

LEISURE AND PLEASURE IN IBERIAN COURT RESIDENCES

15th–18th centuries

1 | 5 sep '25



Parques de Sintra

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Apart from main residences, European royal courts maintained a network of satellite estates designed for leisure and pleasure, serving as pivotal sites for monarchs and their entourages. These historic locations, now iconic tourist destinations, have garnered scholarly interest for their roles in Early Modern diplomacy, social networking, and displays of princely magnificence. Recent research has further explored the organisational aspects of courtly sojourns, the activities undertaken, the social dynamics cultivated, and the sensory experiences of those involved.

The 2025 Sintra Summer School brings together experts who have explored the history of leisure and pleasure within Iberian courts, intersecting their knowledge with the exceptional historic sites where monarchs and their entourages engaged in hunting, banqueting, dancing, and enjoying music, theatre, opera, and stunning gardens. Key sessions will delve into festivities and feasts, music, theatre, dance, equestrian art, falconry, and more. This immersive program, which even includes a workshop to learn court dances, offers participants a unique opportunity to examine and discuss the cultural and spatial dimensions of pleasure and leisure within the palatial settings of Spain and Portugal.

To emphasize the importance of spatial context, these discussions will take place in the National Palaces of Sintra, including the medieval-to-early-modern National Palace of Sintra, the rococo National Palace of Queluz, and the romantic National Palace of Pena. Additionally, participants will enjoy exclusive opportunities to witness equestrian art and falconry with visits to the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art and the Royal Falconry in Salvaterra de Magos.

Join us for this exceptional summer school to explore the vibrant intersections of leisure, pleasure, and courtly life in Iberian history.

AUDIENCE

This course is intended for:

- undergraduate and graduate students and doctoral students of history, art history, museology, heritage;
- heritage and museum professionals;
- general public with a specific interest in the topic.



PROGRAMME

1 september | National Palace of Sintra

10:00 Reception and registration (main entrance)

10:30 Welcoming remarks

ANTÓNIO NUNES PEREIRA (Parques de Sintra)

BRUNO A MARTINHO (Parques de Sintra; CHAM / NOVA FCSH-UAç)

11:00 Session 1: Leisure, Pleasure and Festivities

BERNARDO GARCÍA GARCÍA (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Sharing leisure and celebrations from a distance. Experiences and emotions narrated in the family letters of the Habsburgs

JOHAN VERBERCKMOES (KU Leuven)

'Screams of laughter': entertainment and good humour in the court

12:30 Lunch (not included)

14:30 Visit to the National Palace of Sintra

18:00 Cocktails

19:30 End of Day 1



2 september | National Palace of Sintra

09:15 Reception (main entrance)

09:30 Session 2: Music

TESS KNIGHTON (ICREA)

Singing songs at the court of the catholic monarchs: spaces, performers, listeners

CRISTINA FERNANDES (INET-md / NOVA FCSH)

Between ceremonial duties and the pleasures of entertainment: musical practices in the royal palaces of Queluz and Salvaterra in the second half of the 18th century

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 Session 3: Theatre and Performance

JOSÉ CAMÕES (CET/FLUL – Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa)

Theatrical entertainment at the Portuguese Court in early 16th-century

JUDITH FARRÉ VIDAL (CSIC – Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas)

Courtly leisure, theatre and women's pastimes in 17th century México

FLORENCE D'ARTOIS (Sorbonne Université – Paris IV)

Embodied politics: dance and festive practices at the courts of the Hispanic Monarchy

13.30 Lunch (not included)

15:00 Workshop: Dance

DIANA CAMPÓO SCHELOTTO (Centro Superior de Música del País Vasco - MUSIKENE)

Introduction to Historical Dance: practice and theory of court dance in early Modern Europe

18:00 End of Day 2





3 september | Portuguese School of Equestrian Art (Queluz/Belém) and Royal Falconry (Salvaterra de Magos)

- 08:30** Meeting at bus stop at Volta do Duche, Sintra
- 08:45** Bus departure to Queluz
- 09:30** Visit to the Equestrian Art Library in the National Palace of Queluz
- 10:20** Bus departure to Belém
- 10:45** Coffee break
- 11:00** Visit to the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art in Belém
- 12:00** Equestrian Art Show
- 12:45** Lunch
- 14:00** Bus departure to Salvaterra de Magos
- 15:30** Session 4: Hunting
TIAGO VIÚLA DE FARIA (IEM / NOVA FCSH)
High-Flying Pursuits. Hunting in the Medieval and Early Modern Iberian Courts
- 16:00** Visit to Falcoaria Real in Salvaterra de Magos
- 18:00** Bus departure to Sintra
- 19:15** End of Day 3



4 september | National Palace and Gardens of Queluz

08:30 Meeting at bus stop at Volta do Duche, Sintra

08:45 Bus departure to Queluz

09:30 Session 5: Reading, Writing and Embroidery

AURELIO VARGAS DÍAZ-TOLEDO (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

The Court's perspective on Portuguese Chivalric Matters

NIEVES BARANDA LETURIO (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia)

Lady's writing at Court: form follows function

ANA MARÍA ÁGRED A PINO (Universidad de Zaragoza)

“Toda nobleza de oro y seda”. El bordado femenino en los espacios cortesanos de la Edad Moderna | “All the nobility of gold and silk”: Female embroidery in courtly spaces of the Early Modern period (in Spanish, with written translation in English)

11:30 Coffee break

12:00 Session 6: Gardens

VIRGINIA ALBARRÁN MARTÍN (Patrimonio Nacional)

The role of Nature in the life of Philip V: the royal site of La Granja de San Ildefonso and the drawings made by the king.

SÓNIA TALHÉ AZAMBUJA (CEABN-InBIO/ISA/ULisboa; FCT/UAlg)

Royal Leisure: Entertainment and Sociability in the Gardens of Quinta de Queluz (18th–19th Centuries)

13:30 Lunch (not included)

15:30 Visit to the National Palace and Gardens of Queluz

18:00 Bus departure to Sintra

18:40 End of Day 4



5 september | National Palace of Pena

- 09:00** Meeting at bus stop at Volta do Duche, Sintra
- 09:15** Bus departure to the Park of Pena (Stables)
- 10:00** Closing Session: Collecting the Natural World
FLORIKE EGMOND (Universiteit Leiden)
The luxury of plants at the Habsburg courts of the 16th century
- 11:00** Visit to the Park of Pena
ELSA ISIDRO (Parques de Sintra)
- 12:30** Aperitif
- 13.00** Wrap-up Session
BERNARDO GARCÍA GARCÍA (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
BRUNO A MARTINHO (Parques de Sintra; CHAM / NOVA FCSH-UAç)
- 13:45** Lunch (not included)
- 15:00** Free visit to the National Palace of Pena
- 17:30** Bus departure do Volta do Duche, Sintra
- 18:00** End of Day 5

DATES

1 to 5 September 2025

PARTICIPATION COSTS

- Registration fee – students
100 €
- Registration fee - general public
200 €
- Accommodation (6 nights at the youth hostel)
180 €

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

- Youth hostel accommodation
Pousada de Jovens - Sintra
- 6 nights in a four-bed mixed dorm

MEALS

- Meals included in the registration fee: 1 cocktail, 3 coffee breaks, 1 aperitif, 1 lunch.
- The remaining meals are at the expense of the participant.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS

30 (thirty)

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

28 April 2025

Announcement of the selected participants during the month of May

CREDITS

There are no credits, but a certificate is issued.

ORGANISATION

Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, SA
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Fundación Carlos de Amberes
CHAM – Centro de Humanidades, FCSH/Nova, UAç
Falcoaria Real | Câmara Municipal de Salvaterra de Magos
Institut Universitaire de France

ASSOCIATED RESEARCH PROJECTS

CPH -Corpus ProceSSIONalium Hispanarum (Agencia Estatal de Investigación – Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, PID2023-146551NB-I00) – Universidad Complutense de Madrid

BIESES - Bibliografía de escritoras españolas (Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades, PID2022-140064NB-I00, BIESES 7) – Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia

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