



Good Practice Story Title: Matosinhos: Um Porto de Mudanças

Destination: Matosinhos

Country: Portugal

Submitting Organization: Municipality of Matosinhos

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Destination description:

The sea at the table, the new architecture, the pilgrimages, the monuments, the historical recreations.

Tourism in Matosinhos is unavoidably associated with gastronomy, contemporary architecture, the immense maritime coast and many are other enchantments.

We could say that gastronomy is our anchor. The fish, the shellfish, the meat recipes from the interior of Matosinhos, the tone and aroma of the eternal "arraial" are disarming. The North makes Matosinhos the place for all celebrations. They come for lunch, dinner, and they come back for a concert, a conference, to practice a sport, discover the other enchantments.

In terms of contemporary architecture, we must inevitably mention Álvaro Siza, whose ties to Matosinhos are very strong. First and foremost in terms of emotions: Álvaro Siza was born in Matosinhos, his first memories inevitably have the shape, the aroma, the sounds of his city.

Matosinhos was truly inspiring. Matosinhos jealously guards the works of Siza, those of his youth, icons of world architecture, national monuments: the Boa Nova Tea House, the Piscina das Marés, built between the rocks, if it



weren't - its author would say at the time - breaking the view of the sea line. It is tourism from up close and that crosses the sea to see the Master's works, but also those of Fernando Távora, Alcino Soutinho, Souto Moura. Walk south, by the sea, enter Souto Moura's stripped riverside promenade, look at the legendary Matosinhos beach teeming with magic and symbols - the genesis of many pilgrimages and popular festivals. Wherever you come from, fall in love with Matosinhos!

Summary of Good Practice Story:

Matosinhos, with a privileged location in the Porto metropolitan area, has a history strongly linked to the sea and maritime activities.

The intense connection between Man and the Sea dates back to Roman times, given the existence of port and trade structures, however, with the fall of the Roman Empire the sea was lost, as it was from there that the dangers were feared. they came. However, during the Middle Ages, the good relationship with the sea returned with fishing activity and the collection of sagaga, which was previously used to fertilize the fields and today is used in cosmetics and the pharmaceutical industry. In the 19th century, Matosinhos began to develop as a significant port, especially with the construction of the Port of Leixões, one of the largest and most important in Portugal.

However, it is important to mention that before the Port of Leixões was built, it was the Leça River Estuary, a place where there were numerous salt pans, that is, the fish was preserved through these barrels with salt.

Urban expansion also accompanied port development, and it is here that the canning industry emerged in Matosinhos, more specifically, in 1899, driven by the abundance of sardines and other fish, different canning methods began to be applied, becoming an activity crucial economic situation.

Matosinhos and its people have always been linked to the sea, but contrary to popular belief, fishing activity was not the main activity, so, given the flow of fish and demand, the fishing community of Matosinhos emerged with the surroundings of people coming from all over the country, as they saw an opportunity here. This opportunity developed in such a way, becoming the largest Sardinheiro Port in the world, and consequently one of the main sources of employment for the local population.





However, in the 1970s, with Portugal's entry into the European Economic Community, there were restrictions and the destruction of the fishing fleet, which caused a decline that resulted in a huge crisis in the canning industry. It was at that moment that the fishermen and people of Matosinhos had the need to reinvent themselves. What did they know how to do? To fish. What did they know well? The fish. What else could they do with the fish other than catch it? Develop a set of gastronomic delicacies from the sea. And so, the restaurant was born, the "World Best Fish" brand, which makes Matosinhos a place of choice in terms of restaurants in Portugal.

Issues faced:

Man's intense relationship with the production of preserved fish was possible due to the Roman era, as a result of the peace that was felt at that time, thus allowing a good relationship with the sea front. However, with the fall of the Roman Empire, the existing connection to the sea was lost, that is, the attachment to the coast retreated, due to the dangers that the sea represented.

The Wars brought even more challenges, changing the customs and ways of life of the local population.

Furthermore, another threat arose from climate change, as the Matosinhos sea was extremely rich in tuna production, given the area and conditions in which it was located, however, due to climate change it was no longer possible to carry out this production. .

However, regardless of these problems, Matosinhos invested in the canning industry as a new engine for the economy, thus becoming a global exporter of canned food, but which ended up giving rise to international competition, which arose due to the unfair competition generated by the crisis. of oil and changes in consumption habits.

Combined with this rapid growth, disorderly urbanization appears, leading to infrastructure problems, traffic congestion and environmental pollution. This growth was possible through advances technological, however, this also brought some challenges related to the requalification of the workforce, social inequality, and which ended up affecting the quality of life of the inhabitants.

Despite the obstacles, the city demonstrated resilience and ability to adapt over time.





Solution:

The solution that Matosinhos had in mind to face these challenges was to reconvert the municipality as a whole. In other words, **Matosinhos innovated and differentiated itself by reformulating what was the fishing activity that it had always been part of, taking advantage of what they knew so well, which was Fish, and alerting its economic activity and ideology to what the sea was.** To this end, the main focus was on urban requalification, environmental sustainability and social inclusion, but always with something very present, which was the preservation of traditions and their connection to the Sea.

- ➔ **Economic Diversification:** Recognizing the need to reduce exclusive dependence on the canning industry, Matosinhos expanded its economic activities to include sectors such as sustainable tourism, maritime technology and renewable energy. Matosinhos took advantage of its seaside location to promote activities related to the sea, such as surfing, diving and boat trips, as well as to encourage the emergence of new businesses.
- ➔ **Urban Requalification:** Matosinhos carried out urban requalification projects that aimed to revitalize old and degraded areas of the city. This included renovating historic buildings, creating new public spaces and improving urban infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks and lighting. Urban requalification helped to improve the quality of life of residents and make the city more attractive to investors and tourists.
- ➔ **Valuing Maritime Culture:** The city invested in the preservation and promotion of its rich maritime heritage, through the creation of museums, cultural events and festivals related to the sea. This has helped to keep the history and traditions of local fishing communities alive, whilst also attracting visitors and tourists interested in maritime culture.
- ➔ **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Matosinhos has valued and preserved its rich cultural heritage, including traditions related to the sea, historical architecture and local gastronomy. This has helped keep the city's unique identity alive and attract visitors interested in its history and culture.
- ➔ **Sustainable Development:** The city has adopted a sustainability-centric approach in all its development initiatives. This included the use of renewable energy, the promotion of sustainable mobility and the implementation of strict environmental policies. Matosinhos sought to balance economic growth with environmental protection and improving the quality of life of residents.





- **International Cooperation:** The city has established partnerships and collaborations with other coastal communities and international entities to share knowledge, resources and best practices in the field of fisheries and marine management. This helped Matosinhos to address common challenges more effectively and promote global conservation of marine resources.

Overall, Matosinhos' approach to combating fisheries problems has been characterized by innovation, sustainability and collaboration, resulting in a resilient maritime community that continues to thrive in the 21st century.

Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

The development of the Matosinhos seafront was a very dynamic process with a main focus on urban requalification, environmental sustainability and cultural preservation. The objective was to transform this area into a modern, accessible space that always had tradition and nature in mind.

To this end, several initiatives were adopted, such as:

- **Requalification of the waterfront** – involved the creation of walkways along the coastline, with a length of 7 km, with the aim of defending the coastline, environmental protection, landscape enhancement and comfortable conditions for the population
- **Creation of attractive public spaces that encourage community coexistence**
- **Conversion of old factories** - transformation of old factories into cultural centers, museums and coworking spaces, promoting the preservation of industrial heritage and the creation of new tourist attractions. Converting the Matosinhos canning industry into a museum was a fascinating way to preserve the city's rich history and cultural heritage, whilst also offering an educational and immersive experience to visitors. The museums feature interactive exhibitions that highlight the history of the canning industry in Matosinhos, from its beginnings to the present day, including historical artifacts, photographs, videos and installations that illustrate the canned fish production processes.
- **Protection of coastal ecosystems and promotion of sustainable fishing** - Fishermen in Matosinhos seek internationally recognized certifications and sustainability seals, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which guarantee consumers that the fish was caught in a sustainable and responsible way.



- **Promotion of gastronomy** – through events and festivals, as is the case with the “World Best Fish” project, which arises due to the fact that Matosinhos is the largest European cluster of restaurants per square meter, bringing together an unparalleled gastronomic offer.
From traditional grilled sardines to the most exquisite international cuisine, without forgetting seafood, in Matosinhos you will find approximately 600 restaurants.
Matosinhos maintains the tradition, serving high quality fresh seafood and, above all, the fresh fish that comes daily from the fish markets in Matosinhos and Angeiras.
- **Cultural events** - the city promotes events related to the sea and the canning industry, such as: fish festivals and historical exhibitions
- **Porto de Leixões Cruise Terminal** - a cruise terminal was included in the Port of Leixões, being a boosting project for tourism, as it brings visitors from all over the world to Matosinhos.

Achievements and Results:

As a result of continued commitment to sustainable development and the preservation of maritime traditions, Matosinhos has achieved significant achievements that have boosted its economy, promoted community well-being and solidified its position as a prominent destination in the region:

- **Canning Industry:** The canning industry in Matosinhos, started in 1899, became a crucial economic activity for the city. Matosinhos stood out as one of the main producers of canned fish. Over time, he turned this activity into a space for cultural observation.
- **Transformation for Gastronomy:** Faced with the crisis in the canning industry in the 70s, the fishermen of Matosinhos reinvented themselves, giving rise to restaurants. This transformation has propelled the city as a renowned gastronomic destination, celebrating the flavors of the sea and the rich local culinary tradition.



→ **Urban Requalification:** Matosinhos undertook urban requalification projects that revitalized old and degraded areas of the city, creating new public spaces, promoting community coexistence and improving the quality of life of residents.

→ **Sustainable Development:** In recent years, Matosinhos has focused on sustainable development, integrating the conservation of the marine environment with economic activities such as tourism and sustainable fishing. This approach aims to ensure a prosperous future for the city, preserving its natural resources and promoting community well-being.

These achievements reflect Matosinhos' commitment to progress, innovation and the preservation of its traditions. The city continues to face challenges, but its story of overcoming and success is a source of inspiration for other communities around the world.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

Matosinhos, with its history rooted in the sea and maritime traditions, vividly illustrates the power and importance of involving the community, preserving traditions and celebrating culture as fundamental pillars of sustainable development.

Matosinhos is an example of readaptation, with challenges transformed into opportunities throughout its history. Despite the difficulties faced in the fishing sector, the city will be able to take advantage of the vast knowledge accumulated in this activity to develop a new economic dynamic. The local community, with its resilience and capacity for innovation, channeled its expertise in fishing to diversify the economy, promoting new sectors and services. This spirit of adaptation and reinvention has been crucial to the continued growth and prosperity of Matosinhos, standing out as a reference for overcoming and economic evolution.

Over the years, Matosinhos has stood out in promoting community participation in all phases of project planning and implementation. From urban regeneration to cultural heritage preservation, residents are involved, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs met.

Preserving local traditions has always been a priority in Matosinhos. From the ancient canning industry to sustainable fishing practices, the city values and protects the customs and knowledge passed down from generation



to generation. This not only helps maintain the community's unique identity, but also strengthens bonds between residents and promotes a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, Matosinhos celebrates its rich maritime culture through a variety of events, festivals and cultural initiatives. From fish festivals to maritime art exhibitions, the city offers opportunities for residents and visitors to get involved and learn more about Matosinhos' maritime heritage.

These are just some of the many good practices that Matosinhos exemplifies. By prioritizing community involvement, preserving traditions and celebrating culture, the city not only strengthens its own territory, but also builds a sustainable and vibrant future for all its inhabitants and visitors.

Recognitions and Additional References



