

## THE TOWN OF ELVAS

The town of Elvas developed in a prime strategic location and has been inhabited since pre-Roman times. Elvas became part of Portugal in 1228, during the reign of King Dom Sancho II.

Owing to the vicissitudes of history, Elvas has been situated in a frontier region since 12<sup>th</sup> century. Its military functions left an indelible mark on the town, which is today a veritable museum of fortifications dating from diverse ages. Raised to the category of "city" by King Manuel I, in 1513, Elvas was also a diocesan seat between 1570 and 1881. The town was the setting for many illustrious royal weddings that often sealed Iberian alliances, such as, for example, the nuptials of future Portuguese monarchs, such as Dom João IV, who married Luísa de Gusmão Medina-Sidónia, and Dom José I, who wed Maria Ana Victória, Princess of Spain.



The historic centre of the military town of Elvas is surrounded by imposing 17<sup>th</sup> century walls that have long defended Portugal from foreign invasions. These walls are a remarkable example of the Dutch tradition of military architecture and were designed by a Dutch Jesuit called Cosmander. Coupled with the Graça and Santa Luzia fortresses and numerous other bastions, the town's walls have ensured that Elvas, today, has the largest concentration of embattled fortifications in the world.



More information about Elvas available at:

<http://www.portugal-info.net/alentejo/elvas.htm>

<http://www.cm-elvas.pt/turismo/index.htm>

<http://www.rtsm.pt/>