

Trafaria (Almada): An Overview.

Trafaria is a former parish in the municipality of Almada, nestled on the left bank of the river Tagus precisely at the point in which river merges with the Atlantic Ocean. By convention, the confluence corresponds to a fortified lighthouse situated on a tiny island. The **Farol do Bugio**, as it is popularly called, which was initially built to defend the area against the frequent raids of the pirates, has been part of the national heritage of Portugal since 1957. Other historical monuments include the **Forte de Nossa Senhora da Saúde da Trafaria**.

Although Trafaria could be technically considered as part of the metropolitan area of Lisbon, due to its proximity to the capital city, the atmosphere could not be more different. It resembles much to a fishermen's village and a considerable part of its current population is still occupied in fishing. It is not a surprise that the most typical dish of its renown gastronomy is a soup made with fish and seafood, in Portuguese: "**Caldeirada de Marisco**". Further typical products of the economy of Trafaria are its hand-crafted wood items, as well as ceramics, glass and seashells.

Today, the skyline of Trafaria is marked by some impressive silos used by the ships entering the river Tagus to deposit their loads. These gigantic concrete-made cylinders dominate the shore and the beach where fishermen are busy in their daily activities. Looking the other way, the nicest view on Lisbon, situated on the other side of the river, fills the picture.

A few tips for excursions:

- The river Tagus offers good opportunities for boat-tours, but other excursions in the immediate surroundings of Trafaria can be equally interesting. One could possibly go for a rural walk in the countryside between Trafaria and the peri-urban area of Caparica, where the faculty of sciences and technology of the Universidade Nova da Lisboa is located. And from there again towards the river banks, until **Porto Brandão**, a picturesque village situated not far, precisely in front of the tower of Belém, one of the most emblematic Lisbon monuments, just on the other side.

- If one decided instead to move westwards from Trafaria, they would first come across a peculiar locality known as **2º Torrão**, a dense informal settlement mostly inhabited by fishermen and immigrants from former Portuguese colonies and their descendants. Most of the inhabitants, whose houses are not even provided with basic services and facilities and strive to have better living conditions, are in favour of a huge project on stockage of containers, which still represents a big question mark in the future of Trafaria. An opposed faction would prefer to protect the coastline and insist on the development of the tourism industry.
- Beyond the 2º Torrão, the way continues along the bicycle lane towards the Ocean. Small paths leads the the charming scenery of the beaches of **São João da Caparica**. The whole itinerary from Trafaria takes around 35 minutes walking but, in case one does not have much time, an alternative solution is possible: the bus TST 171 or 129 start from Trafaria's river station.

