



Find Your Portuguese Ancestors Online Through Department Websites

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FamilySearch

Learn how to access the different department websites, either individually or through the portal Tombo.pt.

HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE RECORD KEEPING

Early - 1832 Churches were solely responsible for recording vital information (births, marriages, deaths). Records were stored by the parish or the dioceses.

1832 Non-Catholics were required to register vital information at the civil registrar. Records were kept by the registrar for a period of time, then moved to district archives.

1878 Non-Catholic registration was actually enforced.

1911 All Portuguese residents were required to register vital events with the civil registrar. Catholic church records were moved to district and national archives.

DISTRICT AND REGIONAL ARCHIVES

Portugal is comprised of 18 districts and two autonomous regions, the archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores. The district archive of Lisbon is part of the national archive. Each of these districts or regions has an archive that holds their civil registration records.

The district/regional archives of Portugal are in process of digitizing their collections. The digital collections are found on their website. To locate the website of a specific district/regional archive, search "Arquivo [district name]" in your favorite search engine. Once the archive website has opened, use either the simple or advanced search to locate the desired records.

The districts of Beja, Bragança, Castelo Branco, Faro, Guarda, Santarem, and Vila Real have records at both their district archives and the national archive in Lisbon. You may need to search the databases of both archives to locate a record. Alternatively, you can use the website Tombo.pt to locate all available records.

TOMBO.PT

Tombo.pt is a gateway to the online records of the national, district, and regional archives of Portugal. You can locate information either by browsing or searching for a specific location.

Jurisdictions on Tombo.pt. To successfully locate a place on Tombo.pt, you must be familiar with the searchable jurisdictions and their corresponding records available on Tombo.pt. They are as follows:

Districts/Regions (distritos) You will find passports and identity cards at the district level.

Municipalities (concelhos) You will find civil registration at the municipal level.

Civil Parishes (freguesias) You will find church records at the civil parish level.

Browse by Location. You can use the sidebar, located on the left half of the screen to browse to a specific location. Do the following:

- Select the district where your ancestor lived.
- Select the municipality where your ancestor lived.
- Select the civil parish where your ancestor lived.
- Select the birth, marriage, or death book.

Browse the digital images on the archive's website.

Search by Location. You can use the search bar, located on the top of the sidebar on the left half of the screen to search to a specific location. Do the following:

- Search for the specific parish, municipality, or district where your ancestor lived.
- Select the correct option from the results.
- Select the birth, marriage, or death book.

Browse the digital images on the archive's website.

MADEIRA INDEXES

The Madeira Regional Archive has created indexes for the following records:

- Marriage: 1539-1962.
- Baptisms: 1860-1911.
- Passports: 1860-1975.

You can find links to the indexes at Tombo.pt under the region of Madeira, or on the Madeira State Archives index by clicking Access the Documents, then Archives. A page will open displaying the marriage, baptism, and passport indexes, <https://abm.madeira.gov.pt/en/resources/archives/>.