

# “Mosteiro dos Jerónimos”

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Partial View of Mosteiro dos Jerónimos

Lisbon, Portugal’s capital city, is a ramshackle but charming mix of now and then. Vintage trolleys shiver up and down hills, bird-stained statues mark grand squares, taxis rattle and screech through cobbled lanes while the locals and tourists sip cappuccino in Art Nouveau cafes. It’s a city of faded iron work balconies, multicolored tiles and mosaic sidewalks of bougainvillea and red tile roofs with antique TV antennas. Here at the far western edge of Europe prices are reasonable, the people are warm and the pace of life slows. The grand Belém

District offers a look to Lisbon’s historic architecture and seafaring glory.... from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Monastery of Jerónimos to the many museums throughout Lisbon.

The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, also known as the Jerónimos Monastery, is a UNESCO world Heritage site located in Lisbon’s Belém district. Exemplifying Portugal’s Manueline style – a highly ornate style of architecture – the monastery was built during the Age of Discoveries.



South Portal



Vaulted Ceiling

The monastery’s south portal is a stunning example of Manueline architecture at its most exuberant. The richly decorated 32-meter door is the visual center of the façade facing the River Tagus. According to our local tour guide, the design was created by master builder, João de Castillio, the author of the “side door” as it became known. Carved like filigree, the ornate stonework is brought to life by an elaborate collection of 40-odd statues set into the pillars that flank the door, figurines that include Henry the Navigator, St Jerome and Our Lady of the Three Nights. The



Central Nave

twelve apostles can be identified within this extraordinary sculptural grouping, as well as a pair of miniature lions' heads positioned at the foot of the door. Crowning the whole composition is a stature of the Archangel Michael. For all its sumptuous embellishments, the south portal is one of the richest pieces of Portuguese Late Gothic architecture.

After passing through the South Portal, we entered the Belém Church which displays a remarkable monumentality—designed as a Hull Church, it has six isolated columns, three for each nave and two recessed and embedded into the body of the High Choir. The columns are covered with carved plateresque motifs. The side and central naves clearly merge together, placing the public in a single unified space. Interestingly, the nave vault, as seen from the choir, shows a “Gothic” elevation that does not match the depressed vault profile. This interplay of volumes and simultaneous and

complex fittings is one of the aspects that confers more structural and morphological originality to the roofing.

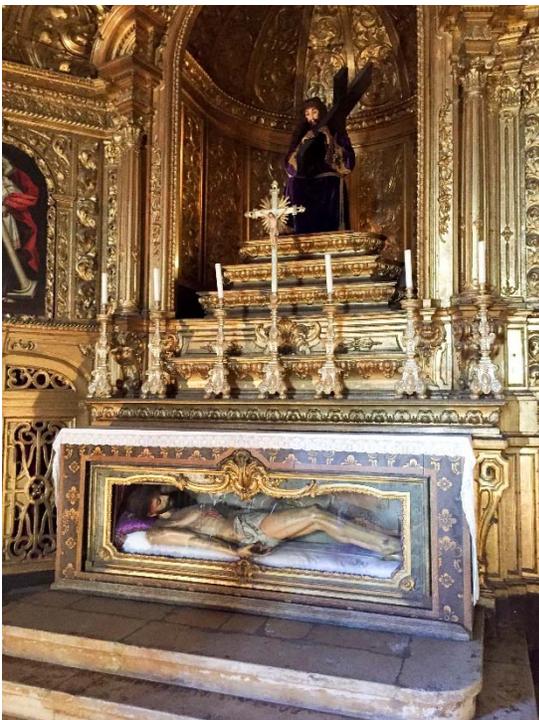
As we viewed the naves vaulting, the single central “core” formed by a star becomes clear. Sheaves of ribs spring from the star



Tomb of Luis Vaz de Camões

which extends the stone vaults' support to the walls. The ribbing becomes ever thinner and its combined design no longer forms the usual fireirons but rather a web tracey. It is like an articulated “spring” system in which the vault keystones serve as hinges. The crossing vault is even more impressive. The entire bulge of the vault is sustained by huge and extremely heavy bronze keystone cores, joined by a sleeves of straight ribs. These are reinforced in the central core by “fans”, round rings of curved ribs.

Inextricably linked to Portugal's gold Age of Discovery, Vasco da Gama and Luis de Camoes are two of the country's most important and influential historical figureheads. Their highly ornate tombs bear all the features of Manueline Architecture – carved ropes, spheres and other seafaring, motifs.



Ancient Saint Anthony Chapel

Based on our observation, it would appear that they are among the most admired and photographed of the church's historic artifacts.

Upon leaving the church, the gloriously gilded Chapel of Senhor dos Passos - the ancient Chapel of St. Anthony - is immediately to the right of the main entrance. We were able to peer through an iron grille to appreciate the exquisite 17<sup>th</sup> Century paneled wood carvings which are outstanding in their detail and craftsmanship.

Our tour group traveled all the way to Lisbon to enjoy differences - to become temporary locals. If your idea of travel includes welcoming locals (who speak a bit of English), exotic architecture, windswept castles and fresh seafood with chilled wine - you've chosen the right destination. With its characteristic hills, trolleys, famous suspension bridge and rolling fog, Lisbon has a San Francisco feel. Our tour group enjoyed this world class city, from its elegant outdoor cafés, exciting art and architecture, along with stunning vistas ...Lisbon heritage endures.

Thoughtful travel engages us with the world. In tough economic times, it reminds us what truly is important. By brooding perspectives, travel has taught me new ways to measure the quality of life.