



VISIT GUIDE 2026

Clérigos Tower

Porto | From 10€

<https://torredosclerigos.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-line tickets & rates



History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

Nasoni's Baroque Genius

GOOGLE **4.6** ★★★★★ 22 718 reviews

TIQETS **4.4** ★★★★★ 635 reviews

The history of the **Clérigos Tower** begins in 1731, when the brotherhood of the “poor Clérigos” asked the Italian architect **Nicolau Nasoni** to design an exceptional religious complex. Nasoni, already renowned for his work on the Palace of Biscay, then conceived a bold project: two monumental bell towers flanking the church. However, financial and logistical constraints forced a revision of the plan, leaving only one tower to be built. Far from being a failure, this decision shaped the monument’s unique identity.

Construction took place from **1754 to 1763**, during which period Nasoni transposed the Italian Baroque style into the port city. Inspired by Tuscan campaniles, he created a slender structure that defied the local architectural norms of the time. The building reached a dizzying height of **76 meters**, instantly becoming the tallest building in Portugal. Its fine and elegant

silhouette strongly contrasts with the more massive surrounding constructions, permanently marking Porto’s urban landscape.

Over the centuries, the tower has evolved far beyond its initial religious function. It served as a **lighthouse for ships** entering the Douro River port, guiding sailors with its lights. This dual sacred and utilitarian vocation gives it a central place in the collective memory of the city. In 1910, it was classified as a national monument by IPPAR, recognizing its major heritage value and ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Today, the Clérigos Tower remains Porto’s essential architectural symbol. Visible from many points in the city, it dominates the UNESCO-listed historic center. Its status as the region’s ex-libris attracts thousands of visitors annually, who come to admire not only its Baroque structure but also the exceptional panoramic view it offers of the city, the river, and the wine cellars.

THE EXPERIENCE

As soon as you cross the threshold of the church, the atmosphere changes dramatically. Natural light filters through the stained glass windows, illuminating the **gilded stuccos** and polychrome marbles that adorn the walls. You immediately feel the weight of history and the grandeur of the Baroque style. The air is cool, contrasting with the outside heat, and invites silent contemplation before the physical effort of the ascent.

As you begin the climb to the top, each step carved into the stone seems to tell a story. The stairs are narrow and steep, requiring total concentration. But the effort is rewarded by successive views that gradually expand. On the top floor, the opening to the outside world evokes a sense of absolute freedom. You are suspended between heaven and earth, with Porto spread out at your feet, offering a unique perspective on urban life and the natural beauty of the Douro.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Historic center · Easy access from Liberty Square (Praça da Liberdade). Metro: Trindade (Line A, B, C) or São Bento (Line A), 10-15 min walk.

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary by season and events. The 'Clérigos By Night' package is seasonal; check specific dates on the official website before your visit.

FARES

The combined 'Tower + Museum + Church' package is often more cost-effective than individual tickets. Check availability online.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 1h30 to 2h for a complete visit including the church, museum, and climb. The physical effort of the 240 steps requires a contemplative pause.

PHOTOS

Photography allowed without flash in the church and museum. At the top, natural light changes quickly; prefer the morning or dusk for optimal shots.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for couples and active adults. Children should be assessed for the effort of the 240 steps. Not suitable for people with reduced mobility due to lack of a

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

**Metro**

: São Bento — 5 min à pied

São Bento station (7 min) · Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (36 min)

**Bus**

: Santo António Hospital — 6 min à pied

São Bento station (9 min) · Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (58 min)

**Car**

São Bento station (4 min) · Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (45 min)

**Bike**

São Bento station (4 min) · Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (60 min)

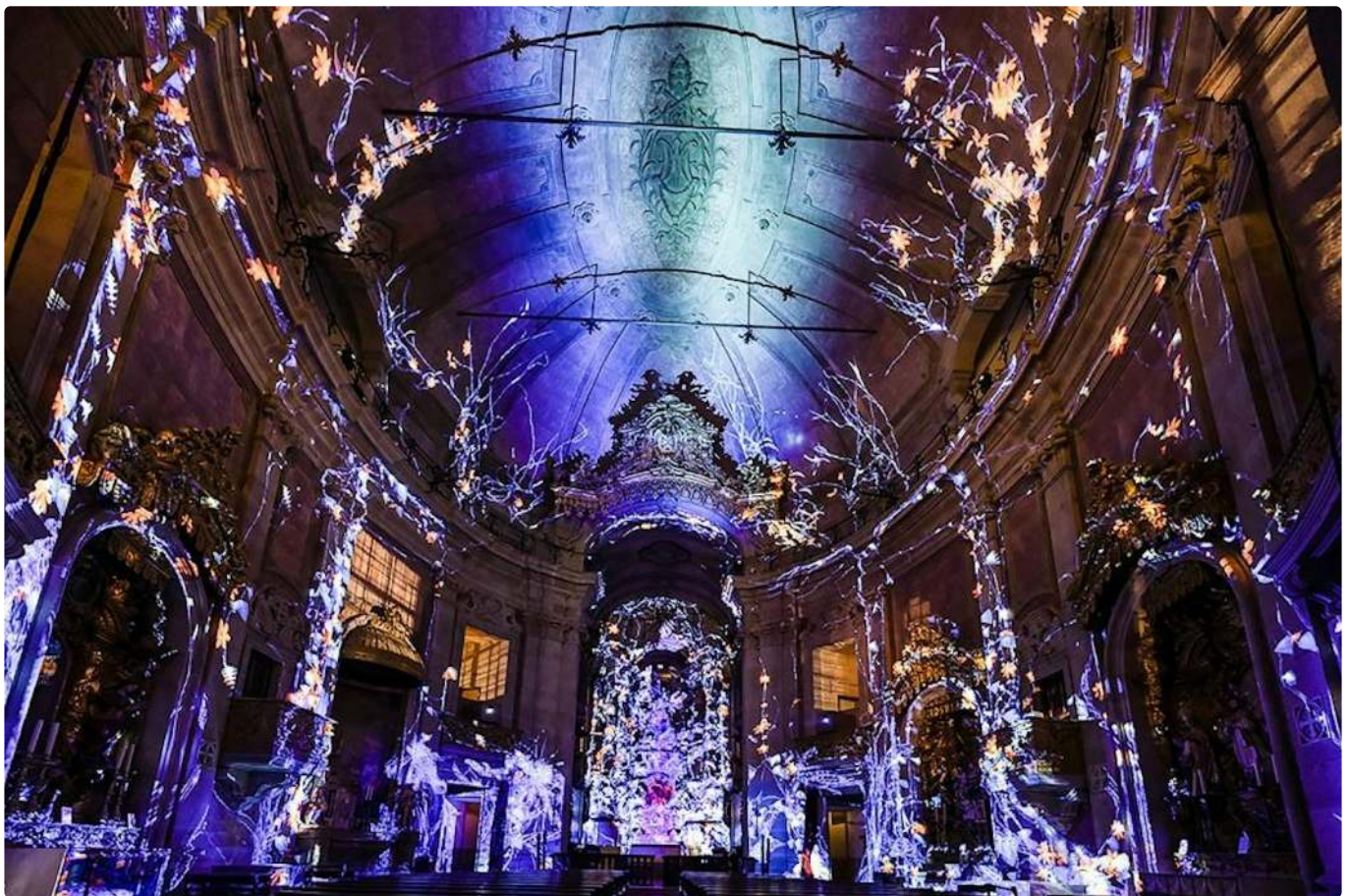
LOCALISATION

Où se trouve Clérigos Tower ?



 Torre dos Clérigos, Rua de São Filipe de Nery — 4050-546 Porto

 41°8.740' N, 8°36.876' O



ORGANIZATION

Understanding the Site Structure

Level 0 (Ground Floor) - Church and Museum

This level houses the baroque church and the museum dedicated to the Confraternity. The church impresses with its richly sculpted altars and wall frescoes. The museum displays historical documents, liturgical objects, and detailed information about Nicolau Nasoni. It is here that one understands the spiritual and social context of the construction.

Intermediate levels (Staircases)

The ascent is made via a narrow, steep spiral staircase. The bare walls highlight the tower's raw structure. Narrow windows punctuate the climb, offering intermittent glimpses of the city. The physical effort is real, but the steady pace allows for manageable fatigue.

Upper Level (Summit)

The summit offers a 360-degree panoramic view of Porto. It is accessed via a small open platform protected by a balustrade. From here, the cathedral, the Douro River, and the Port wine cellars are clearly visible. The natural light changes rapidly depending on the time of day, creating varied atmospheres.

ACCESSIBILITY



Disabled Access

Access to the top is on foot only (240 steps); the church and museum are accessible with assistance.



Families

A real physical effort for children; plan for comfortable shoes and breaks.



Audio guide

French, English, Portuguese, Spanish

Must-sees

SELECTION

Must-See Wonders

01

Top of the tower

Panoramic view over the Douro

From the summit, the view of the **Douro river** and the wine cellars is spectacular. One can observe the confluence of roof colors and the dynamics of river traffic. This unique perspective helps understand the strategic importance of the port in the city's economic history.

💡 Before electricity, this same view served as a luminous landmark for ships, guiding their entry into the port.

02

NICOLAU NASONI Clérigos Church

Baroque interior of the church

The interior of the church is a masterpiece of **Italian Baroque**. Gilded stuccos and polychrome marbles cover almost all surfaces. Each sculptural detail depicts a biblical or allegorical scene, testifying to the artistic richness of the era.

💡 Nasoni personally supervised the installation of many decorative elements, ensuring a stylistic coherence rare for the time.

03

Adjacent museum

Clérigos Museum

The museum provides crucial historical context on the **Clérigos Brotherhood**. It features original manuscripts, portraits of influential members, and architectural plans. These exhibits deeply enrich the understanding of the tower and its social role.

💡 Some of the documents on display show the internal debates within the brotherhood regarding the tower's final height.

04

NICOLAU NASONI Exterior of the tower

External granite structure

The **grey granite** façade contrasts with the white ornamental details. The massive base ensures the stability of the 76-meter building. The architecture is directly inspired by Tuscan bell towers, bringing a unique Mediterranean touch to Porto.

💡 The choice of local granite allowed for reduced transport costs while ensuring exceptional durability against Atlantic weather conditions.

05

Bell Chamber

Historical Bells

Just below the summit, the bell chamber houses several **bronze bells**. Their sound once resonated throughout the city to mark the hours and religious events. Today, they remain a central element of the site's sonic identity.

💡 The tower's carillon is sometimes used during major national ceremonies, reminding us of its symbolic importance.

06

Summit

Statue of the Virgin Mary

A statue of the **Virgin Mary** crowns the tower, visible from afar. It symbolizes divine protection over the city and its inhabitants. Its elevated position grants it maximum visibility, making it a major visual focal point.

💡 The statue has been restored several times over the centuries to preserve its integrity against weather conditions.

07

Staircases

Intermediate observation windows

Throughout the ascent, small **narrow windows** offer glimpses of the city. They provide unique viewpoints of adjacent streets and neighboring rooftops. These visual interruptions pace the climb and prepare the visitor for the final revelation.

💡 These windows were originally designed for the natural ventilation of the tower, improving the comfort of the keepers.

08

Main Entrance

Access and Vestibule

Access is from Liberty Square, a central landmark. The entrance vestibule is understated yet elegant, preparing the visitor for the church's sacred atmosphere. This is where tickets and audio guides are obtained.

💡 The square in front of the church is often used for cultural events, adding a lively dimension to the site.

TIPS

Optimizing Your Visit to Porto

TIMING

Arrive early in the morning or late in the day to avoid crowds and enjoy soft light ideal for photography.

TICKET

Buy the combined 'Tour + Museum + Church' package online to save money and avoid separate queues.

ROUTE

Start with the museum and the church to soak in the history before the physical effort of the climb.

PHOTO

Use Place de la Liberté as a landmark to frame the tower with the city in the background.

BREAK

Take a coffee break at Mercado do Bolhão after the visit to recover from the physical effort.

CHILDREN

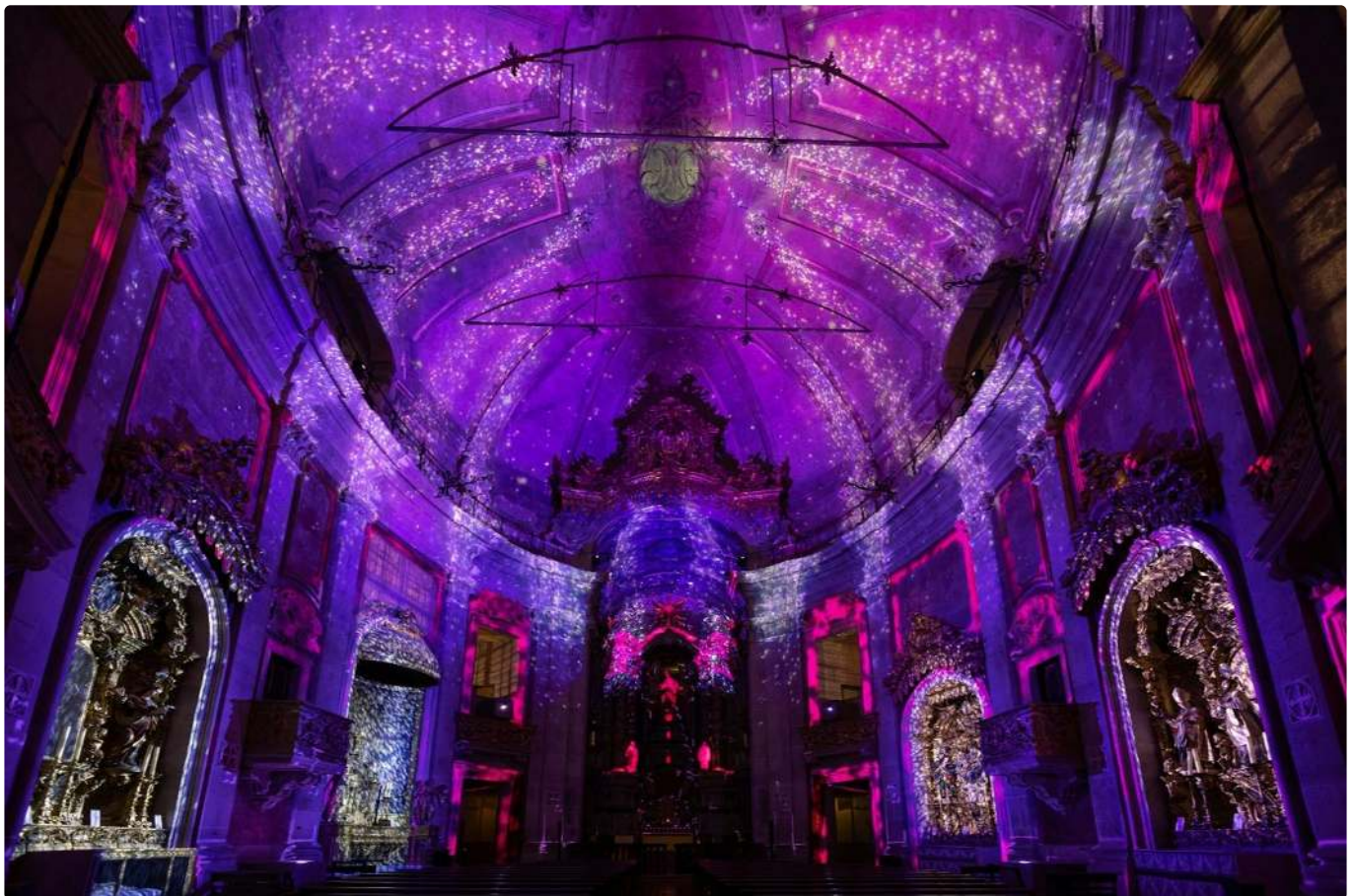
Carefully assess the children's ability to climb the 240 steps; plan for frequent breaks if necessary.

AUDIOGUIDE

The audioguide is available in French and is worth the cost to understand the historical context of Nasoni.

COMFORT

Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and avoid heels to make climbing the narrow stairs easier.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do I need to book the Clérigos Tower visit in advance?

Yes, online booking is highly recommended, especially for the combined package and 'Clérigos By Night' slots. In high season, spots go fast. Buying ahead guarantees your access and avoids queues at the ticket counter.

Does the ticket include access to the church and museum?

It depends on the package chosen. The 'Tower only' ticket does not always include the other spaces. The combined 'Tower + Museum + Church' package is the most cost-effective and comprehensive way to discover the entire b

Is there a current promotion?

Offers may exist for the combined package or groups. Regularly check the official ticketing page. Prices vary by period, so checking before purchase can sometimes save you money compared to the standard rate.

Can I buy tickets on site?

Yes, but there is often a queue. To avoid stress and guarantee your slot, especially during the 'Clérigos By Night' operation, online pre-booking remains the most reliable and quick solution.

How long does the climb to the top take?

Climbing the 240 steps takes about 10 to 15 minutes depending on your pace. It is a real physical effort. Allow time afterwards to enjoy the view and explore the museum before heading back down to Liberty Square.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The sailors' lighthouse

Before the electric era, the tower served as a **natural lighthouse** for ships. Its lights guided boats returning to the port of Porto, a utilitarian function that influenced its initial design to ensure maximum visibility.

The Unfinished Ambition

Nicolau Nasoni had planned two monumental bell towers, but only built one. This final decision transformed the site into a **unique symbol**, rather than a classic symmetrical ensemble.

Tuscan inspiration

The tower's Baroque style is directly inspired by **Tuscan bell towers**. Nasoni transposed these Italian elements to Porto, bringing a distinctive Mediterranean touch to the Portuguese urban landscape.

National Monument

Classified as a national monument in **1910** by IPPAR, the tower benefits from strict protection. This status guarantees the preservation of its architectural integrity against modern modifications and weathering.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

After the physical effort of the climb, the surrounding neighborhood offers numerous options for dining and extending the cultural experience. Just a few minutes' walk away, the **Mercado do Bolhão** awaits with its vibrant stalls where you can savor fresh local products. For a more peaceful break, the **Jardins do Palácio de Cristal** provide a soothing green space ideal for resting your legs. If you wish to deepen your interest in art, the **Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis** is also nearby, offering collections of decorative arts that complement those of the Clérigos. The neighboring Cedofeita district is renowned for its traditional Portuguese restaurants and lively nightlife, making it perfect for ending the day in style.



Visiting the Clérigos Tower is far more than a simple tourist excursion; it is an immersion into the soul of Porto. Whether for the baroque splendor of its interior or the **breathtaking view** from the top, this experience leaves an indelible mark on your heart. Leave with images etched in your memory and a sincere desire to return and explore the still-hidden secrets of this millennial city.