series of protruding sections corresponding to the side chapels, sacristy and annexes make this area very dynamic and lend particular interest to the exterior façade.

The main façade features an exuberant eighteenth-century medallion honouring the figure of the patron saint, Santiago (St. James), who is depicted as a warrior, in a reference to the legend of his miraculous appearance at a battle during the Christian reconquest.

Inside the single nave and the chancel, carved retables, statues and sacred paintings are on display, some of which came from other churches in the city.



## Chapel of Santa Ana

**TAVIRA** | LARGO DE SANTA ANA

**COORDINATES** 37.128677, -7.651445

**CENTURIES** 13<sup>TH</sup> or 14<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

Mediaeval in origin, it is one of the oldest churches in Tavira; its patronage belonged to the Order of St. James of the Sword.

The creation of the position of governor of the Algarve in the sixteenth century and the promulgation of its regiment in 1624, that determined that the cities of Lagos and Tavira would be the seats of the provincial government, subsequently changed the destiny of the chapel. The church began to be used as the governor's private chapel, incorporated in his palace. The fact of being given this new function was probably what prompted the various modifications carried out on the old chapel during the eighteenth century. Apart from being remodelled and incorporated into the governor's installations, the Baroque carvings and imagery now made their appearance, notably the current main retablo in gilt carving.

When the position of governor of the Algarve was abolished in the nineteenth century, the palace, and the church with it, passed into the hands of the army until being acquired by Tavira Municipal Council in 1936. Shortly thereafter, a significant part of the military installations attached to the temple was demolished, leaving it isolated once again.

The church was restored and converted for museum purposes in 2006, becoming one of the hubs in Tavira's decentralised municipal museum network.



**MONUMENT  
OF MUNICIPAL INTEREST**



## Church of the old Convent of São Francisco

TAVIRA | PRAÇA ZACARIAS GUERREIRO

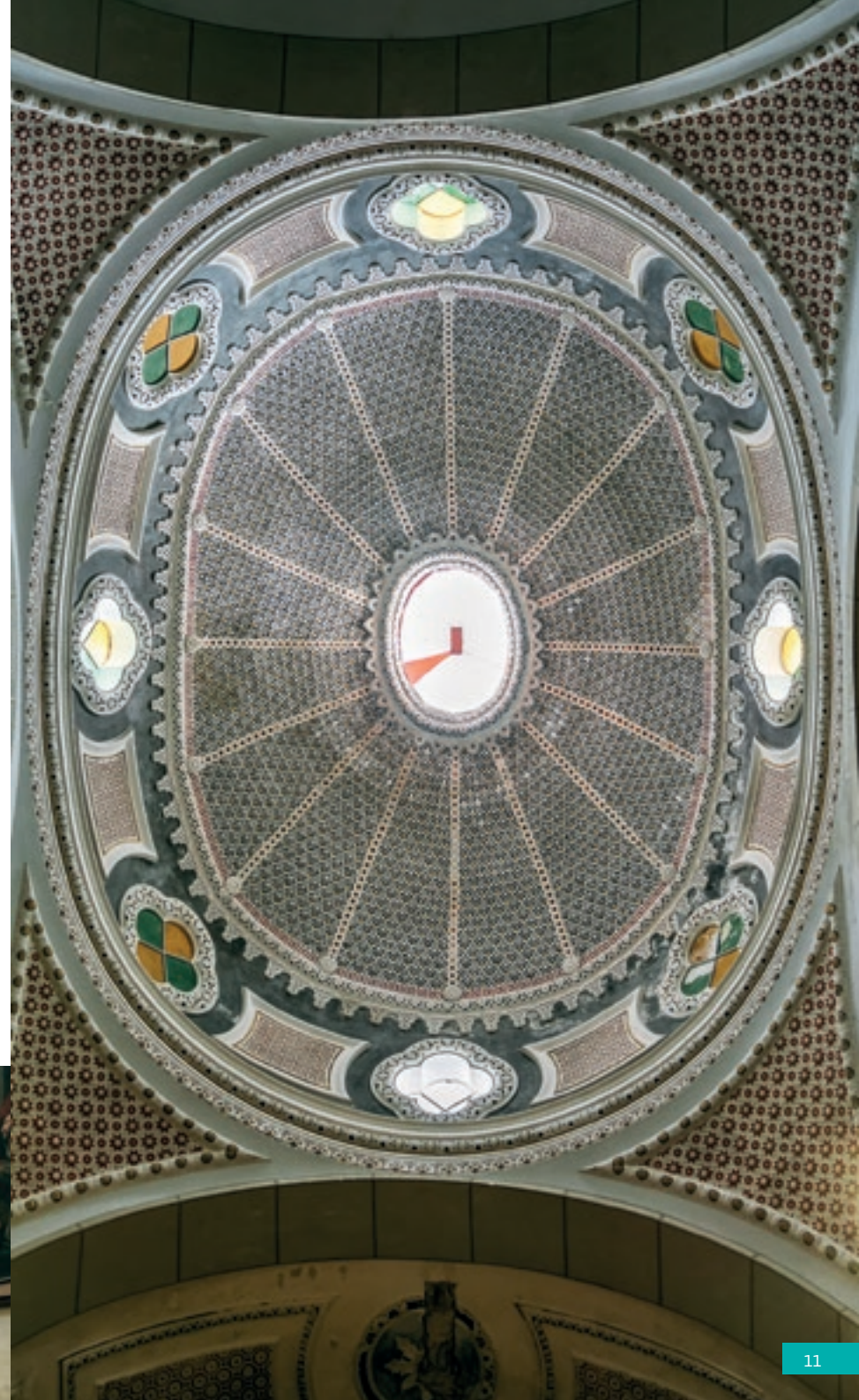
COORDINATES 37.123053, -7.650862

CENTURIES 13<sup>TH</sup> to 14<sup>TH</sup>

Founded by the Franciscans between 1250 and 1330, the Convent of São Francisco (Saint Francis) in Tavira was one of the most pre-eminent buildings in the mediaeval Algarve. It was subsequently devastated by various catastrophes: two earthquakes (1722 and 1755), a collapse (1840) and a terrible fire (1881). Consequently, the church as we know it today is a complex building that has undergone various interventions over its lifetime, resulting in a design that is different from the original.

Worthy of note are the current sacristy, a former side chapel, with a sexpartite vault with ribs issuing from a single keystone and resting on Gothic capitals with plant motifs, reflecting the influence of the art of the Batalha Monastery (fifteenth century). Two Gothic chapels have been preserved in the municipal garden adjacent to the church; they originally belonged to the old convent church.

Worthy of note among the various brotherhoods and sisterhoods that were based in the church during the Early Modern Period is the Third Order of Saint Francis. One of the most prestigious in the city, it took up occupancy of the transept of the convent church in the late seventeenth century. With the extinction of the religious orders in 1834, part of the convent was sold at a public auction and the church was handed over to the Third Order of Saint Francis.





# Church of Hospital do Espírito Santo or of São José

**TAVIRA** | PRAÇA ZACARIAS GUERREIRO

**COORDINATES** 37.123414, -7.650725

**CENTURIES** 15<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

Work began to build the Espírito Santo Hospital in Tavira in 1454. The hospital's mission was to take in the sick from the Moroccan and overseas expeditions.

It is said that the original name "Espírito Santo" (Holy Spirit) was changed to "São José" (St. Joseph) because of a miracle that occurred in 1721, involving an image of the saint, which is currently on display on a side retable. It is also thought to have been around this time that King D. João V placed the hospital and church under royal protection, giving them the privileges of a royal chapel.

Work began on rebuilding the temple and the old hospital in 1752, by royal deliberation, under the guidance of Diogo Tavares e Ataíde, an architect from Faro. An unusual feature of the church is its nave, which is in the shape of an uneven octagon, based on a Baroque design prototype first used in the Menino Deus Church in Lisbon (1712).

The 1755 earthquake damaged both the church and the hospital. Rebuilding dragged on until 1768, when the work was completed.

A sixteenth-century chapel, installed on the Gospel side of the old church by D. Mécia Corte Real, still remains to this day. It is covered by a dynamic Manueline vault featuring the coat-of-arms of the families Costa and Melo, in a reference to the lineage of the founder.

As far as the decoration inside is concerned, a highlight is the main retable; it is one of the few examples of "*trompe l'oeil*" painting (Illusionist painting) in the Algarve and was done by the painter Joaquim Rasquinho in 1805.

**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**



## Chapel of São Sebastião

**TAVIRA** | RUA DA COMUNIDADE LUSÍADA

**COORDINATES** 37.122244, -7.647210

**CENTURIES** 15<sup>TH</sup> (?) to 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

Mediaeval in origin, this chapel is dedicated to the worship of the martyr considered to be an advocate against epidemics and contagious diseases. It was administered by the brotherhood of São Sebastião (St. Sebastian), essentially made up of officers from Tavira Municipal Council.

The church was rebuilt in 1745, under the guidance of masters Diogo Tavares e Ataíde, Manuel Aleixo and Jacinto Pacheco. The cupola over the chancel and the dynamic frontispiece on the main façade bear witness to eighteenth-century architectural activity; the church's resulting appearance is more in harmony with the Baroque.

When the rebuilding work had been completed, the exuberant painting inside was carried out by painter Diogo de Mangino. In 1759, the artist undertook to do the paintings in the chancel, including ten panels depicting the "Life of Saint Sebastian", the imitation marble on the walls and the clothing of two sculptures of torch-bearing angels. The series of ten canvases about Saint Sebastian is considered to be the most complete pictorial recreation of the saint's life in Portuguese art.

The nave is decorated with canvases depicting scenes of the Virgin's life, dating from the second half of the eighteenth century, and by trompe l'oeil paintings, creating a strong scenic and illusionist effect.

The decoration of this chapel is very coherent and affords a sensation of artistic grandeur that is typically Baroque, constituting what is commonly referred to as "total work of art".

**MONUMENT OF MUNICIPAL INTEREST**



## Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Livramento or of São Lázaro

**TAVIRA** | RUA ALMIRANTE CÂNDIDO DOS REIS

**COORDINATES** 37.128342, -7.644337

**CENTURIES** 15<sup>TH</sup> (?) – 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

This small mediaeval temple was associated with an old hospital responsible for treating lepers, and which used to be located on the outskirts of the town. It was rebuilt in 1698, at which time the chapel was mostly frequented by fishermen and seafarers who worshipped Nossa Senhora do Livramento (Our Lady of Deliverance), as is borne out by the various ex-votos on display there.

The temple comprises a single nave and the hermit's house stands alongside. The main façade dates from the early eighteenth century and is entirely lined with nineteenth-century tiles. Inside, there are three eighteenth-century retables, the main one in the chancel and two side ones, linked by the carving on the triumphal arch.



## Chapel of São Brás

TAVIRA | LARGO DE SÃO BRÁS

COORDINATES 37.129065, -7.647507

CENTURIES 15<sup>TH</sup> (?) e 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)



Once situated outside the city, this small late-mediaeval chapel was administered by the brotherhood of São Brás (St. Blaise). It comprises a single nave and chancel and the hermit's house stands alongside.

Its present-day appearance is the result of work carried out in the second half of the eighteenth century. The portal and the large window with expressive stonework frames from the Rococo period are particularly noteworthy on the main façade. Inside, you can admire two wooden statues, one of Our Lady and the other of the patron saint.



## Old Monastery of Nossa Senhora da Piedade or of the Bernardas

**TAVIRA** | RUA ARQ.º EDUARDO SOUTO MOURA

**COORDINATES** 37.121843, -7.645745

**CENTURY** 16<sup>TH</sup>

It was the biggest monastery in the Algarve and the only one belonging to the Cistercian Order in the south of the country. It was founded in 1509 by King D. Manuel I, as a gesture of gratitude for the lifting of the siege that the Moors had imposed on Asilah.

Construction continued until 1528 and was influenced by the Manueline artistic style. Initially intended for nuns belonging to the Poor Clares, in 1530 it was delivered by King D. João III to the Bishop of Silves, D. Fernando Coutinho, who implemented the Rule of Saint Benedict there in accordance with Cistercian observances. The first two abbesses were the sisters of the aforementioned bishop.

The floor plan consisted of a double square, with a cloister, various monastic facilities and a church dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Piedade (Our Lady of Piety).

The building was badly damaged by the 1755 earthquake and various alterations were carried out on the church over the centuries. With the extinction of the religious orders, it received nuns from various parts of the Algarve until it was decommissioned in 1862.

In 1890, the building was converted for use as a milling factory, which resulted in the loss of many of its features. The factory remained in operation until the late 1960s. Various features of the original building can still be seen, such as the Gothic-Manueline portal of the old church on the north façade.

More recently, in 2012, the old monastery was rehabilitated; the design was the work of architect Eduardo Souto Moura.



## Church of Misericórdia

**TAVIRA** | LARGO DA MISERICÓRDIA  
**COORDINATES** 37.125854, -7.650611  
**CENTURY** 16<sup>TH</sup>

The Sisterhood of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia (Holy House of Mercy) of Tavira was founded in the late fifteenth century, initially occupying temporary installations at the Convent of São Francisco and the Espírito Santo Hospital.

In 1541, the sisterhood ordered the building of its own temple appropriate to its financial capabilities and the social status of its members. The chosen site was Vila-a-dentro (the old walled part of the city), next to the D. Manuel I Door. Master stonemason André Pilarte, who had worked on the construction of the Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon, was commissioned for the task. He built a church comprising three naves with arches resting on Renaissance pillars, with the aim of creating a “hall church” in line with the modern experiences favoured by Lisbon architecture.

The Renaissance features are similarly present in the main portico, decorated with grotesque figures (motifs inspired by ancient Roman archaeological remains). Under a second contract, from 1551, he was commissioned to complete the façade including a set of sculptures comprising an image of Our Lady of Mercy, bounded by the coats-of-arms of the city and the kingdom, and the figures of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

Inside, there are three eighteenth-century retables; the main one, crafted by master carver Manuel Abreu do Ó in 1722, is particularly noteworthy. Also from the eighteenth century and worth highlighting are the tile panels, made by a master craftsman in Lisbon in 1760. They depict the fourteen “Works of Mercy” and some scenes from the life of Christ, although some parts are now missing.



**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**



## Church of Nossa Senhora das Ondas or of São Pedro Gonçalves Telmo

**TAVIRA** | RUA D. MARCELINO FRANCO

**COORDINATES** 37.124789, -7.648784

**CENTURIES** 16<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup>

This church belonged to the brotherhood of São Pedro Gonçalves Telmo (Blessed Peter Gonzalez), founded in the fifteenth century and made up of seafarers and fishermen. Having earned considerable social prestige, this brotherhood was able to develop its temple during the first half of the sixteenth century. Bearing witness to this work are the triumphal arch of the chancel, in Renaissance style, the coat-of-arms of the kingdom, embedded in the rear façade, and the “aleeo” emblem, alluding to the Meneses, a noble family that benefited from toll revenue in Tavira in the sixteenth century.

The church was damaged by the 1755 earthquake, as a result of which it had to be rebuilt the following year. The work was directed by Algarve architect Diogo Tavares e Ataíde who, according to the contract, was required to build the temple “with every strength and vigour”, translating the fear felt in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The interior is based on Baroque works from the eighteenth century. Particularly worthy of note are the retables and the magnificent paintings on the ceiling, in illusionist perspective, done in 1765 by Luís António Pereira, an artist from Tavira.

Saints symbolically associated with fishermen and seafarers are worshipped in this church. Devotion to the Virgin was extremely important, as is clearly illustrated by the devotion to Nossa Senhora das Ondas (Our Lady of the Waves), a name by which the church is also known.

**MONUMENT OF  
PUBLIC INTEREST**



## The old Convent of Nossa Senhora da Graça

**TAVIRA** | LARGO DR. JORGE CORREIA

**COORDINATES** 37.125048, -7.652973

**CENTURIES** 16<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup>

It was founded by the Order of Saint Augustine in 1542, in the old Jewish quarter of the city.

After several years of living in provisional installations, the Augustines arranged for the construction of the convent in 1569. Work continued until the seventeenth century. Little remains of this first construction apart from the cloister where the first floor retains the original structure, with Tuscan columns. The church too owes its structure to the original temple from the second half of the sixteenth century, although changes have been made over the centuries.

In 1749, more work was carried out on the building under the guidance of Diogo Tavares e Ataíde, an architect from the Algarve, who restored the cloister and remodelled several wings of the convent. This work modernised the convent, in line with the Baroque style. The main façade is worth highlighting; the architectural design for this part of the building, intended as the monks' dormitory, came from Lisbon.

In 1834, as a result of the disbanding of the religious orders, the building was handed over to the Ministry of War, which then used it to house successive military units. More recently, in 2006, it was reconverted for use as a hotel. Thanks to this work, an archaeological dig was able to be conducted at the site and vestiges of an Islamic quarter dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were discovered, leading to the opening of a museum.

**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**





## The Church of the old Convent of Nossa Senhora da Ajuda or of São Paulo

**TAVIRA** | PRAÇA DR. ANTÓNIO PADINHA  
**COORDINATES** 37.128737, -7.649798  
**CENTURY** 17<sup>TH</sup>

The only convent in the Algarve belonging to the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit was founded in Tavira in 1606, in close proximity to the old bridge.

The church's floor plan is that of a Latin cross, a rarity among Tavira's churches, and it is designed in the plain style of architecture known as "chã". During the second quarter of the eighteenth century, three windows were added to the main façade, allowing more light inside. The plasterwork visible in the vault that precedes the entrance to the church dates from roughly the same time. It features a cartouche with a likeness of Saint Paul the Hermit, the convent's patron saint, with a lion and a palm tree, alluding to the place in the desert that he withdrew to.

Inside there are seven carved retables, a particular highlight being the retable of Nossa Senhora do Carmo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel), crafted in 1730 by carver Gaspar Martins. Neither this retable nor the other ones in the nave were gilded and painted as was the custom during the Baroque period. It is also worth highlighting that part of this church's collection of paintings and religious imagery comprises works from different churches in the city and from decommissioned convents.

In 1834, with the extinction of the religious orders, the church was handed over to the Brotherhood of Nossa Senhora da Ajuda (Our Lady of Good Aid). The convent and enclosure were sold at a public auction and later demolished.



## Church and old Convent of Santo António dos Capuchos

**TAVIRA** | RUA DE SANTO ANTÓNIO  
**COORDINATES** 37.119797, -7.647774  
**CENTURY** 17<sup>TH</sup>

In 1607, the Capuchos (Capuchin) monks arrived in Tavira and temporarily occupied the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Esperança (Our Lady of Good Hope), in the Atalaia area, where, in 1612, they began to build their convent on land that encompassed part of a suburban farm and a public square.

The church is an example of seventeenth-century “chã” or “plain” architecture and of the austerity that was characteristic of Franciscan and Capuchin ideals. It consists of a simple, rectangular floor plan, a single nave and a chancel. The main façade was remodelled during the second half of the eighteenth century, when a Baroque frontispiece and large window were added. Inside, you can admire a noteworthy set of eighteenth-century clay sculptures depicting the life of Saint Anthony, as well as carved retables and examples of painting and religious imagery from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

One of the highlights in the old convent is the cloister: very austere, it features three arches in a row resting on square-shaped pillars.

After the extinction of the religious orders, in 1834, the convent was sold at a public auction and, in 1856, the church was acquired by the Brotherhood of St. Anthony which had, until that time, been based in the church of the Convent of São Francisco (St. Francis).



## Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Consolação

TAVIRA | RUA DA LIBERDADE

COORDINATES 37.124656, -7.650912

CENTURY 17<sup>TH</sup>

This chapel dates back to 1648, when the Brotherhood of Nossa Senhora da Consolação dos Presos (Our Lady of the Consolation of Prisoners) was founded. It was located next to the old Alfeição Gate and the old prison, both of which were demolished in 1918.

This brotherhood's specific aim was to provide moral and spiritual support for the inmates of the old Tavira prison. It is said that this is where the condemned prisoners spent their last hours.

The chapel is very austere. It consists of a single small building with a wooden roof. The sacristy, chapel keeper's houses and one of the Stations of the Cross attached to the church were destroyed in the early twentieth century.

Highlights of the decorative work include carpet-style skirting tiles dating from the seventeenth century, an eighteenth-century canvas of Christ with the Cross (which previously belonged to one of the stations of the cross), a seventeenth-century retable featuring the statue of Our Lady of the Consolation, and Marian-themed paintings by João Rodrigues Andino: *Adoration of the Shepherds*, *Adoration of the Magi*, *Coronation of the Virgin*, and, on the predellas, the *Presentation of the Virgin Mary*, *Last Supper* and *Annunciation*.

**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**



## Church of the Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora do Carmo

**TAVIRA** | LARGO DO CARMO

**COORDINATES** 37.129366, -7.646308

**CENTURY** 18<sup>TH</sup>

The Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora do Carmo (Third Order of Mount Carmel) of Tavira was founded in the early eighteenth century, and was headquartered initially in a chapel of the Church of Saint Paul. In 1747, its members set about building their own temple next to the recently-founded convent intended for use by the First Order of Carmelites. As a consequence of this decision, two Carmelite churches stood adjacent to each other, the convent church and the one for the Third Order. However, the work on the convent dragged on for many years and it had still not been completed when the religious orders were extinguished in 1834.

In turn, the Third Order's church was finished around 1789, and featured a Latin cross floor plan. The temple's spacious proportions are complemented by rich and exuberant embellishment comprising retables, imagery and paintings evoking the main figures of Carmelite spirituality. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Elijah, St. Teresa of Ávila, St. Albert and St. Ephigenia.

The Baroque embellishment in the chancel must be highlighted due to its comprehensiveness and magnificence; various artistic disciplines have been combined – carving, imagery, the painting on the ceiling in illusionist perspective and the easel paintings on the walls – to attract and fascinate the faithful.

It would be remiss not to make mention of this church's set of retables in Rococo style, in particular the main retable, which is praised as a masterpiece of Algarve carving.

**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**



## Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Piedade

TAVIRA | RUA GONÇALO VELHO

COORDINATES 37.126511, -7.650871

CENTURY 18<sup>TH</sup>

This small chapel in Rua Gonçalo Velho, near the Fonte da Praça, belonged to the Brotherhood of Nossa Senhora da Piedade (Our Lady of Piety) and was built in 1578. The door was modelled on some of the porticoes at the Convento da Graça and decorated with a burning heart pierced by a dagger. The frontispiece of the church features a dynamic composition embellished with plasterwork.

Inside the chapel, there is a carved retablo typical of Rococo style, featuring a painting of Our Lady of Piety.



## Main Church of Santo Estêvão

**SANTO ESTÊVÃO** | RUA DA IGREJA

**COORDINATES** 37.126989, -7.714598

**CENTURIES** 16<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

The main church of Santo Estêvão (Saint Stephen) was originally a small late-mediaeval chapel that depended upon the civil parish of Santiago de Tavira. Built in the sixteenth century, it underwent major building work in the eighteenth century that modified its original appearance. The reconstruction began in 1707, on the orders of the Bishop of the Algarve, D. António Pereira da Silva, and was interrupted after he died. Work began again in 1738 and was completed in 1744. The main façade was remodelled in the nineteenth century, probably in 1846, and the main portal was rebuilt in 1903.

Inside, the church comprises a single rectangular nave with four side chapels and a chancel connecting to the sacristy on the Epistle side. The main retable dates from the early nineteenth century, but with subsequent alterations, namely the pyramidal throne and the surrounding mural. The design, by Italian architect Francisco Xavier Fabri, is neoclassical in style, and is similar to that of the retable in the Chapel of São Luís (St. Louis) in Faro.



## Main Church of Nossa Senhora da Luz

LUZ DE TAVIRA | LARGO DA REPÚBLICA

COORDINATES 37.091988, -7.703845

CENTURY 16<sup>TH</sup>

The church was built after Luz de Tavira became the seat of the civil parish in the early decades of the sixteenth century. The construction work dragged on for several decades, the last part of the job being the execution of the main portico sometime around 1570. The structure of the temple was something new in sixteenth-century Algarve architecture. It was the only *hall church* (or *Hallenkirche*) in the region; chronologically, it comes between the Manueline hall churches and those of the 1550s. The project is believed to be the work of André Pilarte, a master who trained in the workshop at the Jerónimos Monastery, and is recognised as being at the forefront of Renaissance architecture in the Algarve.

Currently, two neoclassical altars make up the contents of the naves. The main retable dates from the second half of the sixteenth century and underwent subsequent modifications.

The finish of the main façade was altered during the second half of the eighteenth century due to the damage caused by the 1755 earthquake. Apart from the main Mannerist portico and the temple's ingenious vault, the portal on the south side is worth highlighting; built in early-sixteenth-century Manueline style, it is one of the most interesting in the Algarve. Although it was built quite late on, it is a must-see for anyone interested in Manueline art in the Algarve.

It boasts an interesting collection inside, comprising paintings, sculptures and carvings from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**MONUMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**



## Main Church of Santa Catarina da Fonte do Bispo

**SANTA CATARINA DA FONTE DO BISPO** | LARGO DE N.º S.ª DAS DORES  
**COORDINATES** 37.154010, -7.789037  
**CENTURY** 16<sup>TH</sup>

Work began to build the temple during the first half of the sixteenth century after Fonte do Bispo became the seat of the civil parish. Initially, it began being built in Manueline style, later combined with the Renaissance model of André Pilarte's school.

In the chancel, the Manueline forms are visible in the frames around the gaps, the corbels and the multi-ribbed vaults. Outside, two cylindrical buttresses topped with conical spires, identical to those found in a number of late-Gothic temples in the Alentejo still remain.

The interior is identical in design to that used by master stonemason André Pilarte for the Misericórdia in Tavira: a longitudinal floor plan with three naves and four bays delimited by arches resting on Renaissance pillars.

The portico on the main façade is noteworthy and is identical in shape to that of the side portal on the Misericórdia in Tavira. The decoration relates mostly to Saint Catherine and follows the decorative style of the Renaissance. The finish on the main façade, with dynamic Baroque forms, indicates that work was carried out on the temple during the eighteenth century.





## Main Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição

**CONCEIÇÃO DE TAVIRA** | LARGO ENG.º PADINHA RODRIGUES  
**COORDINATES** 37.146873, -7.604695  
**CENTURIES** 16<sup>TH</sup> and 18<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

Work began to build it in the first quarter of the sixteenth century as part of the creation of the civil parish of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception). It is known that it was already being used for worship in 1518, although it was not yet finished, and that its construction was paid for by donations from the local residents.

The temple features an admirable late-Gothic main portico comprising a pointed arch with five archivolts; the last of these is decorated with representations of branches, leaves, flowers, gargoyles and biting dragons, among others.

Inside, there are three naves with only three bays, where the decorated pillars in classical Renaissance style stand out; this style was favoured by master stonemason André Pilarte in his work in Tavira. The chancel is covered by a sixteenth-century groin vault with a keystone displaying the coat-of-arms of the Order of St. James of the Sword, the church's patron.

Work was carried out on the temple in the mid-eighteenth century, at which time the Baroque frontispiece decorating the main façade was added, framing the coat-of-arms of the Order of St. James of the Sword, made with Baroque shapes in plaster.



## Main Church of Santo Estevão

**CACHOPO** | LARGO DA IGREJA

**COORDINATES** 37.333015, -7.816514

**CENTURIES** 16<sup>TH</sup> and 20<sup>TH</sup> (Reconstruction)

The first time we hear about this church is in the report of the visit carried out in 1535 by the Order of St. James of the Sword, the temple's patron. In this year, the Chapel of Santo Estêvão (Saint Stephen) in Cachopo was described as a modest temple with a single nave, chancel and walls of stone and clay. The building was built at the inhabitants' expense and the chaplain was appointed by the Bishop of the Algarve.

The 1755 earthquake caused cracks to appear in the walls of the church and these were promptly repaired as detailed in the *Memórias Paroquiais* (Parish Memoirs) from 1758.

Major alterations were carried out on the church around the 1950s, during which the original structure was taken apart and the whole interior was altered.

More recently, restoration work was carried out on the church in 2007.



# Main Church of Santa Luzia

**SANTA LUZIA** | LARGO PADRE ANTÓNIO PATRÍCIO

**COORDINATES** 37.101507, -7.661122

**CENTURY** 20<sup>TH</sup>

It was built on the site of the original chapel, which dated from the sixteenth century. The name of Santa Luzia (St. Lucy) was given by the fishermen in tribute to the Sicilian martyr, who protected those who suffer from eye problems. Work was carried out on the church on various occasions over the centuries. In 1958, the church was rebuilt, giving it its present-day appearance, designed by Manuel Gomes da Costa, an architect from the Algarve and one of the leading figures in modern architecture in the region.



## Other monuments in the municipality not included in this guide

### CONVENT

#### Convent of Nossa Senhora do Carmo

The current Tavira Living Science Centre, Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa (Portuguese Red Cross) and Sociedade da Banda de Tavira

COORDINATES 37.129227, -7.645977

Largo do Carmo | Tavira | Century 18<sup>TH</sup>

### CHURCHES

#### Church of São Roque

COORDINATES 37.125276, -7.654308

Rua dos Bombeiros Municipais | Tavira | Century 16<sup>TH</sup>

Rebuilt in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century

#### Church of Antigo Arraial Ferreira Neto

COORDINATES 37.119078, -7.626651

Arraial Ferreira Neto | Tavira | Century 20<sup>TH</sup>

#### Church of Nossa Senhora do Mar

COORDINATES 37.138260, -7.599198

Cabanas de Tavira | Rua Raul Brandão | Century 21<sup>ST</sup>

### CHAPELS

#### Chapel of Santa Margarida

COORDINATES 37.130641, -7.673807

Santa Margarida | Tavira | Century 17<sup>TH</sup>

#### Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Saúde

COORDINATES 37.157669, -7.651142

São Marcos | Tavira | Century 15<sup>TH</sup>

#### Chapel of Benamor

COORDINATES 37.153846, -7.610281

Conceição de Tavira | Century 17<sup>TH</sup>

#### Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Livramento

COORDINATES 37.072577, -7.728402

Livramento | Century 18<sup>TH</sup>

**More information:**

[www.tavira.pt](http://www.tavira.pt)



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