

# Roman Ruins of Milreu

Route 3





# Roman Ruins of Milreu

(By car and by foot)

Depart from Faro using EN 2 towards Estoi.

The village of Estoi has an area of 46.55 km<sup>2</sup> and is located in the Barrocal, whose slopes are covered with almond and carob trees. The main economic activities developed in the region mainly relate to commerce, services and especially tourism related activities, hospitality and building sectors although agriculture still has some expression in the local economy. In Estoi, start by visiting the **Roman Ruins of Milreu (1)**, whose first excavations took place in 1877 by the archaeologist Estacio da Veiga. This area has one of the most important Roman settlements of the Algarve. Here you can see traces of an old "rustic village" as well as Roman mosaics and its own baths. Also noteworthy are the ancient ruins of a pagan temple converted into a Christian church, one of the oldest in the world. The ruins were classified as a National Monument in 1910.





# Estoi Main Church

Head towards the village centre where you can park near this Church and then start a walking tour through the narrow, winding streets of this traditional village. At Liberdade Square, atop the monumental staircase, visit **Estoi Main Church (2)**. The church was built in the 16th century and rebuilt over the next 2 centuries under the guidance of the Italian architect Francisco Xavier Fabri. Its facade is neoclassical and the interior consists of three naves. The altarpieces dates from the 19th century although the statues, namely the image of Saint Vincent, dates back from the 17th century. The baptistery bears neo-rocaille decoration in a similar style to that used in Estoi palace. The church treasures also include a 17th century monstrance in silver gilt belonging to the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. Laterally to the church, and located in General Humberto Delgado Square you'll find a monument to poet Emiliano da Costa, a former village doctor. The statue was inaugurated in 1985 during the centennial celebrations of his birth. Not to be missed is the sonnet "White Village" engraved in the statue and dedicated to Estoi.



# Ossónoba Square

In this square's neighborhood is also worth noting **Casa de Estoi** (Estoi House) (3) built in the first year of the 19th century by José Palermo de Faria Lopes, a link between past and present, and currently a local lodging. Walk down Church Street towards Ossónoba Square. This small square has several canopy trees and various attractions, such as Estoi Fountain, marking the birthplace of this village, and now framed by a new leisure fountain. The former **Processional Station** (4) possibly dating from the 19th century is a testimony of the Passion of the Christ traditional procession that also runs through this square. The same happens with Captain Freire's Solar, a Chã (Plain) style building, from the beginning of the 19th century, whose front door is preceded by a staircase, housing the Pharmacy, and where we highlight the carved stonework and cast iron facades. Continue your journey through Pé da Cruz Street towards the Chapel with the same name. On the nº 47th of this street you can be see a Manueline style Portal, a remnant of a 16th century house, being the chamfer visible on the Portal's door frame and lintel.





# Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz (Our Lady of the Foot of the Cross)

At the top of the street stands the **Chapel of Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz (5)** (Our Lady of the Foot of the Cross), a 17th century temple consisting of a chancel and a rectangular nave. Inside, patterned 17th century tiles and 18th century image of Our Lady inserted in rococo altarpiece. Associated with this chapel and deserving particular attention the traditional Pine-Cone Festival, an old muleteer's party held annually on 1st and 2nd May in honor of Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz. It's an equestrian pilgrimage that involves the parish's population attracting thousands visitors.





# Palace of Estoi

Go back down Pé da Cruz street and turn right at São José street (Saint Joseph) towards the **Palace of Estoi (6)**, which represents a unique rococo style in the Algarve and can be integrated in all the best examples of the 2nd half of the 18th century's civil architecture; it was bought in 1987 by the municipality of Faro. In 1977, it was classified by the government as Building of Public Interest.

Currently, the Palace is a Pousada from Enatur whose adaptation and expansion were a project by the architect Gonalo Byrne and the landscape architect Joo Cerejeiro, being the only Pousada in the Historic and Design segment in the Algarve region. When leaving the Palace turn left and go down the stairway of *Horta da Cega* (former garden), where the ornamental mass works on the Baroque Portal shouldn't be missed. Go up Presa Street and watch the walkway that connects both parts of Estoi Palace building, along with its ornamental statuary. Ahead lays the old public wash fountain and animal tap stand which were subjected to a recent intervention. Then go back to your right at Furriel Joo Canal Street and down Barroca Street, both through a winding but pleasant staircase. Halfway along this path stop at no 30 to read the poem in a wall panel that Jorge de Sena dedicated to a little Roman head found in the Roman Ruins of Estoi. End this journey, by entering Liberdade Square and watching the old communal tank, decorated with a panel featuring the poem "My Village" by Emiliano da Costa. Before you leave, or during the course of your visit, you'll find several terraces where you can have a drink or light meal enjoying this quiet and traditional village, typical of the Algarve Barrocal.





# Map





