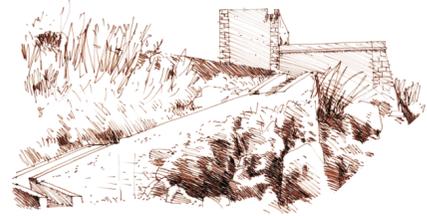
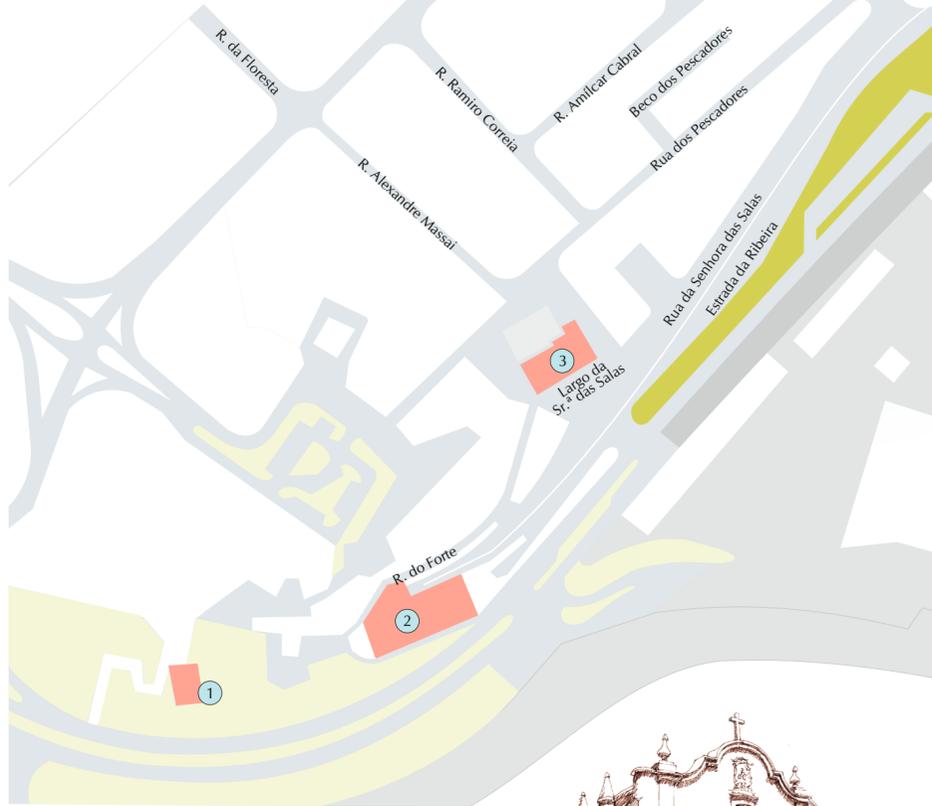


# Sines

## Historic Centre Guide



**1 Revelim Fort**  
Construction completed in 1680, with a view to protecting the port from pirate attacks. Design engineer: João Rodrigues Mouro.



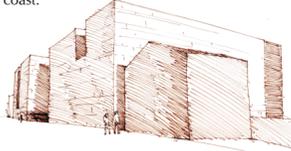
**2 Old Calheta / Fishing Harbour**  
Despite its tradition as the best port of the Alentejo, it was not always easy to dock in Sines. Projects from as far back as the 16th century have sought to improve and expand Calheta, carried out by some of the best military engineers, such as Alexandre Massai. The set of warehouses, retaining walls and ramps remain impressive, despite having silted up and been partially cut by the avenue. Two steps away lies the modern fishing harbour with its colourful fishing boats and the bustle of the fishermen.



**3 Nossa Senhora das Salas Church**  
Founded by the Greek princess D. Vataça Lascaris, it was rebuilt on a larger scale by Vasco da Gama, who ordered the placing of his coat of arms in stone on its facade as well as a plaque with all his titles. Built in the early 16th century, it is preserved in its entirety, with its interior enriched with carved altarpieces in 18th-century woodwork and a remarkable cycle of tiles from around 1780, with scenes from the life of the Virgin. Nowadays it is possible to visit the treasury, portraying jewellery and other objects offered to Our Lady over the centuries.



**4 Sines Arts Centre**  
Designed by the architects Francisco and Manuel Aires Mateus, this building opened in 2005. It was a finalist for the European Mies van der Rohe prize for architecture and has won several national and international awards for architecture. It houses an exhibition hall, an auditorium, a library and the municipal historical archives.



**5 Underwater Archaeological Reserve**  
At the bay, a few meters from the beach, there is a set of cannons on the sea floor and which can be seen by divers. Anyone who wants to stay dry and find out more, can see, in this building, several archaeological finds associated with them and discover more about the shipwrecks that occurred on this coast.

**6 "House of Vasco da Gama"**  
(Private home - visits unavailable)  
Although the plaque placed on the facade in 1898 marks it as the birthplace of the navigator, it is more likely to be the place where Vasco da Gama began to erect a sumptuous palace for his residence after returning from India, but, since it was never completed, it fell into disrepair and was demolished in the late 19th century.



**7 Penedos da Índia**  
A quintessential place for fishermen, where they gather to observe the sea and recount their tales. From here, the fishing nets and traps in the bay were watched over closely, waiting for the fishing campaigns' signal call. An elevator was built under the Sines Urban Renewal Program, connecting the square to Vasco da Gama beach.



**8 Casa do Conde do Bracial**  
(Private home - visits unavailable)  
Romantic construction that despite its resemblance to a fort is actually a revivalist building which was the home of one of the largest landowners in the area and later the residence of the vice-consulate of the United States of America.

**9 Castle / Museum of Sines**  
D. Pedro I raised Sines to the status of town on 24 November 1362, imposing as a counterpart that its inhabitants would continue building the walls of the Castle that had already been initiated. The work progressed slowly but it must already have been completed in 1480, when its Mayor, Estêvão da Gama, father of the navigator Vasco da Gama, informed the Order of Santiago of the improvements he had made in order to better accommodate his family and provide defence against potential attack. The Castle where Vasco da Gama spent his childhood was affected by the earthquake of 1755, but the medieval walls and structures have been maintained, in particular the medieval castle and keep (fortified tower) which, since 2008, houses the headquarters of Sines Museum and Casa de Vasco da Gama. While several architectural elements from the time of the Gama family are visible on the ground floor, the 1st floor reflects the taste of the second half of the 18th century, arising from its extensive reconstruction after the earthquake. Here we highlight the painted ceilings of the two main rooms, with military themes and mythological allegories extolling the harmony between arms and letters, concerns of a time when it was the summer residence of D. Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, a central figure of the Portuguese Enlightenment and founder of the first Portuguese museum. Don't miss the Gaio Treasury (7th century BC), the carved stonework of the Visigothic Basilica (7th century AD) and the pictorial work of Emmerico Nunes (1888-1968).



**10 Vasco da Gama Beach**  
During the 19th century this beach was visited for health reasons and had a Hot Baths Establishment, but it gradually turned into a place of leisure and the favourite beach of the Alentejo, pushing away the fishermen whose life had been centred around it. Vasco da Gama Avenue, bordering the beach, was rebuilt under the Sines Urban Renewal Program.

**11 Escadinhas do Muro da Praia (stairway)**  
Built in the 1930s to facilitate access to a growing number of bathers to Vasco da Gama beach, this stairway offers a unique scenic effect, where the steps cross with car access ramps through landscaped terraces.



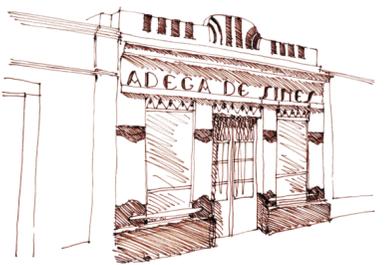
**12 Parish Church**  
The temple where Vasco da Gama was christened was demolished in 1730 to make way for the present church dedicated to the Saviour. It is a building of great sobriety, reflecting the spirit of the Military Order of Santiago, whose coat of arms is visible on the main door. Inside, special note should be made of the tiles of the main chapel, a monumental composition in blue and white from the mid-18th century. A 7th-century Visigoth basilica must have existed previously on the site of this church, of which several richly carved pilasters, removed from the castle walls, are preserved in the Museum.

**13 Statue of Vasco da Gama**  
Erected in 1970 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of the navigator, and produced by the sculptor António Luís Branco de Paiva (1926-1987).



**14 Francisco Luís Lopes Street**  
Baptised with the name of an important 19th-century local writer, various good examples of national architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries can still be found along this street.

**15 "Adega de Sines"**  
This former winery, carefully preserved, is a trip back in time, to the early 20th century, when abundant wine was produced in Sines and sold here.



**16 Poeta Bocage Square**  
Former daily marketplace, which was held here until 1981, in demountable wooden stalls, marked regularly by the bell ringing of the city clock, built over the door of the Castle.

**17 Roman Factory**  
This fish preparation establishment was built in the 1st century. It preserved fish, using salt and various preparation techniques, resulting in preserves and sauces, later sold in clay amphorae in the interior territories and eventually exported by sea.

**18 Manueline Portal**  
A rare example of Sines at the time of Vasco da Gama.

**19 Tomás Ribeiro Square**  
For centuries the Square was the administrative centre of the town, with the Casas da Câmara and pillory (disappeared upon the termination of the Municipality in the 19th century).

**20 Teófilo Braga Street**  
Rua Direita was the main thoroughfare that ran through the village, from Rossio, where several roads converged, to Ribeira. The main business establishments were located here amidst the comings and goings of people and carts carrying cork, fish and other products to and from the harbour.

**21 "A Primorosa" (private home - visits unavailable)**  
The development of the port of Sines in the early 20th century, with the rise in cork manufacturing and canned fish for export, is reflected in various business establishments in Art Deco, with careful architecture and graphic facades.



**22 "A Portuguesa" (private home - visits unavailable)**  
A former grocery store that evokes the National Anthem adopted by the Republic. The current building is a reconstruction but the interior is partially reconstituted in the Museum of Sines with the furniture and some of the original objects.



**23 Misericórdia Church**  
Built during the reign of Philip I, its austere walls are decorated only, over the main door, by the coat of arms of Misericórdia (compassion, mercy and charity), carved in white marble, with the five wounds of Christ on a sophisticated palette surmounted by a crown of styled thorns. The interior is dominated by the carved altarpiece, from the mid-18th century, exuberant in its sculptural detail and use of colour, in imitation of rich-coloured gemstones among gilt elements.

**24 Tourism Office**

# Sines

## Historic Centre Guide



**Sines**  
MUNICIPIO [www.sines.pt](http://www.sines.pt)



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## Harbour of the Alentejo

In the middle of the Alentejo Coast the land protrudes itself over the sea. A rocky massif rises from the waters and offers protection from the wind to a cosy bay open to the south, whose history is inseparable from its geography. Even the name, Sines, appears to derive from the Latin word "sinus", which means breast or cove.

The sea marks the past, present and future of this place open to the world. Sines identifies itself with the figure of its most famous son, Vasco da Gama, who lived his childhood in the Castle and certainly heard the reports of the exploits of the old fishermen, whose descendants still gather on the wide open spaces by the sea to forecast approaching storms. One of their favourite places is under the shade of the statue of the navigator, who seems to question, as they do, the horizon.

The world passes by through the eyes of these people. They saw the arrival of the Phoenician and Roman traders, the French and Italian military engineers who planned its defence and its harbour. English, German and Catalan merchants built houses and factories for the export of cork and canned products. Fishermen from the north or the Algarve came in search of the abundant fish and French ships left here loaded with lobsters for the best restaurants in Paris. Today, large ships from around the world can be seen from the "walls of the beach" transporting containers and fuel. For everyone, Sines was and is a host showing warmth and curiosity.

The town centre still retains its medieval structure, of planned urban development, with streets parallel to the sea, crossed by perpendicular lanes and its central square. In it stands the Castle, which since the 14th century kept unwelcome visitors at a distance: mainly pirates and corsairs intent on plundering the riches of the land.

Nowadays, it is the stage of the World Music Festival, which celebrates the cultural diversity that Vasco da Gama and other Portuguese discoverers revealed to the world.



Vasco da Gama was born in the old Paço do Alcaide around 1470. The building retains much of its 14th century structure, despite being enlarged and redecorated after the 1755 earthquake. Under its beautiful painted ceilings you can see several jewels from the local heritage, such as the Gaio treasure, from the 7th century BC, and discover how people lived in this house during the time of the Gama.

Leaving the Castle, we find, almost touching the walls, the Parish Church, dedicated to the Saviour. This almost umbilical connection reflects the influence that the Order of Santiago had in both the military and religious spheres, as evidenced by its symbol: a cross that is a sword, visible on the main door of the church.

Leaving the Parish Church we find the Misericórdia Church and Emmerico Nunes Cultural Centre, which owes its initial impetus to the poet Al Berto, who developed a pioneer project here for the publicising of contemporary art, associated to the name of one of the greatest illustrators of modernism, who lived a large part of his life in Sines.



**Roman Factory**  
Nuno Farinha / Arqueohoje

This square offers one of the best views of the sea and Vasco da Gama Beach, which is accessed by stairway from the beach wall in a scenery interlaced with stairs, ramps and landscaped terraces from the 1930s.

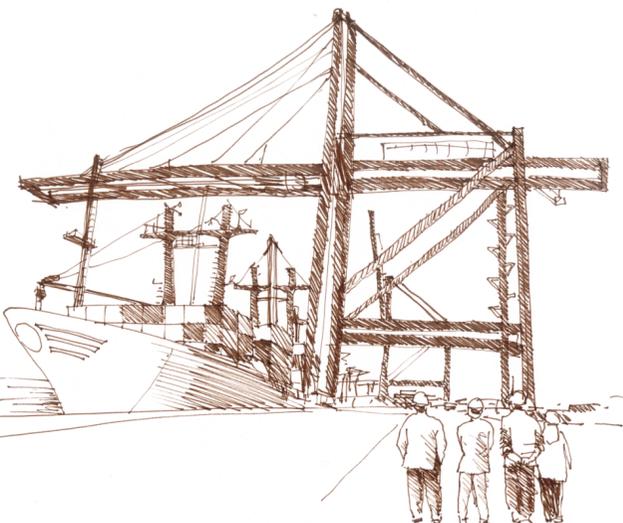


If you go down to the beach, you can admire the rows of houses peeking over the top of the cliff. This was, traditionally, the favourite beach of the Alentejo, where the bathers have taken over from the fishermen who for centuries were here, dedicated to mending nets of old fishing frames and selling on its sands the fish that the restaurants of Sines are still famous for. On its western side you will find the building of the Underwater Archaeological Reserve, where you can discover more about the shipwrecks that occurred when the sea raged, with a destructive force unimaginable today, where the large jetties protect several port terminals.

If you prefer to walk along the cliff top, towards west, you will find other important traces from the past of Vasco da Gama, including Largo dos Penedos da Índia and the place where the navigator began to build his house after returning from India - although popular memory associates this house to his birthplace. King Manuel had promised him the status of landlord of the town but the Order of Santiago objected, causing serious conflicts which actually resulted in wounded people. The king solved the problem by expelling Gama from Sines and forcing him to halt all ongoing construction work.

Further ahead stands another important witness to this dispute: the Church of Nossa Senhora das Salas. Built by Vasco da Gama soon after returning from India in gratitude for the success of the expedition, this church replaced a small chapel founded by the

Greek princess D. Vataça Lascaris, to which the Gama family were very devoted. Its religious festival is held on August 15th and includes a maritime procession.



In front of the church are the warehouses where the fishermen kept old tackle and salt. Following along the Fort street, you will reach the old warehouses of Ribeira and traces of ancient Calheta. The ramps and retaining walls found here were designed by some of the best Portuguese military engineers. This group of buildings was protected by Revelim Fort. This small 17th-century fort offers a view of the industrial port built in the 1970s and of the sunsets disappearing over Sines Cape, the beginning of a beach that extends along the entire northern part of the Alentejo Coast, ending only at Troia Peninsula, with Arrábida in sight.

If, on the other hand, you prefer to venture through the old streets and alleys, be sure to visit the Centro de Artes de Sines, where you can see a contemporary art exhibition or watch a show. It is essential to consult the Agenda Cultural to be up to date with the diverse offer of this space and, during the visit, to be aware of the beauty of this building, which has been awarded several times.

