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Fatima In Portugal Moves Mountains

By Ken Morris

Fatima, Portugal is one of the few places on earth that everyone, be they christians or not,

associates with the word miracle and deep faith. It was once a poor village in the Beira region where the economy was in a profound depression and there was just enough to get by on and life was a big struggle. But one day the appearance of the Virgen Mary or as others have called them the Marian Apparitions changed the life and fame and everyone referred to the Virgen as Our Lady of Fatima. It rapidly became a great sanctuary of pilgrimage, and today it is one of the most important ones in all of Europe. Messages from Fatima On May 13th 1917, at a time when one part of the world was in war with the other and when people needed spiritual guidance and something strong to believe in, the Virgen Mary made her appearance to three young children who were taking care of their sheep near their village called Aljustral. For the next five months, the Virgen Mary called upon these children in the same place called the Cova de Iria and on the same day. As it to be expected, who was going to believe Lucia who was 10, 9 year old Francisco Marto and his sister Jacinta who was 7. The messages that the Virgen had passed on to them seemed so unreal and far fetched, predictions that seemed so futuristic for these simple towns people. They probably expected religious advice and preaching, but the message that three children had to pass on was more of a political warning with a moral basis to it. The Virgen wanted to express the idea that if the Soviet Union converted to Catholicism and opened its borders to the free world, all of which could probably avoid more wars which always produced horrible endings. She also indicated a strong desire that the Berlin wall be knocked down so that the poeple of the world could unite and become one, all under Catholicism. She also warned that the highest representation of the Catholic church would be in danger. Everything she told the shepards seemed hard to understand but as we can see nowadays, everything has come true. For me the most shocking predictions that we have lived through is the terrorist attack on Pope John Paul II's life. But back then it was a test of faith which we can see today has been passed quite well by the people. Fatima's Colossal Square Soon after the appearances, many people gathered at the spot where the Virgen appeared and so a small chapel was built and a figure sculptured by Jose Ferreira Thedim of the Virgen. But in 1922 a bomb destroyed it and a new one was immediately built and in 1928 the Basilica del Rosario was finished. Ever since that glorious day, Fatima`s history has taken on new dimensions and meaning for the whole world. It has become a study place for those wanting to follow a religious life as there are about seventy religious buildings and more than ten religious schools.

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When you arrive in the immense plaza that surrounds the Basilica, other than contemplating the splendorous church, you will come across people who have decided to make their way to the Appearance Chapel on their knees. There is a special path starting at the entrance and leading up to the chapel, going around the back part, where people light candles and ending up at the main altar in the front. In front of the chapel there is a column that shows you exactly where the Virgin appeared. To the right of the oratory there is the Big Oak tree (having had to be replaced once) where the three shepard children would wait for the miracles. In the centre of the square is a statue to the Sacred Heart, in the exact same place where a stream of water came forth during the period of the miracles. And inside the Basilica lay the tombs of the three shepards who have graced Fatima with their courage and continuing faith. Room for all I imagine that right from the beginning, the people of Fatima opened their homes to all wishing to share the religious experience that was happening at that time. Since then, many hotels, youth hostels and camp grounds have been built to accomodate the heavy influx of tourism. All hotels or pensions have restaurants and the majority of them are located on the Rua Jacinta Marto or Rua Francisco Marto. One excellent place to eat where I have personally been is

the restaurant called Tia Alice. It is placed in an old wine cellar (therefore the decoration is as if you were in a nicely decorated cave) and the food is exquisite. Be sure to reserve well in advance. In the town Cova de Iria, about 2 kilometres away, there are more accomodations which can be easily reached by rented car. Spend a few days in Lisbon too as it is the centre and capital of Portugal and offers interesting sights to see.

Ken Morris writes many articles for the spezialised website

<http://www.lisbon-and-portugal.com>

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writer is featuring fatima portugal (

<http://www.lisbon-and-portugal.com/costa-prata/fatima-portugal.html>

) and various articles in the field.

Travelling Beyond The Algarve Reveals The Real Portugal

By Mr Hanna

The Algarve is atypical sun and sand holiday destination attracting tens of thousands of Europeans every summer. Although the region has much to offer both the package holiday maker, independent traveller and, of course, golfer, many visitors to Portugal fail to get beyond the trappings of the holiday resorts and sample the real Portugal.

Outside of the Algarve, Portugal has a long and illustrious history. An independent nation since 1143, Portugal is one of the oldest nations in Europe and it's location on the Atlantic coast of the Iberian

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Peninsula dictates a long history of sea faring and discovery. A vast monumental and cultural legacy has been left for modern visitors to enjoy. The tourist information site gives an interesting and informative overview of the cultural and historic attractions of the country as well as useful guides to the regions and cities of Portugal (

<http://www.portugal.org/tourism/index.html>

).

The capital city, Lisbon, is an ideal location for a short break and is rapidly gaining a reputation as such. A thriving and bustling mix of the old and new, Lisbon retains a respect for its historic past whilst offering the visitor the attractions and amenities that could be expected of a main European city. The city is dominated by the old port area - the departure point for explorers such as Magellan - and recent regeneration of the area is sympathetic and impressive. Lisbon comes to life at night as the locals descend on the pavement restaurants and bars creating a relaxed, sociable and informal atmosphere.

Further North and the impressive, World Heritage status city of Porto can be found. The city, of course, lends its' name to the world famous variety of wine but the city's baroque and Romanesque architecture leave a lasting and perhaps not as regrettable impression. Although the Algarve signs to mind when you mention beaches and Portugal, the coastal region of Minho, to the north of Porto have perhaps the most stunning beaches in the country. The area has some resorts, but these are quieter and smaller in scale to their southern counterparts and offer a quieter, perhaps more relaxed beach holiday than the Algarve.

Travelling to Portugal via, Lisbon, Porto or Faro is relatively easy from the UK with most operators offering direct flights from a range of UK airports. Internal flights are relatively inexpensive and the rail system is cheap and efficient. Portugal is a relatively small country and is negotiable by road for those looking to traverse wide areas. Car rental in Portugal is abundant - especially in Lisbon and Porto and most of the major car hire firms offer one way or return car hire in Portugal (

<http://www.easycar.com/car-hire/destination/Portugal.aspx/EN>

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The Algarve is an ideal family holiday destination and has many charms but Portugal as a country has much more to offer for those willing to explore a little further.

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