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COVILHÃ  
CITY:OF  
:DESIGN

— rooted  
in a sea  
of wool



[covilhacriativa.com](http://covilhacriativa.com)

# Covilhã, perpetuated by Amália Rodrigues in the fado “Covilhã Cidade Neve”, is also intituled as “snow city” or “mountain city” for being the main entrance to Serra da Estrela, the highest mountain in mainland Portugal, certified as World Geopark by UNESCO.

Uniquely established on the southeast slope of the Estrela mountain range, Covilhã is one of the main urban centres of the Portuguese interior region.

Entitled as official headquarters of the term by King Sancho in middle ages (1186) which preceded to in the historical province of Beira Baixa, in 1510, King Manuel granted it a new charter confirming its importance.

In 1870, Covilhã was raised to the distinct category of city, by King Luís, in a strong and firm demonstration of the success of its industrial development policies.

Rooted in a sea of wool, known for its woollen industry, it is one of the few urban centres in the world that can praise themselves for assuming the same regular economic activity for so long. Wool has been int the city's DNA for more than eight centuries, in which textiles are now blended with new areas of innovation and avant-garde.

Covilhã is the birthplace of navigators and cosmographers such as Pêro da Covilhã, Francisco and Ruy Faleiro and master José Vizinho who played a major role in the Portuguese discoveries. Hometown of artists and writers like Mateus Fernandes, Eduardo Malta, Costa Camelo, Frei Heitor Pinto, Alçada Batista or Ernesto Melo e Castro.

Considered an open-air museum of urban art, exhibiting artistic presentations by Rodolfo Passaporte (Curvilinismo, 1988), Vhils (2011 and 2013), Bordalo II (2014), Pantónio (2015) and Bosoletti (2017), among others.

The enchanted city withholds natural and rare landscapes and an unusual architectural heritage perceived in the old factories and their imponent chimneys disseminated throughout the city; the various art nouveau mansions of an industrial bourgeoisie; the

magnificent iron elements in its housing; the castle walls; the masonry; the chapels and churches dating back form the 12th century and even in its 16th century Jewish quarters.

Accustomed to high standards, it is a city of knowledge and constant renewal. The University of Beira Interior, a national and international reference within the educational and research scopes; Parkurbis and UbiMedical incubate and empower companies based on technology or product development.

In every corner of Covilhã, creativity provides an identity and uniqueness, and, at the same time, its unusual orography shapes it into a crib city.

A magical city, closer to the clouds than any other, with a glorious past, a designed future and a present that is built on dreams. Of culture and knowledge. Of audacity and imagination. Of originality.

**Affirming Covilhã as a city of culture, knowledge, research and innovation is the goal that should support and guide public policies and strategies.**

Vitor Pereira, Mayor of Covilhã

**Covilhã's intention to be part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the area of Design is rooted in local history, in a collective pride in its past in which the epithet Portuguese Manchester emphasized the primacy and avant-garde of our textile and wool industry.**

Regina Gouveia, Municipal Councillor

**Through Design and in a transdisciplinary matrix, Covilhã's application for a UNESCO Creative City promotes an active commitment to creativity, innovation, ecology, inclusion and social transformation.**

Francisco Paiva, Candidacy Executive Director