

PORTUGUESE PAINTED TILES

AZULEJOS (FROM THE ARABIC AZZELIJ OR AL-ZULAYJ, MEANING “LITTLE POLISHED STONE”), ARE KNOWN BEST AS THE BLUE AND WHITE PAINTED TILES THAT ADORN PORTUGUESE BUILDINGS AND STREETS, BUT THEY HAVE A LONG HISTORY. THEY WERE BROUGHT FROM NORTHERN AFRICA TO EUROPE IN THE 13TH CENTURY, CRAFTED FOR CENTURIES IN SPAIN, EMBRACED BY PORTUGAL IN THE 16TH CENTURY, AND INFLUENCED BY DUTCH TILES AND CHINESE PORCELAIN.



GRANDE PANORAMA DE LISBOA, C. 1700 NATIONAL AZULEJO MUSEUM

AZULEJOS CAN BE REPEATED GEOMETRIC PATTERNS, OR THEY CAN BE PAINTED AS LARGE, COMPLEX, MURAL-LIKE MOSAICS. IN PORTUGAL, AZULEJOS ARE DEEPLY TIED TO THE ARCHITECTURE THEY ADORN AND PORTUGUESE CULTURAL HISTORY, OFTEN TELLING STORIES THROUGH THEIR DESIGNS.



*DETAILS OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS FOUND AROUND PORTO AND LUZIA PORTUGAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS: WWW.SMITHSONIANMAG.COM/TRAVEL/TO-GET-TO-KNOW-PORTUGAL-EXPLORE-ITS-AZULEJO-TILEWORK-180980999/