Christmas celebrations bring cheer to the parks and monuments of Sintra in December

- Concert for babies “Christmas Morning” in the Palace of Monserrate
- “Crininhas: the horse who wanted to be a reindeer” in the Henrique Calado Riding Ring
- “Once Upon a Time in the Farmyard... at Christmas!” in the Farmyard of Monserrate
- “Dances with History: King João I – The Voyage to Ceuta” in the National Palace of Sintra
- Centre of Nature Interpretation in the Park of Monserrate
- “Apollo and the Divinities of Light” in the Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz

Sintra, 18 November 2019 – The final month of the year brings the full arrival of winter and the good cheer of Christmas which for many is also synonymous with holidays and family activities. In the parks and monuments of Sintra, the December programming reflects all the spirit of this festive season and puts forward proposals designed to provide children and adults with experiences packed with entertainment and learning.

On the 12, 13 and 14 December, at 11am, in the Henrique Calado Riding Ring, in Belém, Lisbon, the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art performs “Crininhas: the horse who wanted to be a reindeer”, which aims to introduce younger persons into the universe of Portuguese Equestrian Haute Ecole within a Christmas context. Accompanying the story of the young Lusitano horse Crininhas, who dreams of transforming into a reindeer but who then changes his mind when his father explains what it is to be a horse in the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art. This helps the audience to get to know this art better along with the exercises the horses and their riders would perform back in the time of kings and queens. At the same time, this evokes the magic of Christmas and conveys the values of friendship and family. The program begins with a visit to the stables in the Nora Patio followed by the performance in the Henrique Calado Riding Ring.
In the **Farmyard of Monserrate**, there is all the bustle of Christmas festival preparations with the program “**Once Upon a Time in the Farmyard… at Christmas!**”, taking place on Saturday, **14 December**, at **10.30am**. The cheerful brothers Túlio and Tibério are tasked with preparing the festival when they encounter something they were not expecting: the Christmas tree star has disappeared and needs to be found. In order to unravel this mystery, they count on the help of your participation as they need to follow clues, paint, sing and live out a great adventure inspired on the stories, the sounds, colours and flavours of the festive season.

Also taking place on **14 December** but at **11am**, in the **National Palace of Sintra**, there is the activity “**Dances with History: King João I – The Voyage to Ceuta**”, which makes recourse to the sounds, the dances and the costumes of the period to embark on a voyage back to the early years of the 15th century. In this presentation, the Danças com História Association revives the times of King João I who here planned part of the expedition that would lead to the conquest of Ceuta in 1415, which marked the beginning of the period of Portuguese overseas expansion. This especially recalls the moment, told of by the chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara, in which the layout of the location was reproduced through means of broad beans and pieces of string. This experience is completed by a guided tour of the Palace.

On the following day, **15 December**, at **10.30am** and at **11.45am**, the sounds of Christmas are to animate the **Palace of Monserrate**, with the **concert for babies “Christmas Morning”**. This is an interactive musical performance that stimulates the melodic and rhythmic senses of participants and fosters learning-musical interactions between parents and their children. This voyage through classical music invokes the most magical night of the year to the sound of tunes such as “Silent Night” by Joseph Mohr/Franz Xaver Gruber while exploring their pitches, tones and rhythms.

Another proposal for children and their families is the recently inaugurated **Monserrate Centre of Nature Interpretation**. On **7, 14 and 21 December**, at **3pm**, there are pedagogic visits that reveal the most important natural values of the Sintra Hills, stimulating contact with nature and environmental awareness. Through an appealing and
innovative approach, through recourse to digital tools and didactic materials, this leads participants along a journey through the main episodes that defined the geologic, cultural and natural history of the Sintra Hills before embarking on discovery of the fauna and flora of the unique ecosystems of this region.

On the eve of the winter solstice, Saturday 21 December, at 3pm, in the Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz, there is the “Apollo and the Divinities of Light”, which celebrates the dawn of each day. Touring the Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz and its rich collection of statues, visitors come to learn about the feats of Apollo (Febo to the Romans), the god of youth, light and truth. Recognised above all as a solar divinity, Apollo was described as the god of divine distance who threatened or protected the altar of the gods. Thus, this brings to a close the cycle of four visits themed on classical mythology and the myths that are at the origin of the seasons of the years.

### PROGRAMMING

**There's a Donkey Here!**
Every Saturday in December, 10am, 12pm and 3pm, D. Fernando II Hunting Grounds (next to the Convent of the Capuchos)
Patients, affable and very calm, donkeys make great companions for both the kids and the grown-ups engaging in this extraordinary adventure. Having made the introductions, it’s time to tell the history of the many long centuries and learnings of these gentle animals, which neither kick out nor bite (whenever dealt with the respect they deserve), are not nervous (when scared, they stop rather than fleeing like their horse “cousins”), are rather greedy (casting desiring glances towards the hay bales that serve as seating), are strong and yes, are even smart! A walk then follows in the company of these new friends: the children riding and the parents guiding the animals so that everybody may enjoy a pleasant walk through the forest.
- **Suitable for:** families with children aged between 3 and 12
- **Duration:** 90 mins
- **Ticket:** €10/participant
- **Requires** pre-booking (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm):
  info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

**Feel the Heritage**
Saturday, 7 December, 10am, Park of Monserrate
Among the romantic ruins and waterfalls, participants discover the Gardens of Monserrate through the sense of feeling, hearing and smelling. This provides the chance to touch the waterfall in motion, understand the variations in temperature and learn about some botanical species while feeling the exotic textures and smells. In the vicinity of the Palace of Monserrate, this provides the chance to explore all the materials that make up its facades.
- **Suitable for:** targeted at blind or visually impaired visitors
- **Duration:** 90 mins
Voyage to the Court of the 18th Century  
Saturday, 7 December, 3pm, National Palace of Queluz  
Step by step, participants are invited to discover every nook and cranny of the National Palace of Queluz and listen to its histories told by persons from another epoch. You get to hear 18th century song and instrument playing along with the dances characteristic of that century. You learn just what went on at the great parties and what costumes were worn in environments of such enormous beauty and refinement. You hear tell how the princes and the infants did not go to school but still had a great deal of material for learning; and you shall discover many more surprises.  
- **Suitable for:** families with children over the age of 5  
- **Duration:** 120 mins  
- **Ticket:** €9/participant  
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)  
- **Note:** staging this activity depends on a minimum number of participants.

Monserrate Centre of Nature Interpretation  
Saturdays, 7, 14 and 21 December, 3pm, Park of Monserrate  
The Monserrate Centre of Nature Interpretation provides a pedagogic visit that opens up an understanding to families of the most important natural values of the Sintra Hills, stimulating their contact with nature, environmental awareness and knowledge about the fauna and flora present in the unique ecosystems that characterise this region.  
Through this innovative approach, with recourse to digital tools and didactic materials, visitors are invited to travel back through time and discover the leading episodes defining the geological, cultural and natural history of the Sintra Hills. Subsequently, this embarks on the exploration of the particular features of the riverside ecosystems through recourse to an aquatic terrarium where it is possible to encounter in situ some of their inhabitants. The biology of trees, which it is possible to learn about through a model of a Portuguese oak, broken down into its roots, trunk and foliage, represents another of the highlighted themes. The visit closes with the projecting of profiles of birds and winged mammals in flight that enables participants in the future to identify these species by their behaviours, their anatomic features and even their respective sounds.  
- **Suitable for:** families with children over the age of 6  
- **Duration:** 120 mins  
- **Ticket:** €8/participant  
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)

Once Upon a Time on the Farmyard… at Christmas!  
Saturday, 14 December, 10.30am, Quintinha de Monserrate  
Túlio and Tibério are two brothers who work in the Farmyard of Monserrate and that are extremely busy preparing the Christmas party when a sudden unforeseen event happens: the Christmas tree star has disappeared! Might it be in the flour jar or in the basket of dried fruits?
Might it be in the chest of toys or inside the music box? To unravel this mystery, you need to follow clues, paint, sing and live out a great adventure inspired on the stories, sounds, colours and flavours of this particularly special season.

- **Suitable for:** Families with children aged between 3 and 6
- **Duration:** 90 mins
- **Ticket:** €8/participant
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** Staging this visit depends on a minimum number of participants.

**Gardens of Monserrate without Barriers**
**Saturday, 14 December, 10.30am, Park of Monserrate**
A visit catering for persons with mobility restrictions who are able to traverse the gardens with autonomy through equipment ensuring they can span the slopes and facilitating the mobility of manual wheelchairs. This includes exploring the Valley of the Ferns, the Garden of Mexico, the Rose Garden, the Lawn and Lakes of the Park of Monserrate.

- **Suitable for:** appropriate for visitors with mobility restrictions
- **Duration:** 90 mins
- **Ticket for registered disabled:** entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- **Regular ticket:** entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- **Requires pre-booking (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm):** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** visitors may bring their own wheelchairs or use the wheelchairs made available by Parques de Sintra (without any added cost). Open to accompanying carers. The traction equipment adapts to the large majority of wheelchairs. Subject to cancellation or adaptation only to the interior of the Palace of Monserrate in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

**Dances with History: King João I – The Voyage to Ceuta**
**Saturday, 14 December, 11am, National Palace of Sintra**
Throughout its eight centuries of history, the National Palace of Sintra has born witness to many important episodes in the history of Portugal. It was precisely during the reign of one of its great builders, King João I, who planned here part of the expedition that would lead to the conquest of Ceuta in 1415, thereby marking the beginning of Portuguese overseas expansion. In this presentation by the Danças com História Association, participants are invited to relive the moment of planning the conquest of this important Maghreb city during which, according to the chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara, the plan of the location was set out in broad beans and pieces of string. This voyage through time is further deepened by a guided tour of the Palace.

- **Suitable for:** families with children over the age of 6
- **Duration/session:** 90 mins/120 mins (30/40 min Dances with History performance + guided tour)
- **Ticket:** €9/participant
- **Information:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)

**Concert for babies: “Christmas Morning”**
**Sunday, 15 December, 10.30am and 11.45am, Palace of Monserrate**
The magic and charm of Christmas in an interactive musical performance that stimulates the melodic and rhythmic feelings of participants and fosters learning-musical interactions between parents and children. In the company of four musicians (two voices, flute and guitar), this takes the audience on a tour through erudite classical music, among arrangements and original
compositions by the group to explore diverse sounds, tones and rhythms while always with the help of the public that correspondingly becomes the fifth musician in this group.

PROGRAM:
- “Morning”, by Peer Gynt, Edvard Grieg
- “Silent Night”, by Joseph Mohr/Franz Xaver Gruber
- “Deck the Halls”, traditional 16th century Scottish song
- “Jingle Bells”, by James Lord Pierpont
- “Carol of the Bells” by Mykola Leontovych
- “Ding Dong” by Beatriz Nunes
- "Greensleeves to a ground", anonymous, traditional English song
- “God rest ye merry gentleman”, traditional English song

- Suitable for: Recommended for families with children over the age of 3 months
- Duration: 45 min
- Ticket: adult + 1 child up to 48 months of age: €20.00; Adults and children aged over 48 months: €15.00
- Requires pre-booking and prior payment: info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)
- Note: Staging this activity depends on a minimum number of participants

The Palace of Sintra through other senses
Sunday, 15 December, 2.30pm, National Palace of Sintra
Throughout the museum visit route of the National Palace of Sintra, visitors are invited to perceive this space through sensorial exploration. This favours physically feeling, through touching replicas of some of the most significant pieces as well as hearing to sense the scale of spaces. This experience is led by a specialist guide who, in addition to the historical contents, approaches other themes such as the different phases of construction, the living quarters, the functional zones of the building, the tile manufacturing techniques and the furniture existing.
- Suitable for: Blind or visually impaired visitors
- Duration: 120 mins
- Ticket for registered disabled: entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- Regular ticket: entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- Requires pre-booking (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm): info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- Note: this activity counts on the support of ACAPO – the Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Portugal. We recommend the wearing of comfortable footwear.

Families in the Forest
Saturday, 21 December, 11am, Farmyard of Monserrate/ Hunting Grounds of Monserrate
A unique opportunity for families to engage in discovering nature with the time and space to run, climb, play, buildings shelters and giving free rein to creativity through natural materials. Playing, come rain or sunshine, stimulates the acquisition of individual and collective competences, team spirit, complicity and valuing and respecting others as well as for biodiversity. The sessions, implemented jointly by Parques de Sintra and the Bloom Movement, are characterised by their Sharing Nature activities, a learning approach inspired on the Flow Learning methodology that values the application of the entertaining component of games to the activities and workshops held and enabling, through means of playing, the participants to deepen their relationships with their own selves as well as with others and the natural world.
The Bloom Movement (www.movimentobloom.org.pt; www.facebook.com/Movimento.Bloom) is a non-profit environmental association that has managed the Sharing Nature Portugal program since 2012 and with the mission of fostering, encouraging and promoting the conservation of the
surrounding environment in conjunction with children and their families through initiatives that seek to strengthen bonds with nature and contribute towards them playing an active role in its conservation.

- **Suitable for:** recommended for families with children aged between 4 and 12
- **Duration:** 120 mins
- **Ticket:** €8/participant
- **Requires pre-booking and prior payment:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)
- **Note:** Staging this activity depends on a minimum number of participants. We would recommend wearing comfortable clothing that may get dirty and waterproof footwear. Participants should bring a complete change of clothing in a small backpack (including trousers, socks, vest, t-shirt, jumper).

**From the Park to the Hunting Grounds: Nature in Sintra and Mafra**
Saturday, 21 December, 10am, Monserrate Hunting Grounds, and 2.30pm, Mafra Hunting Grounds

Joint visit program to Sintra and Mafra, which unveils the diversity of the ecosystems in the Natural Park of Sintra – Cascais – a protected area to which the Monserrate Hunting Grounds belong – and the magnificent historical and indigenous forest that characterises the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra. In the Monserrate Hunting Grounds, the visitor explores the natural history of the Sintra Hills, its unusual microclimate, concepts such as forest food, ecological succession, invasive species, among others. Along the way, visitors will also be surprised by wooden sculptures of the medium and large scale mammals, currently extinct in the Sintra Hills but that, in a recent past, inhabited this landscape. In Mafra, along less trodden footpaths, visitors embark on the discovery of a mature forest that, due to its protected position behind a wall, has been able to guarantee conditions of excellence to vulnerable and where not extinction threatened species that are here able to feed, breed and find shelter.

- **Suitable for:** everybody
- **Duration:** 90 mins in Monserrate, 120 mins in Mafra
- **Ticket:** Adults: €13/participant  |  Youths and seniors: €11/participant  |  Families (2 adults + 2 children): €45
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm)
- **Note:** staging this activity depends on a minimum number of participants. Subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

**Apollo and the Divinities of the Light**
Saturday, 21 December, 3pm, Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz

On the eve of the winter solstice, it is time to celebrate the beginning of growth in the length of days with a voyage through the world of classical mythology. Touring the Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz, visitors gain insights into the deeds of Apollo (Febo to the Romans), the god of youth, light and truth. Recognised above all as a solar divinity and commonly associated with Helios (the personification of the sun in Greek mythology), he was described as the god of divine distance that threatened or protected the altar of the gods. He would frequently be accompanied by his sisters, the Muses., Design and orientation: Filomena Barata, *Clenardvs Association*

- **Suitable for:** all
- **Duration:** 90 mins
- **Tickets:** Adults - €12/participant  |  Youths and seniors – €8.5/participant
- **Requires pre-booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** Staging this visit depends on a minimum number of participants. Subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions.
Heritage through Sign Language
Saturday, 28 December, 2.30pm, Park of Monserrate
A visit to the Gardens and Palace of Monserrate with interpretation in Portuguese Sign Language. The visit to the gardens, one of the most beautiful of creations of Romanticism inspired landscaping in Portugal, which is home to over 3,000 species of plants from distant corners of the world, touring the Valley of Ferns, the Garden of Mexico, the Rose Garden and the lawns before ending in the Palace of Monserrate.
- Suitable for: targeting deaf and audibly impaired visitors
- Duration: 90 mins
- Ticket for registered disabled: entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- Regular ticket: entrance ticket + guided tour supplement €5
- Requires pre-booking (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm): info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- Note: this activity counts on the support and participation of APS – the Portuguese Association of the Deaf. We would recommend wearing comfortable footwear and clothing appropriate to the meteorological conditions. Subject to cancellation or adaptation only to the interior of the Palace of Monserrate in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

The King’s Treasure
Saturday, 28 December, 3pm, National Palace of Sintra
In a palace replete with 700 year of history, packed with secrets to discover, participants are invited to follow clues, solve enigmas and puzzles and complete tasks so that they finally know what is stored as the king’s treasure. This is a game of clues that enables the discovery of the history of the National Palace of Sintra in a very different and emotional fashion.
- Suitable for: recommended for families with children aged over 8
- Duration: 90 mins
- Ticket: €9/participant
- Requires pre-booking: info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- Note: Staging this activity depends on a minimum number of participants

Horse and pony trekking
Daily, Park of Pena
Horse riding in which the visitor tours the routes and paths of the Park of Pena from a new perspective. The horse ride duration may vary between 30 and 90 minutes or from 3 to 6 hours. The longest program includes the scope for visiting other poles under Parques de Sintra management and even booking lunch in some specific place. All the rides and treks are made accompanied by horse handlers who guide the visitors along the routes. Thinking of a younger audience, Parques de Sintra now also provides an activity that enables the youngest to gain their first riding experience on a pony (trained especially for this purpose) and also accompanied by one of their handlers.
- Horse trekking: €15/30 min, €30/90 min, €50/3 hours, €100/6 hours (in addition to the Park of Pena entrance ticket)
- Pony rides: €7/15 minutes (in addition to the Park of Pena entrance ticket)
- Further information and reservations: info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- Note: such activities depend on the prevailing meteorological conditions
- Find out more: www.parquesdesintra.pt/experiencias-e-lazer/passeios-a-cavalo/

Cart Rides
Park of Pena
The Park of Pena cart rides provide a genuine step back in time along the route from the Valley of Lakes and the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, passing through the Farm of Pena and the Garden of the Countess of Edla. This ride may or may not be accompanied by a specialist guide. This takes visitors on a voyage in discovery of the history of this Park and its creators, the botanical and animal species that appear along the route as well as the historical buildings and garden nooks the trajectory contains.

- **Ticket**: €75/1 hour + entrance ticket to the Park of Pena (prior reservation and pre-payment obligatory)
- **Cart**: Holds up to 6 adults or 4 adults and 4 children
- **Available only via prior reservation as from 1 October and throughout the low season.**
- **Further information and reservations**: info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note**: Undertaking such activities depends on the prevailing meteorological conditions
- **Find out more**: www.parquesdesintra.pt/experiencias-e-lazer/passeios-de-charrete/

**Equestrian Art Performances**

**Crininhas: the horse that wanted to be a reindeer**

12, 13 and 14 December, 11am, Nora Patio and the Henrique Calado Riding Ring (Belém, Lisbon)

With the approach of Christmas, Crininhas was dreaming of turning into a reindeer. Everything would change, however, when his father explained to him what it was to be a horse in the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art. “Crininhas, the horse that wanted to be a reindeer” is a special performance designed for younger audiences in which, through the dialogue between father and son, they get to know more about Portuguese equestrian art and its history. With the horses and their riders dressed as in the times of kings and queens, this opens up the universe of the only school that continues to teach Alter Real Lusitano horses these elegant but demanding exercises from times past. This story, which also conveys the magic of Christmas, is simultaneously a hymn to friendship and the value of family ties. The program begins with a visit to the Nora Patio stables followed by the performance in the Henrique Calado Riding Ring.

- **Suitable for**: Everybody
- **Duration**: 1 hour (including an explanatory visit to Nora Patio)
- **Ticket**:
  
  **General Public**: children <6 years: free | adults: €8/participant / youths and seniors: €6  
  Tickets on sale at https://www.parquesdesintra.pt/area-comercial/bilheteira-2/ or at the  
  Henriques Calado Riding Ring Ticket Office

  **Schools**: children <6 years: free | children >6 years: €5/student  
  Requires pre-booking (working days between 9.30am and 6.30pm):  
  info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00

**Closing Gala for the commemorations of the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art**

Friday, 27 December, 9.30pm, Henrique Calado Riding Ring (Belém, Lisbon)

**Equestrian Art Mornings**

From Tuesday to Saturday, between 10am to 1pm  
(schedule calendar at www.arteequestre.pt/bilheteira)

The Henrique Calado Riding Ring regularly hosts the “Equestrian Art Mornings”, an initiative that unveils the daily work ongoing at the School.

- **Suitable for**: everybody aged over 6
- **Ticket**: Galas - €25 // “Equestrian Art Mornings” – €8
About Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua

Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua, S.A. (PSML) is an entirely state owned company founded in 2000 in order to meet the challenges arising out of the UNESCO classification of the Sintra Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage site. The entity does not resort to the State Budget and the restoration and maintenance of the heritage in its care are ensured by the revenues resulting from sales at its ticket offices, stores, cafeterias and the rental of facilities for the hosting of events.

In 2018, the sites managed by PSML (the Park and National Palace of Pena, the National Palaces of Sintra and Queluz, the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, the Moorish Castle, the Palace and Gardens of Monserrate, the Convent of the Capuchos and the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art) welcomed around 3.5 million visits, around 86% of whom were international in origin. In 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, PSML was distinguished with the World Travel Award for the “World’s Leading Conservation Company”.

The PSML shareholders are the General Directorate of the Treasury and Finance (representing the Portuguese state), the Portuguese Institute of Nature and Forestry Conservation, the Portuguese Tourism Board and Sintra Municipal Council.

Mediá contacts:

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