



The Fort of Santa Catarina is classified as having Public Interest status since 1961, remaining one of the most important benchmarks in the History of Figueira da Foz.



Município da Figueira da Foz

## OPENING HOURS

Sunday, Monday,  
Wednesday and Thursday  
**9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

FRIDAY  
AND SATURDAY  
**9:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

TUESDAY  
**closed**

Free Entrance

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### CITY COUNCIL OF FIGUEIRA DA FOZ

Paços do Concelho, Av. Saraiva de Carvalho  
3084 - 501 | Figueira da Foz  
Tel.: +351 233 403 300

Email: [municipe@cm-figfoz.pt](mailto:municipe@cm-figfoz.pt)  
<http://www.cm-figfoz.pt>

### TOURISM INFORMATION OFFICE

Municipal Tourism Office  
Av. 25 de Abril  
3084 - 501 | Figueira da Foz  
Tel.: +351 233 422 610

Buarcos Municipal Tourism Office | Maritime Museum Centre  
Rua Governador Soares Nogueira, 32, Buarcos  
3080 - 296 | Figueira da Foz  
Tel: +351 233 433 019

+info: [figueiraturismo@cm-figfoz.pt](mailto:figueiraturismo@cm-figfoz.pt)

# THE FORT OF SANTA CATARINA

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ  
Portugal



## THE FORT, LIGHTHOUSE AND CHAPEL OF SANTA CATARINA

The Fort of Santa Catarina was built in the 17th century, along with Fortress of Buarcos and Fort of Palheiros, to serve as a defence point for the Mondego river shoal, being a key part of the defensive system of the port and bay of Figueira da Foz and Buarcos. The Fort of Santa Catarina was built on *Rochedos de Santa Catarina* (the rocks of Santa Catarina) with a triangular shape, angles facing north, east and south, and three curtain walls, a half bastion, and two irregular bastions.

Access to the fortified enclosure is made by a gate in the curtain wall facing north which allows the passage to the interior yard where the Chapel is located. Due to its strategic significance, this Fort was taken by Napoleon's invading troops, led by Junot, in 1808, having been subsequently reclaimed on June 27th of that same year, by a group of local people led by the scholar António Bernado Zagalo, by means of an action that facilitated the disembark of allied troops – the army of British General Arthur Wellesley – between August 1st and 3rd.

After the large-scale intervention in the vicinity of the Fort in 2013, the entire architectural complex was subjected to a restoration and requalification intervention in 2016, under a project of architect Ricardo Vieira de Melo.

The Fort, Lighthouse and Chapel of Santa Catarina are definitely prepared to be visited, having been restored upon full observance and valorisation of its original elements.



In 1882, during the Liberal Wars, the Fort of Santa Catarina reaffirmed its relevance in terms of coastline defence, when its artillery, combined with the Fortress of Buarcos and the Fort of Palheiros, was finally able to neutralize the enemy forces. In the end of the 19th century, the military and defensive functions of Fort of Santa Catarina we ceased, but the beacon of baluarte do sinal (beacon bastion) installed in 1888 to aid navigation and vessel passage through the river shoal, was still kept. It was later deactivated in 1969, and underwent a fast deterioration process. It was restored and rebuilt in 2002 and restored once again in 2016. One hundred and twenty-eight years later, the Lighthouse of Santa Catarina is an integral part of the fort and city's image.

The Chapel of Santa Catarina was built about half a century before the Fort. This Chapel was built to honour Santa Catarina de Ribamar and began as a small chapel on the rocks belonging to the Church of Santa Cruz de Redondos, enclosed to the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra. In 1598, this monastery ordered builder Mateus Rodrigues to rebuild the chapel. The Chapel of Santa Catarina is a small square centred chapel in which the ribbed dome stands out. An inscription identifying the Monastery of Santa Cruz and its construction date is still visible on the door lintel. In the 18th century, the chapel was also used for non-religious purposes like the Court of the Inquisition, in 1645, and to execute public deeds, during the year of 1733. In the 19th century, this chapel was subjected to construction works that changed and eliminated some of its primary elements. The recent intervention made in 2016, restored and exposed said elements once more, namely the stone floor and the niche on its primary altar made in limestone.