

Alcoutim

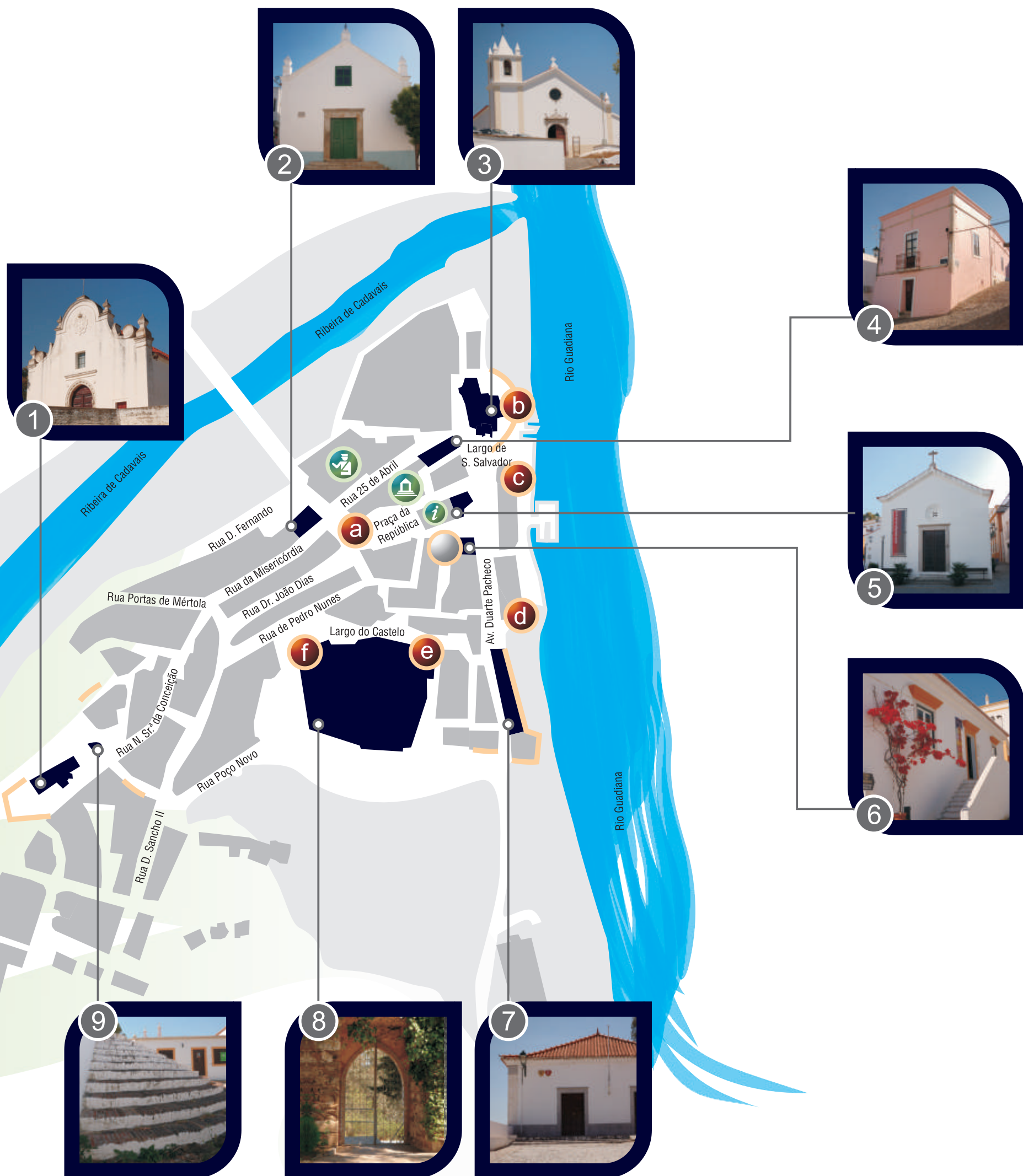
Borderland

"Alcoutim, Borderland" is the exhibition with which the Municipality of *Alcoutim* participates in the region-wide "exhibition": *Algarve - From Kingdom to Region*. It is a pioneer and joint initiative with the Algarve's Museum Network, composed of 13 exhibitions followed by publications on different subjects about the Algarve, which for the first time addresses the last one thousand years of the Algarve's history and culture, found in the material and spiritual heritage that since *Gharb al-Andalus* till today, has shaped and characterized the identity marks of this territory.

The historical nucleus of the town of *Alcoutim* becomes the "exhibition hall", its background being the surrounding landscape, with the river *Guadiana*, the town walled up to form an amphitheatre and the neighbouring *Sanluar de Guadiana*, and also the most emblematic and representative buildings of the urban heritage: the "objects" which provide us with the information.

Alcoutim invites you to stroll along the historical nucleus of the town and discover its history, culture, its nooks, alleys, and most authentic, beautiful and characteristic buildings, on a route upon which the history and the landscape are the guiding lines.

Enjoy unique moments ...



A pleasant route through the historical nucleus of the town of *Alcoutim* unravels the urban growth of this settlement, linked to the consolidation of the Kingdom's borders and the control of river trade, the importance of the river, and also its relations with *Sanluar de Guadiana*.

Legend:

Seventeenth Century Walls

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2 Church of Mercy

3 Matrix Church of Saint Saviour

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b Relations with *Sanluar de Guadiana*

c The River *Guadiana*

d Contraband

e The Defence of the Border

f The Town's Urbanism

Multimedia kiosk

Police

Town Hall

Tourist office

Useful Information:

At the multimedia kiosk the contents of the exhibition are available in five languages – portuguese, english, french, german and spanish – as well as all the tourist and cultural information regarding the town and its territory. You may download the sound recordings onto your iPod, MP3 player, MP4 player or mobile phone through the multimedia kiosk or the Municipality's Website, or borrow an MP4 player at the Castle's front desk, to guide you during your visit.



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Seventeenth Century Walls

Initiated in 1660 under Sergeant-Major *Manuel de Sousa de Castro* and the military engineer *Pedro de Santa Colomba*, *Alcoutim* was fully surrounded by walls, becoming a genuine Garrison. The walls were pierced by the following gates: Gate of *Tavira*, Gate of *Mértola* and Gate of the River.



Matrix Church of Saint Saviour

The early matrix church was built in the mid-fourteenth century and had one single aisle. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the church's rebuilding was sponsored by the Counts of *Alcoutim* and acquired three aisles, four bays, and curved abacus capitals. The main portal, the columns, the bases and the capitals came from *Tavira* and are believed to have been made at the workshop of master-mason *André Pilarte*. This temple is one of the prime examples of Early Renaissance in the Algarve.



Hermitage of Our Lady of Conception

The date of foundation is unknown. The records mention it is very ancient and named it Church of Saint Mary. It is a single aisle temple, the dome ending in a blind skylight covering the section that corresponds to the apse. During the second decade of the sixteenth century, the Counts of *Alcoutim* sponsored a few renovation works. The maneline portal is what remains from those works. At the end of the seventeenth century, beginning of the eighteenth century, the exterior space of the church was reformulated by military engineers with a view to connecting the temple to the town. In the high altar, notice the beautiful baroque altarpiece dating from the second half of the seventeenth century, composed of twisted columns surrounding the statue of Our Lady of Conception, and also the hispanic-arabic tiles that cover the frontispiece of the altar table.



Church of Mercy

Temple built in the sixteenth century. It once held an apse and an altar with stucco marble, dating from the reign of *Dom João VI*. Inside there is a tombstone with the following inscription: –“ TOMB OF MARTIM VILÃO AND HIS WIFE (AND) HEIRS – YEAR OF 1513 – THE FIRST ONE BURIED IN THIS HOUSE. OUR FATHER – HAIL MARY”. There is a tablet close to the main door indicating the level reached by the Guadiana's waters during the great flood of 1876.



Rampart House

The ramparted walls suggest the possibility that this was the old Armed Guards of *Alcoutim*, possibly renovated by military engineers by the late seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century, in order to adapt to new military functions. It is recorded in the drawings of the military engineer *José de Sande Vasconcelos*, from the late eighteenth century.



Chapel of Saint Anthony

The date of construction is unknown but the proximity of this temple to the Residence of the Counts, as well as the fact that the title of Count was granted on the Name Day of Saint Anthony, June 13th, suggest the possibility that this chapel was built at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century, by the Counts of *Alcoutim* as a private temple. The patron saint, Saint Anthony, suggests that this edification is associated to fishing in the *Guadiana*. The interior holds an altar in masonry and a niche tiled in red adobe with the statue of Saint Anthony. Notice the tiled barrel vaulting and the highly accomplished lintel over the portal. In 2008, it welcomed the renovated Museological Exhibition of Sacred Art.



Residence of the Counts

Medieval building that underwent some architectural transformations by military engineers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Residence of the Counts has a simple architecture: the singularity of this building is due to the double access stairs that interrupt the public path. Inside there is a small yard where an attractive well can be found. Former Residence of the Counts of Alcoutim that was renovated in 1997/98 by the Town Hall so as to house the Municipal Library, and the temporary exhibition hall.



Old Customs House

This building already stood in mid-sixteenth century, and must have undergone some architectural transformations and renovations by military engineers. It possesses a rigorous, simple and functional architecture, with a lateral facade facing the river and a main facade to the north. It is found on three drawings of *Alcoutim's* Square made by *José de Sande Vasconcelos* in the late eighteenth century. On one of these records the building is designated as “*Houses of the Judge of Customs*”. In the twentieth century, it was the Customs-Officers Station. It was unoccupied until recently rehabilitated in order to house the Tax Revenue Office of *Alcoutim*.



Castle

The construction of *Alcoutim's* Castle began during the rule of *Dom Dinis*, in the fourteenth century, in order to defend the border and control the trade on the river *Guadiana*. In the sixteenth century, the pointed arch gate on the side facing the river was erected and several edifications adjoining the North Wall were built. In the second half of the seventeenth century and eighteenth century, military engineers built a platform on this castle to hold a gun battery of seven canons aimed at the town of *Sanlucar de Guadiana*. In 1992/1993, the Municipality of *Alcoutim* developed a project to rehabilitate the Castle, which resulted in the find of a few archaeological remains. These remains were researched and duly regarded with the creation of the Museological Exhibition on Archaeology in 2000. In 2005, the gunpowder magazine held the exhibition *Timeless Games – Exhibition of Trays and Game Pieces from the Old Castle of Alcoutim*.



Baroque Staircase

Stairs built by military engineers during the second half of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century, with a view to connecting the church to the town. Circular staircase from the Baroque Age, composed of landing and two subsequent and opposed flights of stairs.

